



Tribal Rugs: Nomadic and Village Weavings from the Near East and Central Asia

James Opie

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This is an exploration of one of the oldest forms of artistic expression. James Opie has been travelling among the tribes of Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan since 1970, and his book describes and discusses the ancient roots of tribal weavings and the development and significance of the common patterns and traditions which they display. From an examination of the Pazyryk rug, the oldest complete rug of a complex design worked nearly 2500 thousand years ago and uncovered from the frozen tomb of a Siberian chieftain in 1949, Opie traces the links between this piece and subsequent work, following the history of antique and traditional designs right up to the present day, when urban influences have almost completely smothered the rich religious and cultural messages of the older patterns. As tribal life gives way to relentless modernization and it is too late to stimulate artificially the broad cultural support on which a living craft depends, the art of tribal rugs become increasingly the domain of the scholar and the collector. The book is illustrated with colour reproductions of all the pieces discussed, together with maps and drawings which indicate tribal areas and boundaries, and with photographs of the tribal peoples who weave them.

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