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ARABIC INSCRIPTIONS

ON MEDIEVAL TEXTILES FROM THE NEAR EAST

IN THE DUMBARTON OAKS COLLECTION

Analyzed by

RICHARD ETTINGHAUSEN

Ann Arbor

1939
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A. Historic Textiles with Dated Inscriptions

1. Tīrāz fabrics made for the Abbasid caliphs
Tirāz made for the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtadid bi'llāh
(279-89 H./892-902 A.D.) on the instigation of the Emir
Hārūn ibn Khumārawāiḥ ibn Ahmad, by Kāʾim (or Fāʾim?)
in Tinnīs (?) (Egypt), in the year 285 H. (898 A.D.)

Arabic inscription:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سورة المؤمنين

النبيين عز من الله اعبده احمد الأمام المنتظم

بالله امير المؤمنين اطلاء الله بناية مما امر

الامير حارون بن خمارويه بن احمد مولى امير

المؤمنين بعمله بتنضس (؟) على بني عام سنة

خمس (دوالانيين) ومائتين خمسة

English translation:

In the name of Allāh. Praise to Allāh! May Allāh bestow
his blessing on Muhammad the seal of the prophets. Glory from
Allāh to the slave of Allāh Ahmad, the Imām al-Muʿtadid
bi'llāh, the Commander of the Faithful, may Allāh make long
the duration of his life. This belongs to what was ordered to
be made by the Emir Hārūn ibn Khumārawāiḥ ibn Ahmad, the
Freedman of the Commander of the Faithful in Tinnīs (?) by
Kāʾim (or Fāʾim?). In the year 285. The good is coming.
This textile shows a complete and well-preserved Kufic inscription giving besides the name of the Abbasid caliph and the year of manufacture other valuable data: the names of the official in general charge of the ʿtirāz manufacture and of the workman, and also the place of the workshop.

The caliph al-Muʿtaḍid bi'llāḥ and his predecessor al-Muʿtamid ʻalā l-lāh are the first members of the Abbasid dynasty of whom we have larger series of ʿtirāz textiles which allow us to understand the scope of that typical Islamic institution, analogous to the western decorations or 'Orden'. Fragments of only one or two of such 'robes of honor' with the name of the supreme head of the Muslim world are to be found of the earlier caliphs. Each of

A number of other inscribed textiles show us that the complete name of the Emir who ordered the fabric S-191 was Abū Mūsā Harūn (see Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe, vol. 2, Cairo 1932, no. 788; vol. 3, Cairo 1932, nos. 805, 815). There are also several ʿtirāz ordered by Harūn's father, Abū l-Djaīsh Khumārawāih (Répertoire, II, nos. 767, 774, 785) who held his position under the caliphs al-Muṭamid ʻalā l-lāḥ and al-Muʿtaḍid bi'llāḥ. All the ʿtirāz of father and son so far referred to were made in Tinnīs in Egypt; we may therefore assume that
the textile in the Dumbarton Oaks collection was also made there, though the deciphering of the name of the place on the textile makes difficulties, and in spite of the fact that we do not know the workman Ka'im or Fa'im from other fabrics. Several pieces have, however, the somewhat rare feature of having a name or formula after the date, like the خبير مقبل - 'the god will come' in S - 191.
Tirāz made for the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir bi’illāh
(295-320 H./908 - 32 A.D.) by order of his vizier Ḥāmid ibn al-‘Abbās in the tirāz workshop of Shafī‘ by the weaver Harūn in Tinnīs (Egypt) in the year 306 H./918-19 A.D.

Arabic inscription:
‘...[المقند]ر بالله امير المومنين آية الله ما امر الوزير هامد بن العباس به العمل في طراز تنين على يدي شفيق مولى امير المومنين سنة ست وثلاثين هرمن

English translation:
'......(al-Muqtadi)r bi’illāh, Commander of the Faithful , may Allah strengthen him! This was ordered by the vizier Ḥāmid ibn al-‘Abbās to be made in the tirāz workshop of Tinnīs by Shafī‘, freedman of the Commander of the Faithful, in the year 306 . Harūn.

Though this tirāz textile is not completely preserved all the essential data of historical importance are easily to be reconstructed. Thus while only the last letter of the caliph’s name remains intact, the year of the manufacture provides the full name without doubt. The inscription gives a much larger amount of information than is usually found in such textiles.
Tīrāz signed by the weaver, at the end of the official inscription are rather rare.

Ḥāmid ibn al-‘Abbās was appointed vizier in Djamāda II 306, so that our textile must have been made in the period between November 918 and early June 919. Two other tīrāz ordered by Ḥāmid in this first year of his vizierate are known, one in the Benaki Museum, Athens, and one in the possession of Nahman, Cairo (Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe, ed. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget and G. Wiet, vol. III, Cairo 1932, nos. 1005 and 1006). The Musée Arabe in Cairo owns a tīrāz of the next year (307 H.) ordered by Ḥāmid and also made in the workshop of Shafi‘. None of the inscriptions on these three textiles provides, however, the extensive data to be found on Dumbarton Oaks S-185.

The vizier Ḥāmid ibn al-‘Abbās is a well-known official of the reign of the caliph al-Muktadir bi'llāh. He ordered the execution of the famous Muslim mystic Ḥalladj in the year 309 H. Ḥāmid was deposed in 311 H./923-4 A.D. and disposed of with poisoned eggs. His official career is well described in Miskawaihi, The Experiences of the Nations, transl. by D.S. Margoliouth, vol. I, Oxford 1921, pp. 60-116.

The inscription of the Dumbarton Oaks textile has been published in Répertoire, vol. III, pp. 118-19, no. 1007; the textile then belonged to M. Tano, Cairo (1932).
Tirāz made for the Abbasid caliph al-Kādir bi'llāh (391-422 H./991 - 1031 A.D.) in the year 399 H. (1008-09 A.D.), probably in Baghdad.

Arabic inscription:
[alphabetical text]

English translation:
'(In the name of Allāh the) Merciful, the All-compassionate. Praise to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds! The happy end is for those who fear God and there is no enmity except against the oppressors. May Allāh bestow his blessings on our lord Muhammad, the seal of the prophets and all the perfect and excellent members of his family! Blessing from Allāh and glory for the caliph, the slave of Allāh, Ahmad, the Imām al-Kādir bi'llāh, the Commander of the Faithful, in the year 399. '

The lengthy inscription is on the whole well preserved; only the first two words of the basmala and the two last letters of the last word are missing.

The writing is characterized by the height of the shafts of the tall letters, the frequent inclusion of alif-like strokes, and of tail-forming flourishes below the writing line, all of which make the reading difficult. These features are found on tirāz
made in Madīnat al-Salām (Baghdad) and it is therefore very likely that Dumbarton Oaks S-186 was also made there, though the inscription does not mention the place of manufacture.

The inscription was published in *Repertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, ed. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, vol. VI, Cairo 1935, p. 70, no. 2130; the textile belonged then to M. Tano, Cairo.


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1) See Nancy Pence Britton, *A Study of Some Early Islamic Textiles in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Boston 1938, pp. 30/1, Fig. 4.

A. Historic Textiles with Dated Inscriptions

2. Tiraz fabrics made for the Fatimid caliphs
Tīrāz made for the first Fatimid caliph of Egypt, Mu‘izz (358-65 H./969-75 A.D.), in Egypt.

Arabic inscription:

‘In the name of the Merciful, the All-compassionate. Assistance from Allāh and manifest victory for Ma‘add (Abī Tamīm, the Imam al-Mu‘izz li-dīn Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful….)

Only the beginning of this tīrāz with its fine stately Kufic letters is preserved, but it contains at least the first part of the name of a caliph: Ma‘add. Two rulers had this name, the Fatimid caliphs Mu‘izz and Mustanṣir. As the writing during the reign of the later was quite different, the tīrāz must belong to the first Fatimid who conquered Egypt in 358 H./969 A.D. This assumption is corroborated by the characteristic style of the Kufic; it is very much like the well-known tīrāz of the contemporary Abbasid caliph Mutā‘ (334-63 H./946-74 A.D.) of whom a great number, probably made in the same Egyptian workshops, have been preserved (See for comparison: Nancy Pence Britton, A Study of Some Early Islamic textiles in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1938, Figs. 29-32)
The Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe, ed. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget and G. Wiet, vol. V, Cairo 1934, lists twenty tiraz textiles with the name of the Fatimid caliph Mu'izz or such inscribed textiles which can be attributed to him; none of these, however, has been published or illustrated elsewhere so that no analogies with this material, mostly preserved in the Musée Arabe in Cairo can be made for deductions. The only other Mu'izz textile known besides those listed in the Répertoire is the one in the University of Michigan, actually the only fully published piece; see Florence E. Day, Dated Tiraz in the collection of the University of Michigan, Ars Islamica, vol. IV (1937), p. 443, no. 24, Fig. 24. Its Kufic inscription is much more archaic than the more developed lettering of the MutI-type on the piece of the Dumbarton Oaks collection.

The short text shows one peculiarity: the missing word 
الله - God in the introductory basmala.

The textile is apparently identical with Répertoire, V, no. 1854, then belonging to Tano, Cairo (1934) and there characterized as having a simple Kufic inscription in black silk on a piece of linen of a length of 44 cm. The reading there differs in one word from ours, instead of فتح مبين, the Répertoire reads فتح قريب – near victory.

1) Nos. 1814, 1822, 1840-1857.
Tirāz made for the first Fatimid caliph of Egypt, Mu‘izz (358-65 H./969-75 A.D.) in Egypt.

Arabic inscription:

English Translation:

‘...the King, the Truth, Praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.' The blessing of Allah upon you, o people of this house; Praise and glory are his due!’. Assistance from Allah and blessing to the slave of Allah and his friend Ma‘add Abū Tamīm al-Mu‘izz li-dīn Allah......'

Like S - 198 this fabric is one of the tirāz of the first Fatimid caliph, made sometime between his conquest of Egypt in 969 and his death in 975 A.D. A more exact date is not possible, as the date on the fabric is not preserved.

The Kufic inscription is like the one on S - 198 in an epigraphic style close to that of the contemporary Abbasid caliph al-Mutā’}.
The quotation within the inscription is from the Coran, Sura 11, verse 76, being the words of the angels to Abraham and Sarah after the latter had laughed about the prophesized birth of a son, Isaac.

The fabric is apparently identical with the one listed in Répertoire chronologique d'égigraphie arabe, ed. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget and G. Wiet, vol. V, Cairo 1934, no. 1853, then belonging to M. Tano of Cairo; it is described as consisting of two fragments of linen tissue of 83 and 45 mm length, with one line of simple, but large and elegant Kufic in red and yellow silk. The first word الملک 'the King' after the introductory basmala is, however, overlooked in the reading of the Répertoire; also the misspelled جب اب 'the Lord of the Worlds' is not indicated there.
Textile X - 153 No. 4b D.O. 41.1

Tiráz made for the first Fatimid caliph of Egypt, Mu‘izz (358-65 H./969-75 A.D.) in Egypt.

Arabic inscription:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم معد أبي تميمي الإمام
المعز لدين الله.....

English translation:

"In the name of Allah the Merciful, the All-compassionate, Ma‘add Abū Tāmī(m.....)"

The textile is closely related to D.O. 33.20 made for the same caliph.

Bibliography.

This textile is apparently identical with the one listed as No.1855 in Répertoire chronologique d’écriture arabe (Le Caire,1934) vol.V,pp.113-14; it was then in the possession of Tano, Cairo.
Tirāz made for the Fatimid caliph ‘Azīz (365-36 H./975-96 A.D.) in Egypt.

Arabic inscription (below the decorated border):

A

بسم ال‌ل‌ه الرحمن الرحimb الصد لله رب العالمين نصر من الله لعبد الله وولي الله فتح مبين

B

نابي منزور الفرير بالله اسم المومنين صلوات الله عليه وعلى آبائه الطاهرين ... بعده سنة

Translation:

A

'In the name of the Unique, Allāh, the Merciful, the All-Compassionate. Praise to Allāh the Lord of the worlds. Assistance from Allāh to the slave of Allāh, Nizār... and evident victory

B

' (Abū’l-Mansūr) al-‘Azīz bi’l-lāh, the commander of the faithful, the blessings of Allāh on him and his pure ancestors.

The making of it (was ordered) in the year....'

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The two Kufic inscriptions on this textile are not well preserved, but the bulk of the inscription, and especially the name of the caliph can still easily be read. The date
was, however, never given as the selvage cuts short this part of the inscription.

This textile is representative for one of the most sumptuous periods of Egypt; it was made for the same ruler to whom for instance the well-known rock crystal vessels in the treasury of San Marc, Venice are dedicated. Only a limited number of *ṭirāz* have come down to us which show the historical inscriptions of this caliph together with decorations. Like the motifs on these datable fabrics the ones on S-208 give us valuable clues about the status of the textile art in Egypt towards the end of the tenth century A.D. The textile in the Dumbarton Oaks collection corroborates the general view of the Fatimid textile craft, as being coloristically and materially very rich, but showing on the other hand a definite degeneration of style.

The inscription on this textile is apparently identical with the one published in *Repertoire chronologique d' épigraphie arabe*, Cairo 1935, vol.VI, pp. 14-15, no.2036. (The fabric belonged then to M.Tano; it is described as a linen fragment of 56 cm length, with two rows of simple Kufic in yellow silk.) In the reading given in the *Repertoire* two words in the inscription वेद तिन' and evident victory 'are missing.
Tirāz made for the Fatimid caliph Ḥākim in Egypt in 391 (1000-01 A.D.)

Arabic text:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا [للّ إلا الله محمد]
رسول اللّه على ولد النصر من الله عبده
الله ووليد المنصور ابناً الساكم [بأمر اللّه] [سير
الإلمامين بن الفاتر بالله صلى الله عليهما
وعلى آبائهما أجمعين صلاة تزعمهم إلى يوم
الدين سنة امدي وتعتبرين فرائض الخلاف
من اللّد

English translation:

'In the name of Allah the Merciful, the All-Compassionate. There
is no [God except Allah; Muhammad] is the apostle of Allah;
ʿAlī is the friend of Allah. Assistance from Allah to the
slave and friend of Allah al-Mansūr Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥākim [bi-amr
Allāh Com] mander of the Faithful the son of al-ʿAzīz bi'llāh
may the blessings of Allāh be on both of them and all their
ancestors, blessings which will satisfy them until the day
do judgement. In the year 391. Prosperity comes from Allāh.
The largest missing part in the Kufic inscription includes the main part of the Shahāda, the Arabic proclamation of the Muslim faith which could easily be reconstructed from the preserved end. Parts of the caliph's name are destroyed, but here again the reconstruction was not difficult.

The Kufic is very delicate showing an especially fine form of 'ayn ٍ. It is not very often used amongst the tirāz of this caliph.

Al-Ḥākim bi'amr Allāh, the third Fatimid ruler of Egypt (386-411 H./996-1021 A.D.) was one of the strangest sovereigns of the East. He proclaimed his own divinity in 408 H./1017 A.D. The Druze people of the Lebanon revere him as an incarnation of God and are still expecting his return.

The inscription of the tirāz in the Dumbarton Oaks collection was published in Répertoire chronologique d'epigraphie arabe, Cairo 1935, vol.VI,pp.40-41, no.2084.

The piece belonged to M. Tano of Cairo in 1935, and was described as a fragment of linen length 73 cm, with one line of small simple Kufic in red silk.
Tirāz made for the Fatimid caliph Ḥākim (386-411 H./996-1021 A.D.) in Egypt.

Arabic text:

بسم الملك الله الرحمن الحاكم بأمر الله

امبر (المومنين) بن العزيز بَلَه الله لا إله إلا الأَلِلَّه

الله . صل الله عليه و سلم

English translation:

In the name of the King, Compassionate, al-Ḥākim bi'amr Allāh, the Commander (of the Faithful), the son of al-ʿAzīz bi'llāh. There is not God except Allāh. The good is an aid (if God wills......)

The Kufic used in this textile is very characteristic for al-Ḥākim. Two pieces in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts herald the general style with their foliated hastae and their very dynamic upthrust of ṣās, ẓās, and even mīms; the tendency to bring the letters close together and to produce an effect of crowdedness by adding space filling triangles and hooks together with the other characteristic features of the Ḥākim period already mentioned - are only represented in S-181.
and in two other fabrics, belonging to the University of Michigan and the Musée Arabe (Florence E. Day, 'Dated Tirāz in the Collection of the University of Michigan', Ars Islamica IV (1937) p.44, no. 26, Fig. 26; G. Wiet, 'Les tissus et tapisseries de l'Égypte musulmane', Revue de l'art ancien et moderne, LXVIII (1935), Fig. p. 63).

The inscription itself is rather faultily written. In two words important letters are missing (النبي، الرحيم) , while a superfluous rā is given after the shahada formula (the proclamation of the Muslim faith). The most astounding mistake in this official textile made under state supervision is, however, the missing word المونبين 'of the Faithful' in the foremost title of the caliph, 'Commander of the Faithful'.

The end formula of the inscription الباب معيين، إن شاء الله which is now not only misspelled, but also fragmentary, can be reconstructed from the tirāz fabric in the Musée Arabe, Cairo, which shows the same type of Kufic.
Parāz made for the Fatimid caliph al-Zāhir (411-27 H./1021-36 A.D.)

In Egypt.

Large Arabic inscription:

الحسن الإمام الظاهر للهاء العزاز دين الله أمير
المؤمنين بن الإمام الحاكم بأمر الله أمير المؤمنين
صلوات الله عليهما]

Small Arabic inscription:

كلّي أبي الحسن الإمام] الظاهر للهاء العزاز دين الله أمير
المؤمنين بن الإمام الحاكم [بأمر الله أمير المؤمنين صلوات
الله عليهما]

Translation of the large inscription:

'(al-) Hasan the Imam al-Zahir li-iżāz dīn Allāh , the Commander of the Faithful, the son of the Imam al-Ḥakim bi-amr Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful may the blessings of Allah be on both of them.......'

Translation of the small inscription:

'(Al)? Abī'l-Hasan the Imam al-Zahir li-iżāz dīn Allāh , the Commander of the Faithful, the son of the Imam al-Ḥakim ( bi-amr Allāh , the Commander of the Faithful, may the blessings of Allah be on both of them.......'
Though the beginning and end of this textile are not preserved, the center with the name of the fourth Fatimid caliph of Egypt, al-Zahir, dates this piece perfectly. It is art historically and epigraphically important, as it belongs to the not very large group of tiraz with decoration, which provide excellent clues to the understanding of the development of Arabic writing and decoration. There is hardly any doubt that the fabric was woven in Egypt, though the place of its origin is not mentioned on the preserved section.

The thickening of the lower ends of certain letters in both inscriptions is to be found also in an inscription of the same caliph in the collections of the University of Michigan (see Florence E. Day, "Dated Tiraz in the Collection of the University of Michigan", *Ars Islamica*, vol. IV, p. 445, Fig. 28). While in the Michigan textile the grape motif is only slightly indicated, the fabric in the Dumbarton Oaks collection shows it fully developed. The motif is common amongst the tiraz of the succeeding Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir (427-87 H./1036-1094 A.D.), as indicated by two unpublished pieces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York:

1) "...near the beginning and at the end...among the wavering tendrils are small clusters of three dots, as if the space-filling scrolls were a vine, and these were the grapes." (Day, loc. cit., p. 445)
no. 31.106.36 the tendrils are not connected with the Kufic letters, just as in the textile in the Dumbarton Oaks collection, while no. 29.179.29 shows already the next step in the development, the tendrils being connected with the letters.
B. Undated Textiles

1. Textiles made in Egypt
2. Textiles made in the Yemen (South Arabia)
3. Textiles made in the Iraq
4. Textiles made in Iran (Persia)
5. Textiles made in not yet identified textile centers
Tiraz probably made in Egypt in the ninth or tenth century.

Arabic inscription A

Arabic inscription B

Translation A

Translation B

Both Kufic inscriptions seem to have the same text, running from right to left. This is usually an indication of a rather late date; the character of the writing and of the decoration are, however, archaic (or at least archaistic).
Tiraz made in the Faiyum (Middle Egypt), Tenth century.

The Arabic inscription is not any more legible. The letters are a form of Kufic characteristic for the weavers from the Faiyum. The other form of Kufic used in that region is shown in another tiraz fabric from that region in the Dumbarton Oaks collection S - 196. For data about the whole group see the discussion of S - 196.
Textile S - 196  No. 10  D.0. 33.25

Tirāz made in the Fayūm (Middle Egypt), Tenth century

Arabic inscription (repeat pattern, running across the decoration):

Translation:
‘The kingdom belongs to Allāh’

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The writing is in Kufic; it is of a special type which is just as characteristic of the Fayūm origin of the textile as are the decoration and the technique. The writing of the word Allāh (اَللَّهُ) ‘to Allāh’ is not correct; if the first sign were turned around towards the left, the word would be properly written. Now the whole looks rather like ئلاَلَّلَه meaning god, which does not make sense. The Arabic on the small sides are only letter combination (جلا) or single letters (سلا).

The clue to the dating and attribution to the Fayūm is given by two textiles in the Musée Arabe, one of which states that the fabric was made in a ‘private tirāz’ in a not yet identified place in the district of al-Fayūm, while the second states that it was made in 375 H./985 A.D. (or 395 H./1004-5 A.D.). The latest discussion of the whole group with full bibliographical data is given in N.P. Britton, A Study of Some Early Islamic

For a published American example see M.S. Dimand, A Handbook of Mohammedan Arts, New York 1930, Fig. 125.
Tiraz of the ikat or chine type with painted Kufic inscription

Yemen, Ninth century

Arabic inscription:

امير بعضمان الامير أبو إبراهيم بن المنتصر بالله
ابن محمد

Small Arabic inscription towards the lower right corner:

Translation:

'The making of this (fabric) has been ordered by the Emir Abu Ibrahim

Small inscription towards the lower right corner:

'Happiness !'

The style of the Kufic letters, painted in gold,

is slightly later than the simple Kufic in the
tiraz from the Yemen in the ikat technique made for a son of
al-Muntasir bi'llāh (about 861-62 A.D.).

For literature on this type of textiles see G.Wist,
"Tissus et tapisseries du Musée arabe du Caire" Syria XVI (1935),
pp.236-7, Pl. XLVIII; R. Pfister, "Matériaux pour servir au
Tiraz of the ikat or chiné type with painted Kufic inscription
Yemen, Tenth century

Arabic inscription:

Translation:
'Blessing and

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The painted gold inscription on this ikat textile shows the second characteristic type of Kufic used in the Yemenite textiles: a very decorative floriated Kufic which is probably late ninth or Tenth century A.D.
Fragmentary tirāz fabric with Kufic inscription
probably made in Iraq (Baghdād) in the tenth century.

Arabic Inscription:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم نصر من الله عز...''

English translation:

'In the name of Allah the Merciful, the All-compassionate.
Assistance from Allah...'

The Kufic inscription is cut short after the first two introductory formulas. The characteristic features of the Kufic make it very likely that S - 228 is a tirāz of the first half of the tenth century A.D., probably of Iraq (Baghdād) origin. Related textiles are:
Iran, Seljuk period, 11-12th century

Inscription:

Translation:
'Glory and happiness.....'

With the help of a better (but also not completely) preserved textile with the same pattern two more words can be added the inscription, which now runs:

'Glory and happiness to the owner al-rā'is (the chief).....'

The inscription is given in an archaic Kufic.

1) In the collection of Rowland Read, Esq. London Exhibition Catalog no. 38 B (said to have been found in Rayy) and An Illustrated Souvenir of the Exhibition of Persian Art, Pl. 68 B
Silk, showing an eagle carrying a prince, Iran, Seljuk period, 11-12th century.

Smaller inscription (on both sides of the eagle's head):

Translation:

'The glory through Allah'

Larger inscription (in band below the eagle):

Translation:

'And wealth....

Both inscriptions are given in Kufic; they run in two opposite directions, the ones on the left side being in the ordinary way of writing, the others in mirror writing.

In P. Ackerman, Islamic Textiles, A Survey of Persian Art, vol. III, p. 2034, no. 23 the large inscription (there said to be in Naskhī, but actually in Kufic) is read as

'And complete prosperity.'
Iran, 12th or 13th century

Arabic inscription on the body of the quadrupeds (Kufic):

الخير له or الدولة

Translation:

' The good to him ' or 'Victory '

The Kufic writing which appears in mirror writing in every second animal, is slightly distorted and therefore ambiguous. In any case it presents a blessing and does not give any historical information.
Textile S - 201
No. 17
D.0. 33.42

Long Arabic inscription:

Translation:

Small Arabic inscription (along the edge, running in opposite direction to the main inscription):

Translation:

'Good tidings from Allah'

The reading of the main Kufic inscription is made difficult by being in mirror-writing and by the strange stylisation of the letters; they are written without any interruption between the single words, and without any undersections below the writing line.

The character of the writing makes a third century Hijrah (ninth century A.D.) date very likely; the country of origin is very uncertain; perhaps it is the Yemen or Egypt. For date and country of origin compare a tirāz made in San‘ā, Yemen, in 289 H.
Textile S - 201 (2) No. 17

(901-902 A.D.) for the caliph al-Mu'tadid: Florence D. Day, "Dated Tiráz in the Collection of the University of Michigan," *Ars Islamica*, vol. IV, (1937), pp. 424-25, Fig. 4.

The characteristic features of the main inscription are not repeated in the small inscription along the edge. Its three words are separated in the ordinary way, and they show also the usual underlength below the writing line. But this short inscription too has affinities with ninth century writing from the Yemen.
Arabic Inscriptions:

A

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الملك الله (sic) الحك
الحين الله والحمد لله لا إله إلا الله
على الباقي سارك الله عليه السلام وسلام

B

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لما لله رسول (sic) العالمين
الله العزjenis الله الحكيم الله
الشديد الله الكريم الله التام

Translation:

A: 'In the Name of Allāh, the Merciful, the All-Compassionate. The
King is Allāh, the evident truth is Allāh. The praise (two words)
is Allāh. There is no god except Allāh, the high, the everlasting
(one word), 'Allāh the wise, the learned.'

B: 'In the Name of Allāh, the Merciful, the All-Compassionate.
Praise to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds, Allāh, the forbearing,
(and) Allāh, the mighty, Allāh, the wise, Allāh, the ancient,
Allāh, the generous, Allāh, the powerful.'

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The Kufic inscriptions run in opposite directions.
Arabic inscription:

Translation:

Verily the happiness ...(only the first three letters of the next word are preserved)

On account of the small inverted arches between certain of the Kufic letters (between nūn and ʿayn, and ʿayn and mīm) and the upward swing in a reversed S curve of a number of letters otherwise ending on or below the writing line (the nūn and the mīm) the textile can not be earlier than the tenth century, but it could possibly be much later. The type of textile and the Kufic writing are unusual.
Corrections

No. 3 (Ac. no. 33.22) add ' of the ' before basmala
last ' before word are missing
as indicated

No. 5 (Ac. no. 33.27) insert ' and evident victory' after
'Assistance from Allah'
add ' clues ' before about the' in the
first line of the second page

No. 12 (Ac. No. 33.40) cross out the words ' one word' under
the heading: Arabic inscription

The text of the English translation
should run:
' Blessing and favour ' 

No. 15 (Ac. No. 30.1, a.b)
Second page under heading HISTORY
The place of excavation should probably
read Bibi Shahr Banu
The error in weaving first noticed by Mrs. E.B. Sachs is not only evident in the figural drawing (the repetition of the left side of the human figure); it occurs also in the large Kufic writing under the eagle, where one letter is superfluous.
An infra-red photograph of the parts of the textile which are illegible under ordinary light condition brought out the black outlines for the gold inscription. Though there are still some doubtful letters left the inscription probably reads:

\[
\text{امير بعمله الامير ابن} \quad \text{برهم بن المنتصر بالله}
\]

\[
\text{البر بن محمد}
\]

English translation:
'The making of this (fabric) has been ordered by the Emir Ab(ū)(?) Ibrahīm ibn al-Muntasir bi'llāh al-Djamr ibn Muhammad.'

This reading recalls at once that of another ikat fabric with an inscription painted in gold, belonging to M. Pfister (see previous pages). The French epigraphists J. Sauvaget and G. Wiet read this other textile as '....billah fils d'al-Muntasir billah' and thought that it probably referred to a son of the Abbasid caliph al-Muntasir who reigned 247-48 H./861-62 A.D. But both scholars pointed also out that the caliph's name (if it is really the caliph) is not followed by his usual
title ' Amir al-Mujminin ' (Commander of the Faithful). The identification with a son of the Abbasid caliph seems therefore still doubtful.

The names al-Muntasir and al-Djamr which are both uncommon, occur among the Hasanid ‘Alids, who were Imams of the Yemen (see E. de Zam-baur, Manuel de Généalogie et de Chronologie pour l'Histoire de l'Islam, Hanovre 1927, plate B), yet also in this case no person with the name mention on No. 33.37 could be found.

There is also a technical relationship between the Dumbarton Oaks textile and the one belonging to M. R. Prister, as the inscription on the fabric in Paris was only visible on an infra-red photograph which brought out the black outlines of the inscription.

The whole group of Yemenite cotton fabrics has been recently discussed by C.J. Lamm in his "Cotton in Mediaeval Textiles of the Near East", Paris 1937, pp. 144-56.
A textile with the same inscription painted (or stencilled) in black is preserved in the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C. (No. 73.34); here only the first two words of the basmala are missing:

(بسم الله) الرحمن الرحيم نصر من الله وعز
لله وبركة من الله وعز له ونصر من الله
وعز له ولهد

English translation:
(In the name of Allāh) the Merciful, the All-Compassionate. Assistance from Allāh and Glory to Him! Blessing from Allāh and Glory to Him! Assistance from Allāh and Glory to Him! ...... (one word).

The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore owns a third fabric with the identical inscription executed in the same style and also fragmentarily preserved (No. 83.666)