



KUCHI JEWELLERY

Tereza Hejzlarová, Libor Dušek¹

Ján Vančo, Michal Čajan, Zdeněk Trávníček²

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on jewellery made by the Kuchi people, which is still one of the marginalized topics. It presents the best-known types of Kuchi jewellery, the way it is worn, the most commonly used materials for its production and the most utilized jewellery techniques. With respect to the date of origin, the focus is mainly on the second half of the 20th century, but also on the present, with regard to the growing trade in these types of jewellery. For a more comprehensive illustration of design, material and jewellery techniques, a collection of jewellery from the 20th century and the present from the collections of the Náprstek Museum in Prague and a private collection was examined. The X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy was used to find out the elemental composition of the materials used in the making of the jewellery.

KEY WORDS: Kuchi – jewellery – Afghanistan – nomads – Pashtuns – XRF spectroscopy

Introduction

The aim of the first part of the text is to briefly acquaint the reader with the Kuchi people, their basic contemporary social and historical background and the changes within anthropological/ethnological categories. The aim of the following pages is therefore not a comprehensive analysis or a deeper socio-cultural or historical excursion (i.e. exploring in detail the relations within the Kuchi group and the groups with which

¹ Contact: Tereza Hejzlarová, Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, e-mail: alabaj@email.cz, Libor Dušek, ethnologist, Krkonoše Museum in Vrchlabí, The Krkonoše Mountains National Park Administration, Czech Republic, e-mail: ldusek@krnap.cz.

This work was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (DKRVO 2019–2023/19.I.c, National Museum, 00023272).

² Authors of the elemental analyses of jewellery from a private collection. Contact: Ján Vančo, Michal Čajan & Zdeněk Trávníček. Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic; e-mail: jan.vanco@upol.cz, michal.cajan@upol.cz, zdenek.travnickek@upol.cz

they share a common geographical space), but only elementary information about this remarkable socio-ethnic group. That is absolutely necessary as complementary information to the second and key part of the text devoted to the jewellery art by the Kuchi. The character of the first part of the article does not have the ambition to come up with new discoveries from the life of the Kuchis, but it summarizes the current data, while being, for the above reasons, rather descriptive, i.e. ethnographic.

Are the Kuchi people really “Afghan Gypsies”?

In the eyes of Western travellers and adventurers whose destination was, or currently is, Afghanistan, Kuchis are mostly perceived as free nomads, living a wild life, knowing no boundaries, the “bottom rung” of society (Rubin 2006), “tattooed women in red and gold embroidered dresses and men riding alongside flocks of goat and sheep” (Ker and Locke 2010) and so on. However, these romantic ideas did not always correspond to the harsh reality of the 20th century and have even been further deviating from it towards the present. Who are the Kuchis? How do they identify themselves and how do others see them? The basic brief encyclopaedic definition is provided by Minority Rights:³ Kuchi means ‘nomad’ in the Dari language.⁴ The more accurate translation is the one who migrates, the meaning of the Persian *kuch* is migration (Tapper 2008: 97).⁵ Generally, the ethnonym *kuchi* refers to pastoralists, practicing transhumance (i.e. seasonal movement of their livestock between summer and winter pastures) or fully nomadic pastoralists, although the term *maldar* is preferred for non-Pasthun nomadic communities such as Farsiwan, Aimaq and Arab. (de Weijer 2007: 9–10), or the more general *powanda* (Foschiny 2013: 5). Kuchis are ethnic Pashtuns⁶ from southern and eastern Afghanistan. They are a social rather than ethnic grouping, although they also have some of the characteristics of a distinct ethnic group. In the past, they devoted themselves exclusively to the nomadic way of livestock farming, migrating for centuries in search of seasonal pastures and milder weather. They were a major contributor to the national economy, possessing about 30 percent of sheep and goats and most camels. They provided transport services and exchanged sugar, tea and matches for wheat and vegetables with settled communities, and also provided them with labour as labourers at harvest time. In recent decades, many have been settled in north-western Afghanistan, in an area that was traditionally occupied by the Uzbeks and Tajiks, having been encouraged to do so by the Taliban government. Nowadays, only a few thousands still lead their traditional way of life of nomadic pastoralists,⁷ while the second group consists of semi-nomadic pastoralists. Others have become farmers, settled in cities, or emigrated. The largest population of Kuchis is probably in Registan, the desert in southern Afghanistan.

³ *Minority Rights Groups International. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, Afghanistan, Kuchis.* Retrieved from: <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/kuchis/>.

⁴ A variant of the Persian language officially used in Afghanistan.

⁵ In addition, Tapper points out in his article that the term *Kuchi* has been widely used by Afghans and foreigners for nomads in Afghanistan and Iran since at least the 1960s, but not necessarily referring to the socio-ethnic Kuchi group.

⁶ According to ethnologue.com, Pashtuns living in Afghanistan belong to the South Pashtun ethnolinguistic branch, and currently there are about six million of them in the country, and about ten million in total. Compare with *Ethnologue. Languages of the World. Pashto, Southern.* Retrieved from: <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/pbt>.

⁷ This figure does not match the NMAK data; see the following text.

Despite their history and due to the country's political instability, they are currently one of the poorest groups in the country.⁸ Thus, Kuchis do not have much in common with Gypsies either historically, ethnically or culturally.

From a nomadic way of life to problematic adaptation

Thus, the term *kuchi*, as it is usually used today, even by the Kuchis themselves, is by definition virtually useless, but we can distinguish three groups of the contemporary Kuchis. (1) migratory, livestock-dependent, (2) partly settled, formerly migratory, livestock-dependent and (3) settled, still maintaining their cultural identity and respecting their *kuchi* heritage (de Weier 2007: 10–11).⁹ In Afghanistan, it is still very difficult to work with the exact numbers of the population, or individual ethnic and other groups, including the Kuchis. The most comprehensive census of the country, which speaks of ten million people settled and a million nomads, was taken in 1972–1974. The 2003 Governmental Overview of Kuchi Population by NMAK should also be reliable,¹⁰ speaking of 2,426,304 individuals in 239,859 households, with 365,106 settled individuals falling under the “settled *kuchi*” category, and there is a non-migratory group category comprising 967,210 individuals, including both “the non-migratory individuals in entirely settled communities” and “the non-migratory individuals in partially migratory communities”. This census shows that 60.1 percent of *kuchis* migrated in 2003. According to an estimate of Afghanistan's population (20.6 million people not including nomads), *kuchis* comprised 10.5 percent of the population of Afghanistan, not including *kuchis* migrating across the borders with Pakistan and Iran, estimated to be between 5-10 percent of the Afghan *kuchis* (de Weier 2007: 12–13).

Significant changes began in the 1950s and 1960s when the country's economic progression and the development of the road system and logistics shut Kuchis out of some traditional activities. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was especially a tangled web of political and economic circumstances associated with the armed conflict that gradually forced them to curb the traditional nomadic way of life, since their livestock were significantly decimated, and some sources estimate the losses at up to 75 percent.¹¹ Needless to say, all of this had a long-term socio-economic impact, which is still quite apparent. Another significant long-term factor is the relationship between Kuchis and Hazaras. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979–1989, Hazaras acquired a large area traditionally used by Kuchis as pastures, making some Kuchis move to pastures further up in the north, which certainly did not please the Mujahedin fighting against the Soviets, traditionally using the pastures. As a result, numerous conflicts broke out in which Kuchis lost their livestock. The subsequent alignment with the Taliban (1994–2001), to whom Kuchis (being of Pashtun origin) were generally inclined (de Weier 2007: 20), once again ignited old disputes and clashes have occurred in the years since then. Besides the above-mentioned circumstances, the highly politicized conflict with Hazaras is also one of the important factors further undermining their

⁸ Compare with *Minority Rights Groups International. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, Afghanistan, Kuchis*. Retrieved from: <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/kuchis/>

⁹ In addition to the ethnically dominating Pashtuns, i.e. Kuchis discussed in our article, De Weijer includes Balochi, Arab, but also Aimaq, Tajik and some Uzbek in the north in the first group.

¹⁰ National Multi-sectoral Assessment on Kuchi.

¹¹ Compare with (de Weijer 2007: 19, Bayat 2016).

social status within Afghan high society and politics.¹² According to the most recent significant sources, Kuchis face a number of primarily social, political and economic problems that have a fatal impact on their existence, but they are supported by a number of humanitarian organizations and projects.¹³ However, it is very likely that “*their traditional nomadic lifestyle based on livestock breeding is not preserved*” (Foschini 2013: 27).

Resources to study Kuchi jewellery

We have very modest information in the literature about Kuchi jewellery. So far, the only more extensive work about general Afghan jewellery based on field research is the publication by Austrian ethnologist Alfred Janata *Schmuck in Afghanistan* (1981), who stayed in Afghanistan several times from 1958 to 1975. Among other things, Janata presents the jewellery of nomads he bought in Afghan bazaars in the 1970s, where he also interviewed local merchants and jewellers. In the publication, we find chapters on selected topics such as body care, amulets, and pre-Islamic symbolism as well as material and technology used in Afghan jewellery art. However, as Janata himself states, there are more questions than answers. Even so, Janata’s publication is undoubtedly one of the most beneficial works on this subject.

More brief texts on Afghan, and sometimes even Kuchi jewellery art, can be found most often in publications presenting museum or private oriental collections. Earlier works include the catalogue *Monili dell’Asia dal Caspio all’Himalaya* (1963),¹⁴ later works include the catalogue for the exhibition *Bizuteria etniczna Afganistanu ze zbiorów Muzeum Azii i Pacyfiku w Warszawie* (2012) by Karolina Krzywicka, the guidebook to the exhibition and collections of the State Museum of the East *Искусство Афганистана. Путеводитель по постоянной экспозиции и коллекции ГМБ* (2012) by N. V. Sazonova, or a publication presenting a private collection of oriental jewellery *Jewellery from the Orient: Treasures from the Dr. Bir Collection* (2009) by Wolf-Dieter Seiwert. Although the text section is not very comprehensive in these publications, it is certainly worthwhile to take a look at the jewellery photos and their descriptions in order to obtain valuable comparative material.

Equally important visual sources are photographs from the field that capture the Kuchi people in their daily life. These include, for example, photographs from the second half of the 20th century by American photographer Josephine Powell, taken in the 1950s, and photographs from the 1960s and 1970s by French photographers Roland and Sabrina Michaud, who visited Afghanistan several times.¹⁵ Thanks to these photographs, we can see the use of jewellery in practice and find out that at that time Kuchi women owned and wore relatively rich sets of jewellery.

Types of Kuchi women’s jewellery

Obviously, rich jewellery sets were mostly worn by girls and women, but they did not only use them to make themselves beautiful, but also to protect themselves against evil

¹² For more information on this, see e.g. (Foschini: 2013, 2010).

¹³ Compare with (Bayat: 2016, Foschini: 2013, Mielke 2016, Mahendru: 2019).

¹⁴ Scerrato, U., Taddei, M. *Monili dell’Asia dal Caspio all’Himalaya*, Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1963. This catalogue is mentioned by A. Janata in his publication and states that he describes and partially displays 342 objects from Afghanistan and Pakistan (Janata 1981: 7).

¹⁵ Photographs by J. Powell are Retrieved from: <http://raambeel.blogspot.com/2018/03/photos-of-pashtun-nomads-by-josephine.html>, photographs by R. and S. Michaud are Retrieved from: <http://raambeel.blogspot.com/2018/11/pashtun-nomads-photographed-by-roland.html>.

forces and ensure fertility. The jewel in itself was thus not only an ornament, but also an amulet. Magical power was usually not only endowed to the material from which the jewel was made, or the ornament that adorned it, but also it was also the very jingle of the pendants made of chainlets, coins, and jingle bells that had the power to ward off evil spirits.¹⁶

Most jewellery was concentrated in the upper half of the body, especially on the head, which was decorated with typical metal headbands with a central circular medallion¹⁷ (in Pashto *silsila*, Cat. No. 9), pendants of various forms, most often circular (in Pashto *rupay*, *gogrey*, *tek*, *tik*),¹⁸ worn individually on the forehead or in a pair on the temples,¹⁹ or small hair clips in the shape of a narrow rectangle (in Pashto *stan*, Cat. No. 8). The head decoration (in Pashto *etoy*) is particularly opulent, consisting of a circular medallion placed on the forehead and side paired medallions in the shape of a semicircle (or crescent). All three medallions are interconnected and decorated with rich pendants, most often jingle bells. The headdress jewellery is usually equipped with hooks to attach to the hair, headgear, or to be attached to a textile ribbon worn over the head. Head ornaments also include earrings, most commonly in the form of a dome with pendants made of chainlets and small metal plates (in Pashto, in Persian *gushwār-e kafāsī*), or crescent-shaped earrings with pendants made of small jingle bells (in Pashto *wāley*, Cat. No. 3). Earrings and pendants are often not clearly distinguishable from each other. Afghan women's ear lobes are almost always pierced, and the holes are usually larger than those which are customary in Europe. Very heavy ornaments were sometimes worn in the earholes while lighter pendants were worn over the head on a textile ribbon (Janata 1981: 88). Nose studs (in Pashto *cargul*) were also a common adornment for Kuchi women, most commonly in the shape of a rosette. Necklaces (Cat. No. 7) usually consisted of vertical rows of chainlets and pendants in the form of variously shaped small metal plates, coins or jingle bells. In another type of necklace, a larger central medallion and a series of coins dominated. Typical are also chokers (in Pashto *ghāragey*) consisting of several horizontal rows of chainlets and metal plates, the bottom of which is adorned with pendants with coins or small metal plates of various shapes. A distinctive piece of jewellery is massive wide bracelets with a protruding serrated hoop at one end (in Pashto *bāhu*, Cat. No. 5).²⁰ They also wore narrower bracelets decorated with small jingle bells and, of course, rings (in Pashto *gutē*), often in the form of rosettes.

¹⁶ Thanks to these properties, small jewellery, especially silver coins, was also abundantly used to decorate children's clothing, especially caps.

¹⁷ Photographs by R. and S. Michaud depict Kuchi women with traditional jewellery: a headband, metal and beaded necklaces, circular pendants adorning the forehead, sleep pendants and rings. See Note 15 for the link.

¹⁸ *Rupay* – coin pendant (from rupee), *tek* – pendant, *tik* – forehead ornament.

¹⁹ See photo (authors not specified): <https://www.flickr.com/photos/76420882@N06/7601687604/>, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/76420882@N06/7601689364/>. However, some types of pendants in the form of various medallions can also be found as part of the necklaces. For example, the historical photo of a Kuchi woman shows the type of pendant No. 2, strung on a chain and intended to be worn on the neck, being worn in a pair as a head ornament. See photo (author not specified): <https://ellengeerlings.wordpress.com/2013/04/02/a-morning-with-the-kuchi-of-karkar-mountain/>.

²⁰ The photos by J. Powell depict Kuchi women with temporal pendants, wide bracelets and nose pins. See Note 15 for the link.

The Kuchi women's jewellery set also featured metal amulet cases (in Pashto, in Persian *ta'wiz*), which were most often of square, triangular or cylindrical forms, equipped with various metal pendants, chainlets and jingle bells. Inserted into the case was an amulet protecting against evil forces, especially bewitchery, illness and infertility. They were worn not only by women but also by children, individually and in pairs. Under the influence of Islam, prayers from the Qur'an most commonly fulfilled the function of the amulet. In addition to prayers and various incantations, other objects (e.g. coins) were added to the cases to which magical meanings were attributed. In many cases, the original amulet cases became only flat ornaments (Cat. No. 7), thereby losing their original function of the case in which the amulet was inserted, although the belief in its protective power was preserved (ГЮЛЬ 2008).

Material and jewellery techniques

The basic material for jewellery production was metal and, to a lesser extent, small glass beads used by women to make beaded necklaces and other small jewellery for their own use (Janata 1981: 38). In some cases, beads also form part of a metal jewel, where they are most commonly intertwined between chainlet pendants, or are used to fringe a textile mat to which a metal jewel is attached. Metal jewellery makers were men who made them for families or individuals, on request or for sale. A characteristic metal material that was most widely used in the Kuchi jewellery production was an alloy of copper, zinc and nickel, possibly a small amount of other metals. Alloys of these metals in different ratios are known by many names, such as pakfong, German silver, new silver, nickel silver, alpaca and others. In some cases, the Kuchi jewellery also contains a small amount of silver, which was obtained mainly from silver coins melted together with other pieces of metal obtained from old jewellery and other metal residues (Janata 1981: 38). Different ratios of copper, zinc and nickel cause different colouring of the metal, which is sometimes more goldish, sometimes more silvery.

In stylistic terms, the Kuchi jewellery is characterized by certain distinctive features, in terms of technology by some of the most commonly used jewellery techniques. Mostly, the jewellery is made up of tin plates of various shapes, often circular, semi-circular, square or triangular,²¹ which are framed by a simple filigree and set with rows of small, mostly transparent glass stones, most commonly red, green and blue. Larger transparent glass stones are faceted, or in the form of oval cabochons. Both faceted stones and cabochons are almost always embedded in serrated bezels. The centre field is commonly decorated by flat glass triangles, ovals, crescents or drops, which are underlaid with a coloured foil. The decoration is complemented with small metal plates with an embossed pattern, most commonly in the shape of flowers. The vast majority of jewellery is provided with rich hangers made of chainlets, small flat metal plates of various shapes, coins, jingle bells and pendants with embossed floral motifs (flowers, petals). Small components of embossed jewellery are most commonly created by

²¹ As for the significance of these forms, the association with astral symbolism is often mentioned in the case of the circle. The circle and the crescent are associated with the pre-Islamic cult worshipping the Sun and the Moon. The sun was a fertile life-preserving force, the crescent was the beginning of a new life cycle (ГЮЛЬ 2003). The square symbolized the Earth and its four cardinal points, while the triangle is associated with the idea of divine power, proximity to the «upper world.» The up-pointing triangle was associated with the active male principle, the down-pointing triangle with the passive female principle (ГЮЛЬ 2008).

hammering small metal plates into metal dies with a variety of patterns. Made from metal dies with linear grooves, flat wires are patterned in a similar way. A doming block with dimples and a punch set of different sizes was used to create hollow jewellery components. The most important technique of joining metal components together was soft and hard soldering (Janata 1981: 186).

Kuchi jewellery trade

Very little relevant information is available about the present use of Kuchi jewellery in Afghanistan. Based on the current photos of the Afghan nomads that are available online, it can be said that the Kuchi women's jewellery is now much more modest than it was in the 1950s and 1970s. This has been probably caused by the sale of jewellery by Kuchis themselves due to political-economic changes and war conflicts.²² We have received some information about the jewellery trade in Afghanistan from Alfred Janata, who spoke to three Pashtun merchants from Ghazni in 1975. They said they had been buying jewellery all over the country for many years before opening a shop in Kabul (Janata 1981: 7). As already mentioned, Janata also bought jewellery in Afghan bazaars and got a collection of "nomad jewellery" in Paktia Province, in the cities of Gardez and Khost, where they were, according to his own words, brought by nomads returning from winter pastures (Janata 1981: 68).

The story of Kuchi jewellery in Western culture has been remarkable. Already at the beginning of the 21st century Western society witnessed a growing interest in the so-called Kuchi tribal jewellery as they are commonly called today. Prospective buyers include mainly women-dancers who imitate oriental dances, which are very popular in Europe and the USA. Afghan jewellery attracts attention mainly because of its distinctive decorativeness, which gives the impression of a "typical Orient", and moreover, it can usually be bought at a low price and looks authentic.

At present, we can find a large number of e-shops on the Internet offering Kuchi tribal jewellery in different quality and at different prices. Under the name "Kuchi tribal jewellery", you will find not only jewellery in the style of Afghanistan's Pashtuns, but also Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmens. Most of these jewels are made of base metal alloys (copper, zinc, nickel, etc.), decorated with glass or plastic stones, sometimes with carnelian (especially in Turkmen jewellery) and lazurite. Some retailers (especially European and American) try to clarify the description of the jewellery by mentioning a particular ethnicity, the name of the jewel in the native language and the material from which it is made. However, quite often there is misidentification and misinformation that stems from ignorance rather than intention.

The production of Kuchi jewellery is now almost exclusively focused on profit and trade with the western as well as some eastern countries (e.g. India), and outside of their original culture. The main suppliers of these jewels are Pakistani traders who sell them both in retail and wholesale (by weight or by a specified number of pieces). Kuchi-style jewellery is now mostly manufactured in large volumes, which is reflected in the quality and price. Thus, among today's jewellery, we can find pieces of very low and higher craftsmanship at very low and higher prices. The high demand for jewellery and the associated extensive trade have made the original old jewellery more and more

²² *The Afghan Traditional Jewellery. The Afghanistan of Today*. Retrieved from: <https://afghanistannow.wordpress.com/tag/kuchi-jewelry/>.

scarce, but it can still be found. However, the price of such jewellery is considerably higher.²³

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to introduce the socio-ethnic group of the Kuchi people and to try to extend the knowledge of their jewellery production, which is still among those poorly explored. For this purpose, in addition to literature and internet resources, nine pieces of Kuchi jewellery were examined from the collection of the Náprstek Museum in Prague and a private collection. Particular attention was paid to jewellery design, jewellery techniques and the material from which it was made. For this reason, the jewellery samples were also subjected to chemical analyses of their elemental compositions using X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy, the results of which are presented in the Catalogue.

Certainly, it would be most beneficial to compare the data obtained through field research among Kuchis themselves, but due to the political or security situation in Afghanistan, this is currently impossible. Thus, the subject of the Kuchi jewellery production is yet to be explored in more detail in the future.

Translated by Radek Vantuch

Photographs by Jiří Vaněk

²³ The information was obtained through extensive factual research into e-shops selling oriental jewellery.

Catalogue

Cat. No. 1. Pendant on a chain. Metal, glass, foil, filigree, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, 1st half of the 20th century, h. 7.5 cm, w. 6.2 cm, l. chain 81.5 cm. Inv. No. A 19686, acquired 1991. National Museum – Náprstek Museum, Prague.

A pendant made of sheet metal with the perimeter and inside decorated with a simple filigree, which forms the borders. Border lines are filled with glass stones of red, green and blue, which are set in simple S-shaped bezels (some of them missing). The central field is made up of a triangle and a semicircle, which are separated by a horizontal border line. The upper triangular part is decorated with a transparent teardrop-shaped glass underlaid with a green foil and two red glass stones of a circular shape. The lower semi-circular part was originally filled with three transparent teardrop-shaped glasses (now one missing), underlaid with a red foil. The central border belt is decorated with eight small embossed flowers on the edges. Eyelets for pendants, which are now missing, are soldered to the bottom of the pendant.



1

Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)²⁴

Mass contents of the elements (in %)

Cat.no. 1	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	As	Se	Ag
back side - centre	0.059	0.001	0.145	55.276	10.274	0.001	0.021	31.015
back side – between eyelets	0.046	0.005	0.091	14.327	3.109	-	0.022	54.873
back side - eyelet	0.057	0.003	0.168	49.853	10.492	0.009	0.020	36.655
chain – a	0.068	-	11.346	44.402	14.799	-	0.013	1.245
chain – b	0.091	0.006	2.378	47.037	21.231	-	0.015	1.373

Cat.no. 1	Cd	Sn	Sb	I	Ba	Au	Hg	Pb
back side – centre	0.023	-	0.001	-	0.114	0.004	0.029	0.349
back side – between eyelets	0.001	-	0.001	0.001	0.145	0.015	0.508	0.214
back side – eyelet	0.005	0.001	0.001	-	0.033	0.001	0.010	0.743
chain - a	0.011	-	0.001	-	0.067	0.004	0.009	0.018
chain - b	0.018	-	0.003	0.002	0.095	0.004	0.014	0.029

Cat.no. 1	Na	Mg	Al	Si	S	K	Ca	Ti	Cr	Fe	Ba
red teardrop-shaped glass	13.02	0.018	0.055	29.218	0.055	1.013	63.066	0.029	0.06	1.447	0.381
red glass - a	0.135	0.024	3.188	28.065	0.125	37.873	33.891	2.39	0.081	5.461	-
red glass - b	0.17	0.03	2.618	28.745	0.203	33.186	36.403	3.568	0.096	9.092	0.034

Cat. No. 2. Pendant on a chain. Metal, glass, foil, filigree, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, 1st half of the 20th century, h. 4 cm (6 cm with pendants), w. 7 cm, l. chain 58 cm. Inv. No. A 19687, acquired 1991. National Museum – Náprstek Museum, Prague.

A semicircle-shaped pendant on a chain. The lower edge is decorated with a simple filigree. The central field made up of three triangular bezels, which were originally filled with three glasses underlaid with a coloured foil (only one glass underlaid with a red foil has been preserved). The central field is lined with a series of green and red glass stones in S-shaped bezels (some of them missing). Along the bottom edge are eyelets with S-shaped pendants with bells. Similar pendants were also worn in pairs on the sides of the head, or individually over the forehead.

²⁴ Jewel Cat. No. A 19686 from the collection of the Náprstek Museum was analysed by Ing. Tereza Horáková (National Museum in Prague).



2

Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)²⁵

Mass contents of the elements (in %)

Cat. No.2	Cu	Zn	Ni	Fe	Pb	Ag	Sn	Sb
	69.08	2.20	6.06	0.45	0.32	0.46	0.35	0.05

Cat. No. 3. Earrings. Metal, glass, filigree, granulation, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, 1st half of the 20th century, w. 7 cm. Private collection. Analogies: Krzywicka 2012: 53, 54.

Crescent-shaped earrings, an ornament in the central field is made up of filigree and granulation. In the centre of the flower motif made of glass stones and beads of red and green colour set in simple (bezels). The lower part is decorated around the perimeter with movable pendants consisting of flat bends of curved shape and small bells. Both crescent horns are covered with a small plate with an embossed flower motif (on each earring in a different style). Each earring has a different granule arrangement.

²⁵ Jewel Cat. No. A 19867 from the collection of the Náprstek Museum was analysed by dr. Frána and dr. Fikrl at the Nuclear Physics Institute of the CAS in Řež near Prague in 2005.



Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *

Cat. No. 3	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Ag	Al	Sn	Fe	S	Pb	Ti
filigree	53.26 (9)	24.18 (5)	8.60 (2)	6.92 (7)	0.79 (1)	1.87 (13)	2.89 (2)	0.48 (1)	0.59 (2)		
pendants (plates)	49.30 (6)	36.70 (5)	10.33 (2)	1.51 (4)	-	0.73 (10)	0.10 (1)	0.74 (1)	0.12 (1)	0.17 (1)	0.15 (1)
small bells	60.54 (9)	19.62 (4)	11.59 (2)	3.93 (5)	-	2.44 (12)	0.66 (1)	0.37 (1)	0.42 (1)	-	0.11 (1)

**(only the elements with the content ≥ 0.1 % are given)*

Cat. No. 4. Temporal pendants. Metal, filigree, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, 1st half of the 20th century, l. 12.5 cm. Private collection. Analogies: Krzywicka 2012: 45.

Temporal pendants consisting of a thick wire with a large eyelet. A cupola created using a filigree technique is attached to the wire at the bottom. In the lower part of the cupola there are chainlets with small flat teardrop-shaped metal plates hanging around the perimeter. The upper part of the temporal pendants is decorated with a coiled wire and small flat teardrop-shaped metal plates, which are attached to two hemispheres soldered together. Intended to be attached to the headgear or the hair, a short chainlet with a hook at its end is attached under the eyelet. Temporal pendants were often attached to a strip of fabric that was worn over the head.

Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *



Cat. No. 4	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Ag	Al	Sn	Fe	S	P	Pb	Ti
spiral wire (upper part)	57.79 (17)	21.47 (7)	7.07 (3)	2.25 (7)	5.47 (2)	3.20 (25)	0.18 (1)	0.40 (1)	1.01 (4)	0.15 (2)	0.20 (1)	0.54 (2)
teardrop metal plate (upper part)	62.49 (8)	20.24 (8)	8.66 (2)	2.00 (3)	0.26 (1)	4.40 (11)	-	0.26 (1)	1.34 (2)	0.16 (1)	-	-
cupola (top part)	57.98 (16)	8.45 (3)	15.11 (5)	2.02 (6)	7.89 (3)	5.64 (24)	0.10 (1)	0.20 (1)	1.66 (3)	0.18 (2)	0.24 (1)	0.27 (2)
teardrop plate (lower part)	54.84 (18)	22.93 (6)	7.41 (3)	3.18 (6)	3.75 (1)	5.22 (21)	0.14 (1)	0.27 (1)	1.63 (3)	0.18 (1)	0.19 (1)	0.11 (1)
chainlet with a hook	57.03 (9)	29.21 (5)	5.07 (1)	2.20 (4)	0.24 (1)	2.97 (14)	0.13 (1)	0.13 (1)	2.74 (3)	0.13 (1)	-	-

**(only the elements with the content ≥ 0.1 % are given)*

Cat. No. 5. Bracelet. Metal, glass, grooving, punching, cast, filigree, Kuchi, Afghanistan, 2nd half of the 20th century, diameter max. 7 cm, h. 8 cm. Private collection. Analogies: Krzywicka 2012: 45, Janata 1981: 113.

A wide massive bracelet made of sheet metal with a locking cotter pin. The central field is divided into three horizontal strips. The centre strip is further vertically divided into

squares, some of which are decorated with plant motifs created using a grooving technique. Both side strips are decorated with a geometric zig-zag motif created using a grooving technique and small ring motifs created using a punching technique. Both outer borders consist of several filigree strips. The protruding serrated hoop on one side of the bracelet is created using a casting technique. At each end, in the cotter pin, there are three faceted pebbles of transparent glass (two green, middle red) set in serrated bezels. The opposite side is decorated in the centre strip with a single oval cabochon of dull orange colour in a serrated bezel.

5



Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *

Cat. No. 5	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Ag	Al	Sn	Fe	S	P	Pb	Ti	Cd	Mn
bracelet body	51.76 (6)	32.91 (4)	10.39 (2)	2.70 (4)	0.23 (1)	0.91 (9)	-	0.35 (1)	0.54 (1)	-	-	-	-	-
protruding serrated hoop	57.48 (10)	16.64 (4)	9.91 (3)	6.59 (7)	5.53 (2)	1.96 (14)	0.39 (1)	0.46 (1)	0.63 (2)	0.11 (1)	0.15 (1)	-	-	-
light-red oval cabochon	4.63 (1)	13.19 (2)	2.00 (1)	78.04 (3)	-	-	-	0.39 (1)	-	-	-	-	1.36 (1)	0.32 (1)
green pebble**	22.02 (4)	5.69 (2)	6.51 (2)	53.54 (6)	-	-	-	0.43 (1)	-	-	9.74 (2)	1.05 (2)	-	0.10 (1)
clear red pebble	10.70 (2)	9.10 (2)	2.66 (1)	76.75 (3)	-	-	-	0.20 (1)	-	-	-	-	0.54 (1)	-

*(only the elements with the content ≥ 0.1 % are given)

Mass content of the specific elements:

** V 0.64(2) %

Cat. No. 6. Necklace. Metal, glass, coins (Communist Afghanistan, the date is resoldered, 1978-1981, can be 1, 2 or 5 afghani),²⁶ filigree, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, 1980s, l. 54 cm. Private collection.

A necklace consisting of two rows of chains that are joined together by five faceted glass stones (of red and green colour) in serrated bezels. On the bottom chain, chainlets are hung on the bottom chain along the entire length, ending with small flat oblong plates. The central medallion is a triangle-shaped plaque decorated with a simple filigree (partly missing). In the centre of the plaque, a finely faceted, pink-coloured glass stone is set in a simple bezel, with three smaller pink, turquoise and green glass pebbles in each corner. The lower part of the plaque is decorated with chainlets ending with jingle bells. The side medallions are made of one coin with a glass stone of green colour in a serrated bezel in the centre and soldered eyelets with chainlets ending with flat rings. Both the triangular pendant and the pendants made of coins are considered to be amulets on their own and were also worn separately, most commonly in the hair and the pendants made of coins also on the forehead.

²⁶ We would like to thank Arabist and numismatist PhDr. Vlastimil Novák, PhD. of the Náprstek Museum for identifying the coins.



Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *

Cat. No. 6	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Al	Sn	Fe	S	Mn
ornamental chain*	57.35 (4)	36.23 (4)	5.31 (2)	-	-	0.34 (1)	0.52 (1)	-	-
coins	59.13 (11)	2.21 (1)	26.66 (6)	2.31 (5)	9.13 (16)	0.22 (1)	-	-	0.11 (1)
yellowish flat rings	53.21 (6)	36.08 (5)	6.34 (1)	0.99 (2)	2.70 (10)	-	0.22 (1)	0.24 (1)	-
flat oblong plates	53.51 (5)	35.92 (4)	9.03 (2)	0.65 (2)	0.51 (8)	-	0.14 (3)	0.11 (1)	-
triangular pendant (main body)	63.98 (5)	21.47 (2)	12.21 (2)	0.56 (2)	0.43 (6)	-	0.48 (4)	0.75 (1)	-
jingle bells	62.75 (7)	23.30 (3)	7.94 (2)	2.49 (4)	2.03 (9)	-	0.23 (1)	1.08 (1)	-

**(only the elements with the content ≥ 0.1 % are given)*

Mass content of the specific elements: *Sb 0.10 (1) %

Cat. No. 7. Amulet. Metal, glass, foil, filigree, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, late 20th century, l. 16 cm, w. 8.5 cm. Private collection. Analogies: Janata 1981: 69.

An isosceles trapezium-shaped sheet metal amulet. The central motif is made up of a flower created with an oval red glass cabochon in a serrated bezel, fringed with small glass stones and beads of blue and red colour. The corners of the central field are adorned with drop-shaped glasses, deposited on a foil of red and blue. The main border strip is made up of a series of glass faceted pebbles and beads of blue, red and purple colour. The edges are decorated with filigree strips, which are already worn smooth in places. In the upper and lower part of the amulet there is a series of soldered eyelets (only two pieces on each side) decorated with small metal plates with stamped plant motif (tapping technique into the matrix). Chainlets with small bells are attached to the eyelets and the bottom.

7



Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *

Cat. No. 7	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Al	Sn	Fe	S	P	Pb	Ti
stamped plant motif (upper part)	53.96 (7)	35.56 (5)	7.18 (2)	0.75 (3)	1.46 (12)	0.11 (1)	0.29 (1)	0.21 (1)	0.12 (1)	-	0.22 (1)
flower-motif (lower part)	46.99 (10)	25.10 (6)	20.87 (5)	2.70 (8)	1.79 (17)	1.01 (1)	0.65 (1)	-	-	0.57 (1)	0.20 (1)
bells (yellowish color)	77.60 (11)	14.73 (3)	2.73 (1)	1.45 (4)	1.06 (12)	0.49 (1)	0.35 (1)	0.33 (2)	-	0.32 (1)	-
ornamental chain	53.92 (11)	32.83 (7)	8.19 (2)	2.18 (6)	2.01 (18)	-	0.22 (1)	0.31 (3)	0.10 (1)	-	-
metal sheet (back-side)	66.68 (6)	23.71 (3)	7.42 (1)	0.74 (2)	0.71 (7)	-	0.36 (1)	0.20 (1)	-	-	-

**(only the elements with the content $\geq 0.1\%$ are given)*

Cat. No. 8. Hair slide. Metal, glass, foil, filigree, stamping, Kuchi, Afghanistan, late 20th century, l. 8 cm, h. 6 cm. Private collection. Analogies: Janata 1981: 69.

8



A narrow rectangle hair slide fringed with filigree over its entire length and decorated with transparent oval-shaped glasses in the central field, underlaid with blue and red foil alternating with pebbles of green and red arranged in the form of flowers. The lower part is decorated with two rows of pendants – the upper row with small teardrop-shaped metal plates, the lower row with small jingle bells. A triangle-shaped plaque is attached in the upper part by chainlets to the slide, decorated with jingle bells and a transparent triangle glass in the lower corners, which is underlaid with a red foil. On the back there is a toggle clasp to fasten the hair.

Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *

Cat. No. 8	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Ag	Al	Sn	Fe	S	P	Pb	Ti
red colored glass	32.35 (7)	17.04 (4)	6.94 (2)	40.32 (12)	-	-	2.19 (2)	0.70 (1)	-	-	0.38 (1)	-
main body-filigree	48.89 (6)	26.18 (5)	8.50 (2)	11.88 (9)	-	-	3.58 (3)	0.60 (1)	-	-	0.29 (1)	-
blue colored glass	34.35 (9)	18.78 (5)	7.24 (3)	36.72 (15)	-	-	2.01 (2)	0.77 (1)	-	-	0.11 (1)	-
jingle bells	55.90 (15)	31.54 (9)	7.94 (3)	0.92 (6)	0.42 (1)	0.93 (25)	0.54 (1)	0.21 (1)	0.11 (3)	0.13 (2)		1.34 (3)
solder	52.41 (11)	26.73 (6)	7.67 (2)	1.01 (4)	1.71 (1)	5.93 (19)	3.50 (2)	0.52 (1)	0.17 (2)	-	0.18 (1)	-

**(only the elements with the content ≥ 0.1 % are given)*

Cat. No. 9. Diadem. Metal, glass, plastic, cotton fabric, stamping. Kuchi style, made in Pakistan, contemporary production, l. 26 cm, h. 13 cm, diameter (central medallion) 6.5 cm. Private collection. Analogies: Krzywicka 2012: 35.

A diadem consisting of a central circular medallion and chainlets. The medallion is decorated in the centre with a single pink faceted pebble in a serrated bezel, which is fringed in two circles with tiny plastic stones in red, pink, yellow, green and blue in simple bezels. Attached to the medallion on the sides and in the upper part are rows of chains, which are interconnected by several rows of plastic stones in simple bezels of the same colours as those on the medallion. The lower part of the diadem is decorated with a curtain of chainlets with jingle bells. The diadem is stitched onto a cotton fabric with laces to fasten it around the head. The upper edge of the fabric is lined with white and red glass beads. It is a brand-new Kuchi-style jewel made in Pakistan for retail.



Elemental composition (determined by XRF method)

Mass contents of the elements [% (SD)] *

Cat. No. 9	Cu	Zn	Ni	Si	Al	Fe	S	Pb	Ti	Mn
central circular medallion	54.51 (16)	19.45 (6)	1.69 (1)	-	23.30 (22)	0.22 (1)	-	0.83 (1)	-	-
horizontal chains	60.58 (10)	31.15 (6)	3.29 (1)	0.34 (2)	4.14 (16)	0.33 (1)	-	-	0.10 (1)	-
hanging chains	8.88 (3)	5.23 (2)	25.83 (6)	0.56 (3)	7.95 (20)	51.05 (12)	-	0.13 (1)	-	0.17 (1)
jingle bells	6.73 (3)	3.12 (2)	35.13 (7)	0.31 (2)	2.27 (15)	49.21 (9)	0.11 (1)	-	2.65 (3)	0.30 (1)
central pink stone	7.63 (2)	3.48 (1)	0.36 (1)	88.35 (3)	-	-	-	0.17 (1)	-	-

**(only the elements with the content ≥ 0.1 % are given)*

Chemical analyses notes

The objects under study

The following objects were analysed using a combination of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy: Cat. No. 3. Earrings (1st half of the 20th century), Cat. No. 4. Temporal pendants (1st half of the 20th century), Cat. No. 5. Bracelet (2nd half of the 20th century), Cat. No. 6. Necklace (1980s), Cat. No. 7. Amulet (late 20th century), Cat. No. 8. Hair slide (late 20th century), Cat. No. 9. Diadem (contemporary production).

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy

The average elemental compositions of the jewellery sample details were determined by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy, using a Vanta Education spectrometer (Olympus, USA) calibrated for coinage metals and alloys and general mineralogy samples. The XRF spectrometer was equipped with 4 W rhodium X-ray source (working at up to the 40 kV excitation voltage) and a large silicon drift detector.

Literature and internet sources:

Асланов, Мартирос Григорьевич

1985 *Пушту-русский словарь*, Москва: Русский язык.

Bayat, Ehsan

2016 Is There a Future for The Kuchi Nomads of Afghanistan? *Ehsan Bayat Afghan Wireless. Business Development and Philanthropy in Afghanistan*. Retrieved from: <https://ehsanbayatafghanwireless.com/future-kuchi-nomads-afghanistan/> [29 April 2019].

Foschini, Fabrizio

2013 The Social Wandering of the Afghan Kuchis. Changing patterns, perceptions and politics of an Afghan community. *Afghanistan Analysts Network. AAN Thematic Report 04/2013*.

2010 The Kuchi-Hazara Conflict, Again. [online]. *Afghanistan Analysts Network*. Retrieved from: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-kuchi-hazara-conflict-again/> [29 April 2019].

Гюль, Эльмира

2008 К вопросу о генезисе амулетниц-тумаров. *Центральноазиатский исторический сервер*. Retrieved from: https://kyrgyz.ru/articles/library/elmira_gyul_k_voprosu_o_genezise_amuletnits-tumarov/ [15 April 2019].

2003 Ювелирное искусство Бухары (к семантике форм). *San'at* 4. Retrieved from: http://www.sanat.orexca.com/rus/archive/4-03/history_art6.shtml [15 April 2019].

Janata, Alfred

1981 *Schmuck in Afghanistan*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt.

Ker, Michelle and Locke, Jacob

2010 Singing in the Wilderness: Kuchi Nomads in Modern Afghanistan. *Cornell International Affairs Review* 2010, Vol. 3 No 2. Retrieved from: <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1260/singing-in-the-wilderness-kuchi-nomads-in-modern-afghanistan> [27 April 2019].

Krzywicka, Karolina

2012 *Bizuteria etniczna Afganistanu ze zbiorów Muzeum Azii i Pacyfiku w Warszawie*. Warszawa: Muzeum Azii i Pacyfiku w Warszawie.

Лебедев, К. А., Яцевич, Л. С., Конаровский, М. А.

1989 *Русско-пушту-дари словарь*, Москва: Русский язык.

Mahendru, Ritu

2019 Afghanistan's Most Vulnerable Woman. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/afghanistans-most-vulnerable-women/> [27 April 2019].

Mielke, Katja

2016 Tracing Change: On the Positionality of Traditionally Mobile Groups in Kabul's Camps. *Internationales Asienforum*, Vol. 47 (2016), No. 3–4, pp. 245–271.

Raverty, Henry George

1867 *A dictionary of the Puk'hto, Pus'hto, or language of the Afghans: with remarks on the originality of the language, and its affinity to other oriental tongues*. Second edition, with considerable additions. London: Williams and Norgate.

Rubin, Elizabeth

2006 Land of the Seven Scarves. The Kuchi, Afghanistan's nomads. [online]. *Bidoun, Issue 6: Envy, Winter 2006*. Retrieved from: <https://bidoun.org/issues/6-envy> [28 April 2019].

Сафонова, Н. В.

2012 *Искусство Афганистана. Путеводитель по постоянной экспозиции и коллекции ГМВ*. Москва: Государственный музей Востока.

Seiwert, Wolf-Dieter

2009 *Jewellery from the Orient: Treasures from the Dr. Bir Collection*, Stuttgart: Arnoldsche.

Tapper, Richard

2008 Who are the Kuchi? Nomad self-identities in Afghanistan. *Royal Anthropological Institute 2008. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N. S.)*, 14, pp.97–116.

de Weier, Frauke

2007 Afghanistan's Kuchi Pastoralist: The Change and Adaptation. *Nomadic Peoples. Volume 11, Issue 1, 2007*: pp. 9–37.

Ethnologue. Languages of the World. Pashto, Southern. Retrieved from: <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/pbt> [27 April 2019].

Minority Rights Groups International. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, Afghanistan, Kuchis. Retrieved from: <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/kuchis/> [27 April 2019].

The Afghan Traditional Jewellery. The Afghanistan of Today. Retrieved from: <https://afghanistannow.wordpress.com/tag/kuchi-jewelry/> [15 April 2019].

Photo by Josephine Powell. Retrieved from:

<http://raambeel.blogspot.com/2018/11/pashtun-nomads-photographed-by-roland.html>

Photo by Roland and Sabrina Michaud. Retrieved from: <http://raambeel.blogspot.com/2018/03/photos-of-pashtun-nomads-by-josephine.html>.