

Scissor Bags & Sheep Scissors

in the Nomadic Tradition



Peter Umney-Gray



Shahsavani scissor bag – Moghan-Savalan 1850-99

Mountains, Türkiye, and the Uygurs of Xinjiang help to shed light on this tradition, and also bring the reader into closer contact with groups who have been shearing sheep with these scissors and producing containers for them for an indeterminable length of time.

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Scissor bags, and the end-pivot sheep scissors they contained, have not until now been given the attention they deserve. The utilitarian purpose and ephemeral nature of these mainly woven objects by nomadic pastoralists have meant that not many of them have survived. This has made the task of unearthing so many examples at this late stage all the more challenging.

In the first book devoted to this subject 90 scissor bags, most woven, but also made of felt and cotton, as well as unusual wooden containers and numerous examples of end-pivot sheep scissors, some of which are attractively decorated, are illustrated.

The results of field research among the Shahsavani of Northwest Iran, the Sarıkeçili Türkmen of the Toros



Inscribed end-pivot sheep scissors, Iran