

Krishna Playing Flute: A Chambā Rumāl at the Lahore Museum

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This study is based on the collection of Chambā Rumāls in the Lahore Museum on the Mall road, Lahore. The survey has been taken in the Textile and Ethnological Gallery of the Museum which houses these beautiful specimens of embroidery belonging to the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The craft belongs to a hill state of Himachal Pradesh, India. This research is a documentation of this dying art which is losing its beauty thread by thread with the folding pages of time. The present condition of some is vulnerable and close to complete decay. The twentyone beautiful specimens uncover the culture, religious values and history of the area they belong to. The study encompasses the history, subject matter, intrinsic and extrinsic analysis of the specimens at display in the show cases as well as those stored in the storage area of the museum. Illustrating some scenes from the Indian religious mythology, the rumāls appear to be small textile miniature paintings. The compositions are according to the shape and sizes of the base fabric whereas the drafting techniques are very close to those of the miniature paintings produced in the same era. The research further connects the similarities in drawing, motifs and subject matter of the miniature paintings and rumāls at Chambā, a hill state of Himachal Pradesh.

Key Words: Chambā Rumāls, Lahore Museum Collection, Himachal Pradesh embroidery, Chambā Miniature Paintings.

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