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## The Motif of Tree of Life in the Woodcarvings of Bhera and Chiniot

A Literary study of the Symbolism inherent in its Form

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### Abstract:

The craft tradition of a culture expresses the values, taste, expertise, and symbolism of a region. These aspects undergo significant and abrupt changes in instances of cultural invasions; the expertise modifies and the symbolism acquires new meanings and forms. The paper discusses the historical journey of the motif of Tree of Life observable in the woodcarvings of Bhera and Chiniot; the two craft centers of Pakistan. The study establishes that the motif evolved by absorbing influences from various cultures diachronically and synchronically and acquired new forms, uses and meanings. It elaborates upon how the motif survived as a decorative element in the local architectural traditions and how an enrichment of its meaning came from different cultures. Additionally, the study suggests that the culmination of this motif in the woodcarvings of Bhera and Chiniot is distinguishable due to different diachronic factors.

### Introduction

A region exposed to varied cultural influences over a long stretch of time displays an extraordinarily complex social dynamic. The culture and practices of such a region display a process of change, which has gradual and abrupt transitions. The incoming cultures influence the local practices in a way that various layers of

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