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THE NEWLY DISCOVERED EPITAPHIOS
DESIGNED BY CHRISTOPHER ZEFAROVIC

By LÛBA GURDUS

EMBROIDERY, like other decorative arts, depends largely on an atmosphere of wealthy patronage if it is to thrive. Such conditions prevailed in the Viennese capital of the Habsburgs at the time of Empress Maria Theresa who succeeded her father, Emperor Charles IV, in 1740. During her reign the reputation of Vienna as an Eastern European center of the arts greatly increased. Favored above all styles was the seventeenth-century baroque which seems best to embody the most significant period in the history of the city. The Austrian Empire, although repressive of speech and worship, was far from absolute. For the provincial states, including Serbia, an efficient centralized bureaucracy was created. The Austrian nobles were attracted to this type of service but their power as a class had weakened while the bourgeoisie emerged as a new force which asserted its growing importance and prosperity by generally encouraging the rapidly expanding decorative arts.

In such a cultivated and affluent society in the early 1740's Christopher Zefarovic appeared, a Serbian artist born at the turn of the century in Dojran, Macedonia. Zefarovic (Zefar, Zefarov: late seventeenth century—1753) was brought up during a period of political instability and social unrest. His native Serbia, deprived of national independence, was divided between Austria and Turkey. The South, dominated by the Turks, remained in deplorable condition while the North enjoyed relative freedom under the sovereignty of the Habsburgs. The treaty of Pozarevac (1718) converted Belgrade and Northern Serbia (Sumadija) into an Austrian province and thus turned the hopes of the Serbian people toward Vienna. Among the provinces which profited from the contact with the West was Pannonia, where several flourishing centers such as Novi Sad, Kikinda and Karlovci soon developed.

In the 1730's, Zefarovic, an already established artist, went to work under the auspices of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Karlovci. Ambitious and dynamic, he was largely influential in its efforts to keep the national spirit alive. His artistic activity was highly diversified. He painted icons and frescoes, produced engravings, designed patterns for ecclesiastical embroideries and even published books.¹ Chronologically,



PLATE I

Last Supper. Fresco by Christopher Zefarovic, 1737. Church of Bodan, Backa.

his first important work was a cycle of frescoes for the Church of Bodan, in Backa (1737). Another series of frescoes for the Church of Siklus (1739) has since disappeared. The surviving Bodan frescoes illustrate his early style. The ambitious compositions from the life of Christ (Plate I), disclose his narrative powers and his talent for rendering his figures in convincing action against landscape or architectural backgrounds. On the other hand they reveal his inability to free himself from the medieval tradition still persisting in Serbian art. The frescoes are conceived in monumental fashion but their pictorial appeal is obscured by their ambiguous aerial perspective and distorted anatomy. Obviously disturbed by unresolved stylistic and technical problems and a craving for new pictorial means, Zefarovic took a decisive step and moved in the early 1740's to the capital of the Austrian Empire.

In Vienna the artist's innate talent received a powerful stimulus from the dominant trends in art. He mastered the graphic media in vogue in the Austrian capital and gained a new political and religious propaganda weapon for the Serbian church. Together with Thomas Mesmer, an Austrian graphic artist, he published in Vienna the *Stematographie* (1741), an illustrated compendium of Yugoslavian coats of arms. The contemporary political and cultural importance of this book was enormous.

In his graphic works, Zefarovic developed a new style marked by sinuous lineation and complexity. He succeeded in translating the spiritual attitudes of the Austrian Baroque into an aesthetic expression by utilizing its spontaneity and exuberance for purely formal ends. These characteristics appear in his powerful prints of the 1740's, illustrating the lives of the Serbian saints (Plate II).² They are partly carried over to his embroideries also. Attracted by the decorative possibilities of the craft, the artist produced a considerable number of embroidery designs. They constitute a remarkable addition to his impressive *oeuvre* and illustrate his ties with the Byzantine tradition persisting in Serbian art of the period. Serbia, more exposed to Western influence than the rest of the Byzantine Empire, was attached to the Orthodox tradition in church art. The latter, transmitted through Salonica and Ochrid, was particularly strong in Macedonia. Zefarovic grew up in the vicinity of two famous Macedonian churches, St. Clement in Ochrid and St. Nicolas in Prilep, each of which had a notable cycle of Serbo-Byzantine frescoes. There seems to be no doubt that our artist was familiar with these national treasures and demonstrated his indebtedness to them in his own frescoes.



PLATE II
SS. Teodor Tiron and Stratilat. Print by Christopher Zefarovic, 1741.

He must have also been aware of the existence of the so-called St. Clement Epitaphios (ca. 1295, present whereabouts unknown) in the St. Clement Church in Ochrid, which according to tradition was executed in Constantinople at the time of Emperor Andronicus II, Palaeologus (1282-1328), to whom it was dedicated (see Plate 93 in Johnstone). It is an established fact that the presence of this epitaphios has influenced the Serbian embroideries of later centuries, among them the famous epitaphios embroidered for Milutin Ures (ca. 1300, Museum of the Orthodox Church, Belgrade) and that produced for Euphemia and Eupraxia (late fourteenth century, Monastery of Putna) (Plates XIII and XIV).

The victories of the Turks at Maritsa and Kossovo at the end of the fourteenth century caused the suspension of all Serbian artistic activity. Whatever survived was driven by necessity to the local monasteries where embroidery, practiced by monks, was resumed after a short interval. Among the epitaphioi created during the following centuries, many are anonymous; only very few are embroidered with the names of the donors or embroiderers. One such outstanding example is the epitaphios of the Annunciation with the Great Feasts (Museum of Art, Belgrade), embroidered with the name of a certain Nun Agni, so far unidentified. The problem of dating these examples is also complicated; as most of them, regardless of origin, display the very distinctive range of stylistic and technical features resulting from their dependence on the Serbo-Byzantine embroidery formula. All demonstrate that the pictorial motifs favored by the Serb embroiderers were highly conventionalized. Changes in conception and execution were slow, and stylistic adaptations rather superficial. In the eighteenth century, Serbian embroidery still displays a close connection with its Byzantine inheritance; baroque trends hardly affected it at all. Even Zefarovic found it difficult to reconcile his baroque tendencies with the particular exigencies of the craft. In his epitaphioi, which are among the finest of his embroideries, the artist shows a rather limited success in his effort to modify the generally accepted Serbo-Byzantine tradition.

An epitaphios belongs to the liturgical vestments of the Orthodox Church used on Good Friday. Known in Greek as *Bereich Epitaphios thrinos* (Lamentation shroud) and in Slavonic as *Bereich Plashtanica* (Body shroud), the epitaphios is carried on Good Friday before the Iconostasis to the church nave. It remains there until Easter as a symbol of the Holy Sepulchre. During the Easter night prayers it is carried



PLATE III

Epitaphios thought to have been designed by Christopher Zefarovic, ca. 1753. French & Company, Inc., New York.



PLATE IV
Detail of Pl. III.

back to the sacristy where it rests until Christ's Ascension Day. During this period it is used in liturgical prayers. The mass or aria chanted during the Easter night services describes how Joseph of Arimathea removed Christ's body from the cross, covered it with clean linen and ointment and placed it in the grave. The epitaphios developed from the sacristy shroud, used in the fourteenth century to cover the Evangelium; later it grew into a baldachin carried by four clergymen. It was adopted in Russia in the fifteenth century, and a century later it became popular in the Balkans. Known as the *epitaphios thrinos*, it is still used by the Orthodox Church in the Good Friday ceremonies.

The epitaphios, considered one of the most holy vestments of the Orthodox Church, became an important vehicle for church embroidery. Usually large in size, it encouraged an extensive iconography based on the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus. The earliest interpretation of the gospel by George of Nicodemia can be traced in the paintings of Duccio and Giotto in the West and in the early epitaphioi of Byzantine and Serbo-Byzantine origin. The later recension by St. Bonaventura was first confined to the regions of Moldavia and Russia but by the sixteenth century replaced the original version in all epitaphioi.³ At first the subject matter of the early epitaphioi was inspired by the Great Aer, which portrayed the body of Christ guarded by angels and laid for embalming on the Red Stone of Ephesus.⁴ In the epitaphioi the stone was replaced by a bier and the nimbed Christ was covered by a loin cloth provided by Joseph. The more detailed description of the event resulted in the gradual introduction of numerous attendants at Christ's crucifixion; the angels were soon accompanied by Evangelists, saints and martyrs. In the sixteenth century the background of the scene was enriched by the gradual addition of celestial elements, as well as Instruments of the Passion and spice vessels. A century later the background included architectural fragments symbolizing the site of Christ's martyrdom. In the eighteenth century, the scene became mostly overloaded with elements derived from the iconographies of Byzantium, the Slavs, the Christians of the Orient and the Latins.⁵

Among the ecclesiastical embroideries by Zefarovic are epitaphioi, epitrachilioni, podei and sacci. Dobrila Stojanovic and Pauline Johnstone, mentioning these works, disagree on their actual count.⁶ Fortunately, they concur on the number of his epitaphioi—only three. Therefore the emergence of a fourth so-far unrecorded epitaphios (Plates III, IV) is sufficiently noteworthy to merit publication. The purpose of this article is to



PLATE V
Epitaphios designed by Christopher Zefarovic, ca. 1753. Pravoslav Cerkev, Budapest.

prove that this embroidery is a fully authentic Zefarovic and closely related to the artist's accepted examples.⁷

The earliest extant document mentioning Zefarovic as master embroiderer is a bill for forty gulden paid to him by Bishop Hopovski for a signed epitaphios now in the Pravoslav Cerkiev in Budapest (Plate V).⁸ The second known epitaphios dated and signed by Zefarovic remains in the Monastery of Olympiotice (Plate VI). The third signed and dated epitaphios, in the Museum of Art in Bucharest (Plate VII), is embroidered with the name of the donor, Constantine Brancoveanu. The latter was among the wealthy patrons who in the 1740's turned to Zefarovic with their commissions. In fact, for Constantine Brancoveanu, the artist designed a katapetasma (curtain), a podea (holy cloth) and an epitaphios (holy shroud), mentioned above. All three, now in the Museum of Art, Bucharest, are signed and dated by the artist 1752. The podea represents the Coronation of the Virgin and the katapetasma, the Vision of Ezekiel (Plates VIII, IX). Both are conceived in a baroque illusionistic style. In the curtain, the interaction of light with extraordinarily voluminous forms is bold and seemingly based on an Italian prototype. In addition, the artist has surrounded his composition with a wide floral border, based on a Turkish motif, which detracts from the central scene. The complex pattern recalls the artist's exuberant baroque style as practiced in the engravings. A considerably more tempered mode of expression makes itself apparent in his Bucharest epitaphios. The distinct change of spirit may be connected with the established Serbo-Byzantine tradition of this holy shroud; it may, however, also be due to the artist's association with his patron, Brancoveanu. It is conceivable that through him, Zefarovic had the rare opportunity of studying the famous epitaphios of the past century, notably those of the great Constantinopolitan embroideress, Argyris Despoineta, who was employed by the Wallachian Brancoveanu family at the turn of the century. The embroideress, active in Constantinople for over four decades (ca. 1682-1723), left a number of signed works as well as unsigned pieces from her workshop.⁹ Impressed by Western techniques, she revitalized her art by the introduction of colored silks, kept in light hues and moderate contrasts to sustain the effect of gradually decreasing metal thread. In her early epitaphios (1682, Benaki Museum, Athens, Plate X), she unites the composition with a central ciborium emphasizing its symbolic importance. The entire scene is outlined against a plain background, relatively free from extraneous detail. The epitaphios, based on a Byzantine prototype, displays



PLATE VI
Epitaphios designed by Christopher Zefarovic, 1752. Monastery of Olympioice.

rare elegance and restraint (cf. epitaphios, ca. 1400?, Schloss Autenried, Günzburg/Donau).¹⁰

Despoineta left many pupils and followers. Among them, Theodosia Kasymbouri distinguished herself by her primitive but mostly individualized approach. In her epitaphios (1738, Benaki Museum, Athens, Plate XI), designed for the Monastery of Soumelia at Trebizond, she reverts to a crudely archaic style and iconography. She shows the Virgin leaning over the body of her Son with Mary Magdalene at her side. Flanking the bier are two guardian angels carrying liturgical vessels and sheltering with their huge wings the closely knit group of saints; the ciborium is replaced by a central cross.

Compared with the epitaphioi by Despoineta and Kasymbouri, the Bucharest epitaphios by Zefarovic (Plate VII), assumes special significance. Our artist seems to draw extensively from both sources; however, for reasons traditional or aesthetic, he favors the iconography of the Kasymbouri example. He, too, shows the Virgin leaning in archaic manner over the body of her Son, though her attitude is largely modified and humanized. He also accords the central cross its place of prominence and flanks it on both sides by seraphs. Finally he borrows from Kasymbouri the scattered flowers and the vignettes with the Evangelists. In turn, he does not fail to include the evenly distributed ciborium lamps used by Despoineta and tries to enhance his own composition with the harmony and elegance which mark the Constantinopolitan example.

There seems to be no doubt that the above epitaphioi have turned the attention of our master to the technical innovations of the West. In his Bucharest epitaphios, Zefarovic drew freely from the resources of both traditions. A product of this eclectic style, it nevertheless attained a measurable degree of decorative appeal. The same may be said about the Olympiotice epitaphios (Plate VI), closely related to the above. Both epitaphioi are signed by Zefarovic and dated 1752; the third example, now in Budapest (Plate V), is not dated, and according to its inscription, it was executed in Vienna, in 1770, where the epitaphios now under consideration was embroidered a decade later. There is reason to believe that all embroidery patterns from the artist's last years have been carried out in Vienna; however, only those executed after 1753 bear a reference to their place of origin.

In his three generally accepted epitaphioi, Zefarovic mixes freely elements from both eastern and western iconography. His central motif



PLATE VII

Epitaphios designed by Christopher Zefarovic, 1752. Museum of Art, Bucharest.

is based on Italian replicas of the Byzantine type (cf. entombments by Duccio, Giotto, Taddeo di Bartolo). Christ is seen stretched on a bier covered with a white loin cloth. The nine saints and the archangel surrounding him are represented in typical Byzantine three-quarters view. Mary Magdalene with raised arms appears in the center of the group and is flanked on the right by SS. Joseph, John, Michael and Mary and on the left by SS. Mary Cleophas and Nicodemus; between them is the archangel Gabriel. Mary, the Mother of Christ, accompanied by St. Martha, leans against her Son in archaic Serbo-Byzantine manner¹¹, while the three Marys appear in the center of the composition in a purely Latin interpretation of the scene.¹² Such archaic features as the Virgin's attitude and St. Joseph's appearance at the foot of the bier may have been derived by Zefarovic from the cycles of Serbo-Byzantine frescoes in Ochrid and Prilep, which he undoubtedly studied in preparation for his own frescoes at Siklus and Bodan.¹³ On the other hand, an artist active in Vienna must have also been exposed to marked western influences. He could have been familiar with Titian's dramatic *Entombment* (Kunst-historisches Museum, Vienna), which had remained in the Austrian capital since 1723.¹⁴ His keen interest in western iconography is clearly expressed in his ecclesiastical compositions representing the *Coronation of the Virgin*, the *Vision of Ezekiel*, the *Antiminsion* (Monastery of Dragovic) (Plate XII).¹⁵ In the latter he tried to reconcile the celestial in the liturgy with its terrestrial counterpart by means of baroque illusionism. Traces of this conception reappear in his ambitious epitaphios from Olympiotice (Plate VI). It illustrates the celestial realm compressed into a semicircle holding the Trinity, the scene of Entombment, almost forced into a geometrically shaped entity, and the four Evangelists relegated to the corners of the well organized pattern. The harmony and balance achieved approach closely Despoineta's decorative conceptions and her eastern strain of mysticism; both imply their common attachment to and fascination with the Byzantine embroidery tradition (cf. the St. Clement Epitaphios).

Only in his third epitaphios, now in Budapest (Plate V), Zefarovic displays a clearly personal style and an increased feeling for naturalistic representation. Not dated, this epitaphios represents the complex iconography, closely knit composition and acanthus border seen in the two 1752 examples (Plates VI, VII). At the same time it demonstrates that the artist has partly sacrificed his purely decorative aims for the sake of a more pictorial approach. The upper realm personified by the Holy



PLATE VIII

The Vision of Ezekiel. Curtain designed by Christopher Zefarovic, 1752. Museum of Art, Bucharest.



PLATE IX
Detail of Pl. VIII.

Trinity is here outlined against a naturalistic sky, separated from earth by the contours of mountains and architecture.¹⁶ The pattern exhibits a freer, more flamboyant style, in keeping with the baroque stylistic features exhibited by our master in his late works.

If we assume that Zefarovic executed the pattern of the epitaphios now under consideration (Plate III), and that he intended it for use in making embroidery, it is certainly akin to the Budapest example. For both these epitaphioi, we can find no stylistic reason to doubt a possible date of about 1753. The organization of the composition is closest to the Budapest epitaphios and, not unlike the latter, betrays marked affinities with the two earlier examples. Our design, from the characteristically knit group of saints surrounding the bier to the smallest iconographical



PLATE X
Epitaphios worked by Despoineta, 1682. Benaki Museum, Athens.

detail—the sun, moon (missing) and bird-like stars—typifies the artist's epitaphioi style and his artistic vocabulary. As usual, the group follows the movement around the bier terminated in the two kneeling angels flanking the symbolic vessels. Mary Magdalene, raising her arms in sorrow, takes her usual place in the center of the group, adding to the character of the scene a lively sense of drama. The Virgin Mary, accompanied by St. Martha, leans against her Son in the very same archaic manner seen in all epitaphioi by Zefarovic (Plate IV). Equally, the saints appear in unmistakable three-quarter view and in the specific order observed in all other examples. Their arbitrary gestures and facial expressions clearly recall the artist's style though not the fervor and expansiveness evident in the earlier examples. The cross with its appurtenances remains in the center of the scene, which is divided as before in two realms. Although Byzantine tradition is lessened, it still makes itself apparent in the iconographical detail, notably in the vignettes with the Evangelists now considerably reduced in size and prominence. Other innovations include the shape of the bier, seen at an angle, and the smaller haloes which now admit air within the group though partly disrupting its uniformity. The artist makes a marked effort toward natural definition of space and rhythmical order. He tries to introduce a feeling of plasticity and a consistent relationship of figures to background. Unfortunately the faulty perspective obstructs the new visual concept and the attempt to lead the eye into depth.

Our epitaphios is not signed by the artist. It carries, however, in the inner border a dedicatory inscription in Greek which discloses its place of origin and date. It also mentions two names—in a context less explicit than one could wish. The inscription reads as follows:

“In everlasting memory, under the supervision of George and Constantine Theodorou, Vienna, January 20, 1780(?)”¹⁷

The text does not satisfactorily clarify the significance of the two names which may be those of the embroiderers under whose “supervision” the epitaphios has been carried out, or may also be the names of the donors who acted in the same capacity. Another Greek inscription appears on Christ's cruciferous nimbus marked on the three branches of the cross with the divine name revealed to Moses: O.W.V. (the Being [Exodus: iii-14]). The Tablet attached to the central cross is inscribed in Latin: INBI(1).¹⁸ The westernized iconography includes in the background Golgotha with its three crosses and Gethsemane on the opposite side.



PLATE XI

Epitaphios worked by Theodosia Kasymbouri, 1738. Benaki Museum, Athens.

Close analysis reveals that the epitaphios has been westernized in a more conclusive manner than all previous epitaphioi by Zefarovic. In the Bucharest epitaphios, dated 1752, the artist still “ignoring (western) tradition, . . . has put Nicodemus at the head of the bier to balance Joseph of Arimathea at the foot.”¹⁹ In our example this order is reversed and Joseph is at long last reinstated in his rightful position of prominence at the Saviour’s head. This has been learned from the names of the saints in their haloes. Outlined by a single metal thread, in Old Slavonic (Cyrillic) they are as follows: SS. Josif (Joseph of Arimathea), M. Kl. opa (Mary Cleophas), Maria Magdalena (Mary Magdalene), Maria (Mary), Mikhail (Michael), Ioanich (John) and Nikodim (Nicodemus).

The westernized iconography is complemented by the technique undoubtedly introduced by Viennese craftsmen. The epitaphios, effectively



PLATE XII

Antimincion designed by Christopher Zefarovic. Monastery of Dragovic.

stitched in silk and metal thread, is worked in a variety of textures largely departing from the Byzantine patterns. The former exclusive use of metal thread is replaced by an array of colored silks. A silver or silver-gilt cord appears primarily in the haloes, wings and letters, worked in the traditional couched techniques. The vestments and faces of the saints are worked in the Italian manner of alternating short and long stitches. Their features, drawn in darker lines, do not display the Byzantine insistence on spiritual emphasis. Instead, they demonstrate a varied treatment characteristic for the newly awakened psychological awareness of individuality freely reacting to the tragic event. The background, worked in back and double running stitches, aims at perspective, and the crudely conceived architecture is carried out with an accent on three-dimensionality. A subtle color scheme, composed of soft creams, greens and browns adds to a general feeling of harmony and balance. The painterly effect



PLATE XIII

The epitaphios of Milutin Ures, ca. 1300. Museum of Serbian Orthodox Church, Belgrade.



PLATE XIV

The epitaphs of Euphemia and Eupraxia, late 14th century. Monastery of Putna.

is heightened by a discreet note of splendor, obtained by the silver-gilt metal thread. The latter is extensively used in the border design, which has been expanded by a prominent lotus palmette added to the usual acanthus foliage left in as an intertwining device. In conclusion, we have a pattern which reveals marked affinities to all three epitaphioi by Zefarovic but which at the same time preserves its own characteristics. One of them is a moderation possibly introduced by the embroiderer, sensitive to changing style, at the end of the century.

The close examination of the extant epitaphioi by Zefarovic makes one aware of the fact that those carried out during his lifetime differ considerably from those embroidered from his designs after his death, in 1753.²⁰ It seems that with time the meaningful baroque exaggerations introduced by him in his patterns had lost their original appeal and were ignored or arbitrarily interpreted by the embroiderers handling them later. This is already apparent in the Budapest epitaphios carried out in 1770, and even more so in the above-discussed example executed in 1780. In spite of these changes, it cannot be doubted that our epitaphios has been based on a genuine design left by Zefarovic. Its close conceptual and stylistic affinities with the accepted epitaphioi cannot be dismissed as purely accidental and merely a trend or fashion of the period.²¹ I firmly believe that the epitaphios in question has been based on a pattern left by Zefarovic and should be included in the master's *oeuvre*. It is difficult to assess how far the artist's influence reached. His pupils and followers were confronted with a difficult task in trying to follow his eclectic style. There is no clear evidence of a specific pupil in charge of the artist's unfinished works or of one supervising the execution of his sketches and designs for embroideries. It seems, nevertheless, that the Zefarovic tradition has been consistently upheld by a Viennese workshop which has carried out the above-described Budapest epitaphios in 1770 and the one now under consideration in 1780. The changes introduced in these two patterns seem to be due to the fact that they have been arbitrarily interpreted by the craftsmen working without authoritative guidance.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Christopher Zefarovic, *Opisanje sviatogo Bozjagrada Jerusalima* (Description of God's town: Jerusalem), 1748.
2. His most vigorous prints are: *St. Laza with the Serbian Saints* (1741), *The Source of Life* (1744), *Our Lady of Eleusa* (1749) and *St. Stephen Stiljanovic* (1753).
3. Gabriel Millet, *Recherches sur l'Iconographie de l'Evangile aux XIV, XV et XVI siècles*, Paris, 1916, p. 489, ff.
4. *Byzantinische und Russische Stickereien*, Slavisches Institut, München, 1961, p. 6.
5. Gabriel Millet, *La Dalmatique du Vatican*, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes (Sciences Religieuses), vol. 60, p. IV.
6. Dobrila Stojanovic, "Embroideries of Hristofor Zefarovic," *Hristofor Zefarovic*, Galeria Matice, Novi Sad, 1961, p. 73. The author quotes the following embroideries by Zefarovic: 4 epitrachilioni (stoles), 2 podei (cloths), 2 sacci (tunics) and 3 epitaphioi (shrouds).
Pauline Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery*, Alec Tiranti, London, 1967. The author quotes the following embroideries by Zefarovic: 7 epitrachilioni, 2 podei, 2 katapetasma (curtains), 1 sacco and 3 epitaphioi.
7. Director Manolis Chatzidakis of the Benaki Museum in Athens has drawn my attention to Christopher Zefarovic as the probable designer of the epitaphios now under consideration. Without his generous inspiration and assistance this article could not have been written.
8. Stojanovic, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
9. E. Chatzidakis, *Ecclesiastical Embroidery*, Benaki Museum, Athens, 1953, pl. 19 (the latest epitaphios by Despoineta: 1723, Benaki Museum).
10. Slavisches Institut, *op. cit.*, pl. opp. p. 28.
11. Cf. the Cozia Epitaphios, 1396, Museum of Art, Bucharest.
12. *Recherches sur l'Iconographie*, *op. cit.*, p. 500.
13. Gabriel Millet, *La Peinture du Moyen Age en Yugoslavie* (Serbie, Macédoine et Monténégro), Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1962, Fascicule, III, pl. 9 (no. 3), pl. 26 (no. 1): North walls of naves.
14. *Titian*, Phaidon Press, Vienna, n.d., p. 547.
15. D. Medakovic, "Srbska umetnost u severnoi Dalmacii," *Muzei* 5, Belgrade, 1950, p. 186 (*Jerusalem Antimission* for Patriarch Malenti, 1733).
16. Zefarovic had visited Jerusalem in 1748 and compiled the above-mentioned survey (See Footnote 1.).
17. The damaged date has been deciphered by Director Manolis Chatzidakis of the Benaki Museum, Athens.
18. The misspelling is undoubtedly due to the illiteracy of the embroiderers and appears consistently on all epitaphioi by Zefarovic.
19. Johnstone, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
20. This excludes extant replicas of earlier examples.
21. Dobrila Stojanovic, Curator of Muzej Primenjene Umetnosci Belgrade, states (letter of April, 1968): "the (here discussed) epitaphios has characteristics of works done at the period in Vienna but cannot be connected with Zefarovic who died in Moscow in 1753."

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

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Pls. 5, 6: Courtesy Dobrila Stojanovic, Curator Muzej Primenjene Umetnosci, Belgrade.

Pls. 13, 14: Courtesy Pauline Johnstone, author, and Alex Tiranti, publisher. Reproduced from Pauline Johnstone's *Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery*, Alex Tiranti, London, 1967, pls. 94, 97.

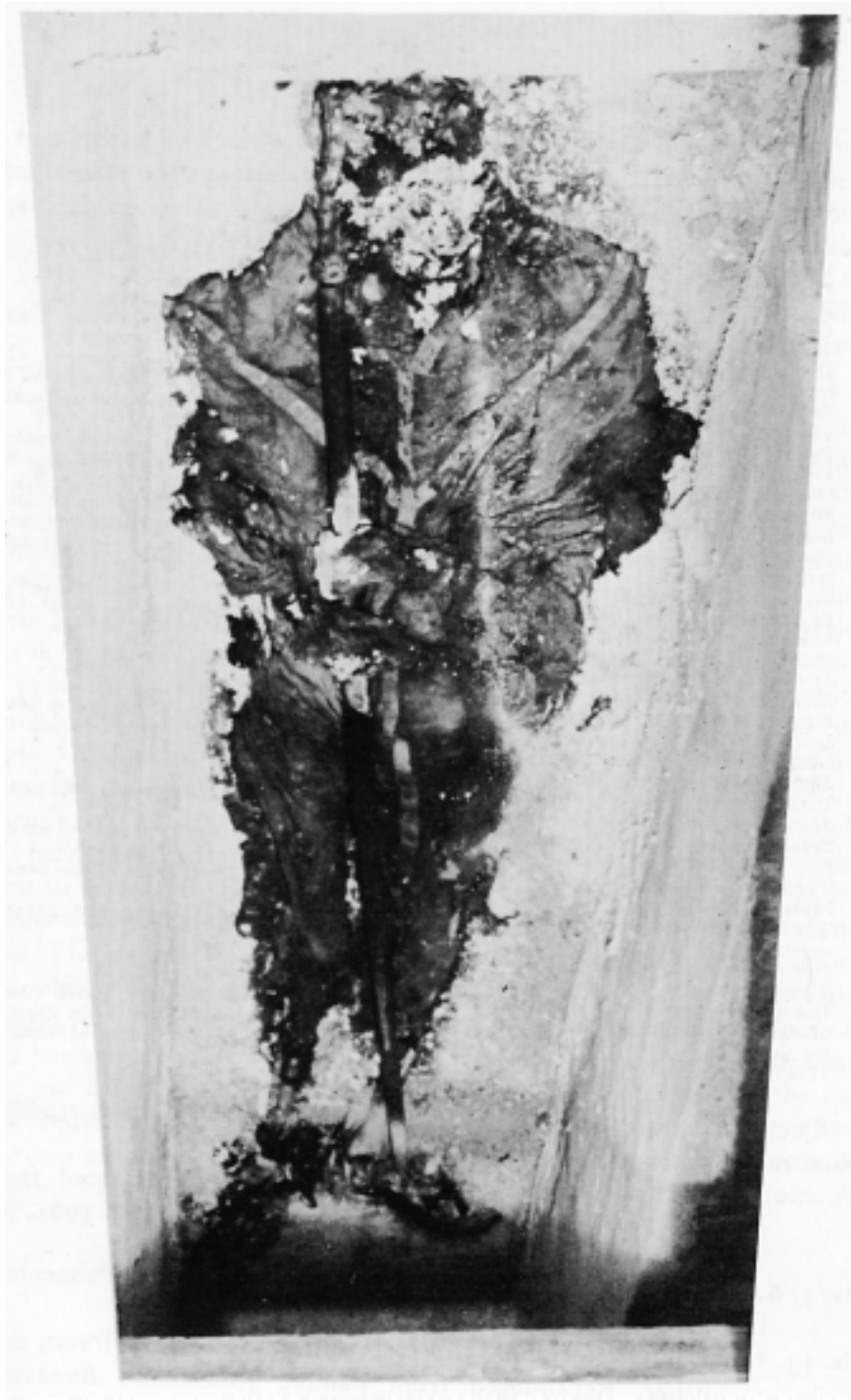


PLATE I
The Bishop in his coffin at St. Denis.

FRAGMENTS FROM THE TOMB OF AN UNKNOWN BISHOP
IN SAINT DENIS, PARIS

By MARGARET T. J. ROWE

THE subject of this paper is a history and description of some thirteenth-century textiles now mounted in plastic, and housed at the Yale University Art Gallery. The circumstances of their finding and preservation are as follows: Professor Sumner McKnight Crosby of the Yale University History of Art Faculty, wrote his Doctoral thesis on the Abbey Church of Saint Denis, just outside Paris. During the course of his studies he became so impressed by the importance of this church in the development of mediaeval architecture in France, that he applied for permission to make some excavations in the church in order to determine the sequence and extent of each successive building erected on the site. He hoped by this excavation to reconcile the mass of conflicting evidence that had turned up during his studies. The permissions were given, and work began during the summer of 1938 to be continued in 1946, 1947, and 1948. Much useful information was found, together with some unexpected items, such as a number of unmarked burials under the floor of the thirteenth century church. There were no written records to account for these graves, but, for the most part, there was nothing left to identify. However, one rather crude grave was found in the south transept within the thirteenth century building. To make room for this, a hole had been dug in the fill, and, presumably with wooden forms, a rough plaster and stone coffin had been built. Within this was the body of a man, dressed in ecclesiastical garments, with a painted and gilded wooden crozier in his hands. The head was completely decomposed. There was no sign of any mitre or of any metal objects, rings, pectoral cross, paten, cup, such as frequently occur in such graves. However, the wooden crozier would indicate that the prelate was a Bishop. The burial was covered with a plain uninscribed stone. (Plate I)

This find created quite a problem for an architectural historian. It was decided to apply to the Paris Anthropological and Ethnological Museum (the Musée de l'Homme) for help. Some technicians were sent to Saint Denis who carefully removed the body from the grave and placed it on a slab in one of the small alcoves off the crypt of the church. With the characteristic attitude of a bureaucratic administration, this Museum took no further interest in the burial, leaving it to some other Depart-



PLATE II

Fragments from the Bishop's vestments as received by Mr. Crosby in 1948.

ment to carry on. However, every one was indifferent, and the body remained uninvestigated.

After the excavations in 1947 Mr. Crosby gave a lecture at Yale on his work, and mentioned the find. The writer, who was at that time Curator of Textiles at the Yale University Art Gallery, was immediately interested and demanded samples of the fabrics for analysis. After the season of excavations in 1948, Mr. Crosby brought home a few fragments of these textiles. They were in very poor condition. All but one of them was of plain cloth weave. When they were first studied, one looked like twill, although there is now no evidence of this. There were several layers,

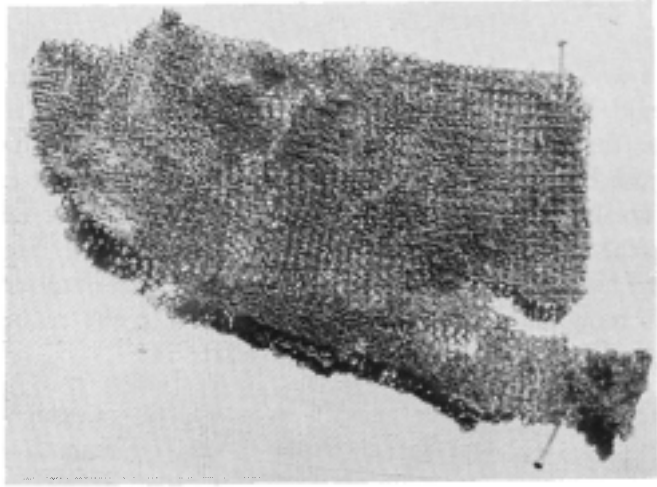


PLATE III

Fragment of Bishop's knitted silk glove (actual size 6 x 3 cm.).



Detail of Bishop, showing tablet-woven bands in place.

one of which was red, and there were several fragments of tablet-woven trimming braid. There being no facilities for cleaning or studying these objects at Yale, they were taken to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Unfortunately the Boston Museum staff could not make time to do anything about them until in 1951 they were examined by the very competent head of the chemical research department, Mr. W. J. Young. He found the fibers used to have been silk, the red piece dyed with madder, with iron and alum as mordants. The metal threads used in the trimming bands were of silver gilt, wound on a silk core. (Plate II)

Meantime, with curiosity greatly aroused, the writer went to St. Denis in January 1949 and had a chance to see the Bishop. There were no lights in the area of the crypt where the body lay, so that all observations had to be made by flash light. I was accompanied on this visit by François Mathey, Inspecteur des Monuments Historiques. I noted at once, with intense interest, the fact that the Bishop was wearing knitted silk gloves. This was, as far as I knew then, the earliest appearance of knitting in central Europe. M. Mathey suggested that I might like a sample of this. He removed a piece from the palm of one hand and we put it in a small box which I took back to Yale. (Plate III) I still felt that it was the business of the Ministry of Fine Arts to make a proper study of this burial, and that I must in no way interfere. However, had conditions of light been better, much more could have been observed. No notes were made about details of the knitting, viz. how the fingers were set in, or how they were finished off, and no investigation of just how many layers of garments were present. There were quite solid leather shoes with tops coming above the ankles. The crozier was painted in red and blue with touches of gold. There were several layers of vestments, the top one being the chasuble of the form used in the thirteenth century, and still used in the Anglican church. This garment is in the form of a large oval of cloth with a hole cut in the center through which the head is passed. It hangs down to about the level of the knees both front and back and to the elbows on the sides. It was trimmed with braid around the neck and shoulders and down the front. (Plate IV)

During the course of the years the fragments in our possession began to decompose rather rapidly, and in 1958 it seemed best to have them embedded in plastic. The heat used in forming the plastic resulted in a loss of color of the silk, but a considerable enhancement of the metal thread. Finally in 1967, when it appeared that the fragment of knitted glove was also fast disappearing, this also was embedded in plastic. This

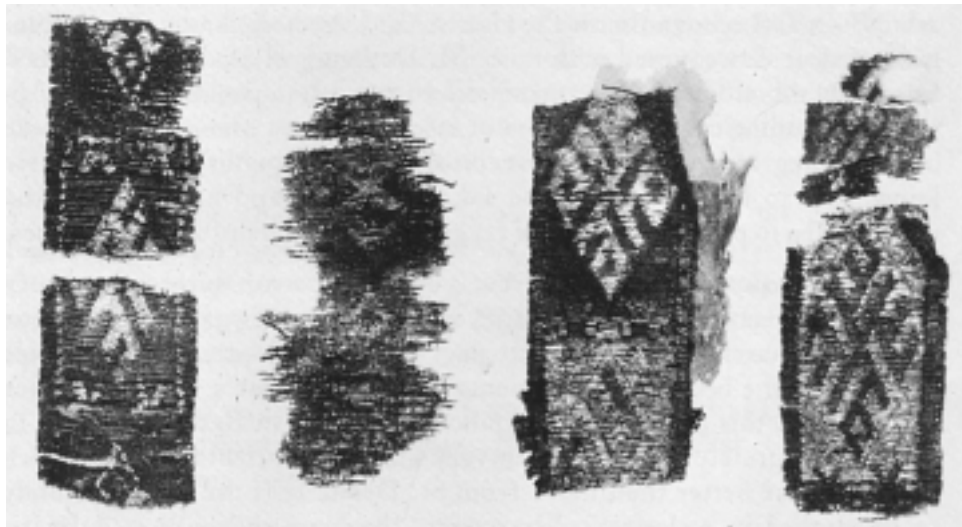


PLATE IV
Fragments (approximately actual size) of tablet-woven bands
from Bishop's vestments.

process has the disadvantage that there is no chance to touch or move the textiles, but on the other hand, they do not disintegrate further because they are shut away from air. The loose fragments are in one mount, the trimming bands in a second, and the knitting in a third.

In 1959 I again visited St. Denis, this time in the company of M. Jacques Dupont who was then Inspecteur Generale des Monuments Historiques. We found that the Bishop had been moved into an inaccessible chamber behind a six foot high wall. We could only see the body by climbing a ladder and looking over the top of the wall. There had been little observable change, except that, since there had been a great deal of rebuilding and renovation in the church, and the body had remained unprotected, it was covered with dust. M. Dupont was as discouraged as I was with the situation, but promised to see what could be done. Apparently nothing came of this, and at latest accounts, almost all remnants have disintegrated. It therefore seems desirable to publish what little we know, and to hope that, for the sake of history and archaeology, the means taken to preserve these few fragments may be helpful in other cases.

Burial customs vary greatly, but a fair number of thirteenth-century graves of prelates have been found in the course of making repairs or rebuilding churches. For the most part, only articles of small value are buried with the bodies. This accounts for the fact that a wooden crozier was found in this grave as in a similar one opened in Basle Cathedral in 1907. That prelate was dressed in very handsome oriental fabrics which have kept far better than those from St. Denis. It is usual for the body to be clothed in ecclesiastical garments, the long plain alb, a dalmatic (a shirtlike robe with sleeves) and the chasuble described above. Quite often the fabrics are of thin unpatterned silk, as in the case of the St. Denis Bishop. Much interest has been shown in Switzerland in investigating graves of this kind, partly because the Swiss have put in heating in many old churches. They have also been fortunate in having scholars who were interested in preserving the textiles, so that there is more known about them than in other countries.

The knitted gloves were a surprise to find at Saint Denis. Knitting seems to have started in the middle East. In fact the earliest known knitting that can be dated, came from Dura-Europos and is preserved in the Yale University Art Gallery. It was in the year 256 A.D. that Dura was destroyed, so anything found there must have been made before that time. Various bits of early knitting have turned up along the Mediterranean coast of Africa, and there is extremely handsome pattern

knitting in the thirteenth-century finds in Las Huelgas in Burgos, Spain. There is also, in the Textile Museum in Washington, an eleventh-century sock, knit of cotton which is said to have come from India.

Gloves were used by ecclesiastics as early as the ninth century. The earliest were cut from linen or silk and sewn together. They were often embroidered in colors and gold and provided with circular medallions of metal or enamel. A pair of gloves knit of white linen thread and embroidered in silk and pearls with silver gilt medallions was shown at an exhibition of mediaeval vestments held in Munich at the Bavarian National Museum in the summer of 1955. They belonged to Bishop Otto, and date from about 1200. They came from the cathedral of Brixen. Very few knitted silk gloves of the thirteenth century still exist, a fact that gives some importance to those from St. Denis. The knitting is in stocking stitch with no pattern, but whether it is done in the eastern or western manner, it is no longer possible to tell.

From the photograph of the Saint Denis Bishop in his grave it is possible to get an idea of the patterns in the tablet-woven bands. Mr. Crosby was careful not to disturb the vestments and simply took a small sample without trying to get pieces that would give the full pattern. As they are now mounted: (Plate V)

- A Two pieces. Lozenge pattern suggests four capital E's with the bottom of one against the back of the next. 6 x 2 cms. together.
- B Condition fragmentary. 5 x 2.3 cms.
- C Still attached to silk fragments, one of which was red, the others probably originally white. Lozenge pattern in silver gilt (wound on silk core). Ground may well have had an over-all design, but it is too faint now to describe. 5 x 2 cms.
- D In two pieces. The larger one seems to have had originally a yellow ground. 4.3 x 2.2 cms.

Tablet-woven braids have been used to embellish ecclesiastical garments from early times, and there are many fine examples to be seen in our museums. This technique is widely distributed and is found in the Middle and Far East as well as in Dynastic Egypt. It seems to have been used all over Europe, and its presence in this grave gives added importance to our Bishop.

LA BONNETERIE AU MOYEN-AGE

par

Marguerite Dubuisson

Les origines du tricot à la main sont fort obscures, et les hypothèses les plus fantaisistes ont été émises sur ce sujet. On a pensé que la fameuse "tapisserie" de Pénélope était, en réalité, un tricot, car seule cette technique permet de défaire et de refaire indéfiniment l'ouvrage. Les Egyptiens de l'époque pharaonique connaissaient-ils le tricotage? Cette supposition a été souvent avancée, car, a-t-on dit, les reines et les déesses, ayant les jambes serrées jusqu'aux chevilles dans d'étroits fourreaux, n'auraient pas pu marcher si ce fourreau n'avait pas présenté une certaine élasticité. Cependant nous ne croyons pas que cette explication soit exacte, puisque les peintres des tombeaux, qui ont représenté tous les métiers en honneur autour d'eux, ne nous ont jamais montré de personnage tricotant.

James Norbury, auteur d'importantes recherches sur les débuts du tricotage, impute aux Arabes l'invention de cette technique et suppose, sans toutefois apporter de preuves absolument certaines, que les premiers échantillons remonteraient jusqu'au VII^e siècle avant J-C. et même au-delà. D'après cet auteur, on pourrait établir une filiation entre la très ancienne technique du tissu au métier et celle du tricotage. On aurait eu l'idée de construire une sorte de cadre inspiré du métier à tisser primitif, mais au lieu de le garnir d'une nappe de chaîne dont tous les fils étaient destinés à être croisés avec ceux de la trame, il recevait une série de fiches, plus ou moins rapprochées autour desquelles était enroulé le fil pour former autant de boucles. Lorsque toutes les fiches étaient garnies de leurs boucles, on commençait, à l'aide d'un bâtonnet ou d'un crochet, à faire passer chaque boucle par dessus un fil de laine, formant ainsi le premier rang, et ainsi de suite. Ces cadres primitifs pouvaient être carrés, rectangulaires ou circulaires, mais dans tous les cas le tricot ainsi produit était tubulaire. On voit par là que dans des temps très reculés les Arabes du désert, probablement des nomades, après, sans doute, une période de tâtonnements plus ou moins longue, parvinrent à trouver le principe du métier circulaire, sous une forme bien sommaire et bien schématique sans doute, mais qui, tout de même, lorsqu'elle aura été abandonnée, devra attendre la fin du XVIII^e siècle, pour retrouver une application.

L'hypothèse de l'emploi du cadre est ingénieuse. Elle permet d'établir un lien entre le métier à tisser primitif et les plus anciennes recherches

de tricotage. Passa-t-on sans transition du cadre au travail sur deux, quatre ou davantage d'aiguilles? C'est peu possible. Il est plus vraisemblable de supposer que le cadre, si rudimentaire pourtant, se simplifia jusqu'à devenir une sorte de bâtonnet hérissé de fiches, sur lequel était monté un premier rang de mailles comme décrit ci-dessus, mais produisant un tricot en bande plate, pourvu de deux lisières.

A quel moment le bâtonnet (origine de cet instrument de tricotage que l'on appela plus tard "l'affiquet") fut-il remplacé par le système des deux aiguilles identiques? Il est difficile de le préciser, mais il semble que ce soit seulement à partir de ce moment-là que le tissu de mailles soit devenu un véritable tricot, au sens où nous l'entendons adjourd'hui, tous les ouvrages antérieurs relevant plutôt du procédé du crochet.

Dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, il semble que les plus anciens exemples de tricotage parvenus jusqu'à nous soient ceux qui sont conservés au Victoria and Albert Museum à Londres. Ce sont des sortes de socquettes (ou chaussons) trouvées dans les tombes égyptiennes de l'époque copte et pouvant être datées des IV^e et V^e siècle de notre ère.

Sir Flinders Petrie, le grand égyptologue anglais, décrit ainsi une de ces trouvailles :

“Dans une chambre funéraire du cimetière de Hawara, furent trouvés des morceaux d'un coffret en bois orné de plaques d'ivoire . . . dans lequel nous avons découvert une chaussette en épaisse laine brune tricotée. . . .”

D'autres échantillons, dont les dates s'échelonnent du III^e au VI^e siècles, provenant, eux aussi, de tombes coptes, se trouvent au Victoria and Albert Museum. L'un est un petit bonnet de poupée, les quatre autres sont des socquettes dont la tige ne dépasse pas la cheville et qui ont la particularité de présenter une case spéciale pour loger le gros orteil. Tous ces spécimens semblent être tricotés au point de côte une et une (alternativement une maille à l'endroit, une maille à l'envers).

La nécropole de Bahnasa livra aussi d'autres échantillons, au nombre desquels il convient de citer une chaussette d'enfant tricotée en bandes alternativement rouges et jaunes, avec, elle aussi, une division pour le gros orteil (IV-V siècle).

Les tricoteurs de cette époque ne semblent pas avoir connu le bord-côte, aussi resserraient-ils parfois le haut de la chaussette à l'aide d'un lacet (Exemple N^o 593 au Victoria and Albert Museum). Sur cet

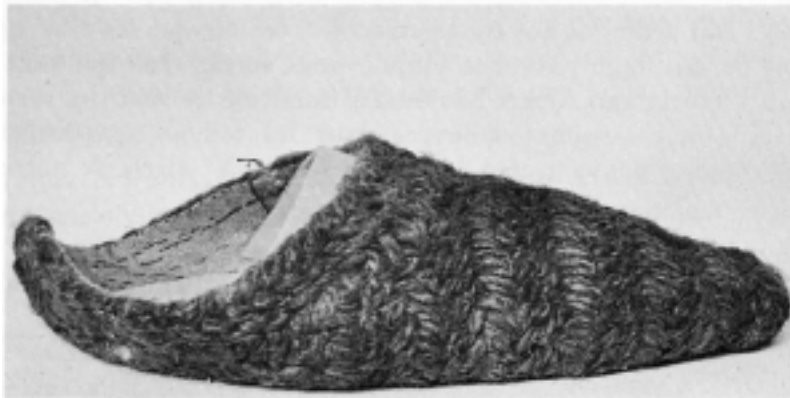
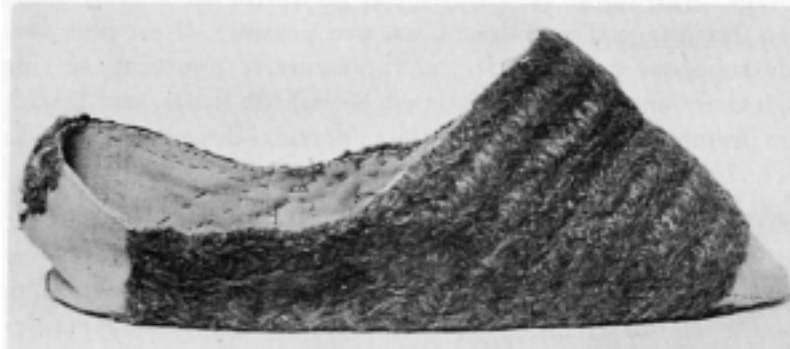


PLATE I

Chaussons tricotés (laine). XII^e siècle. Fouilles de Mme.
L. A. Goloubova à Belooziorsk. Musée National
d'Histoire, Moscou (U.R.S.S.).

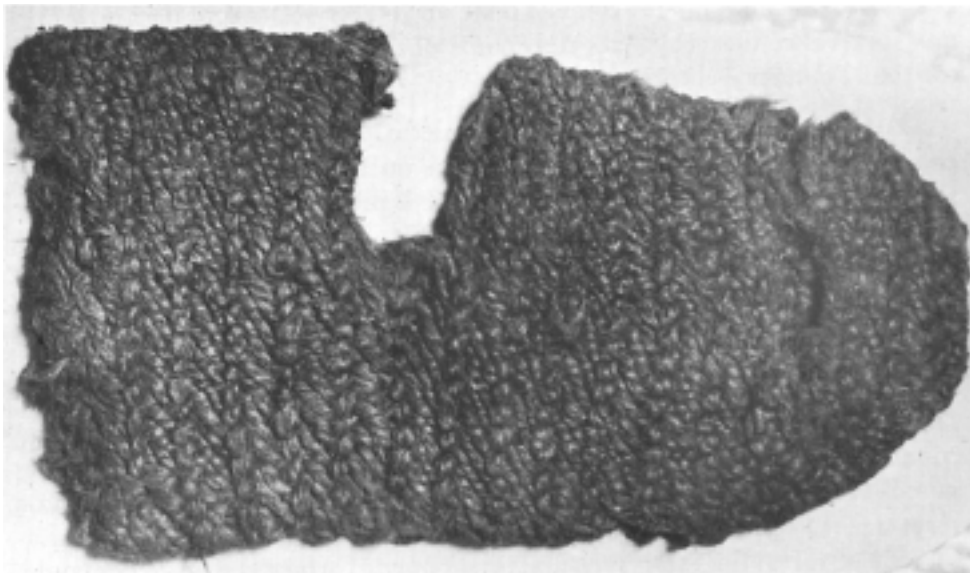


PLATE II

Moufle tricotée du XIV^e siècle (laine). Fouilles de Novgorod en 1960.
Musée National d'Histoire, Moscou (U.R.S.S.).

exemple, comme sur les autres, il existe une division spéciale pour le gros orteil, et l'examen minutieux de la pièce révèle que cette division a été tricotée séparément puis remmaillée. (Cf. Milton N. Grass, *History of Hosiery*, Fairchild Publications, New York, 1955, pp. 108-109).

Il semble que dans ces temps lointains le principe de la diminution existait déjà. Celle-ci était obtenue au moyen d'un croisement de mailles. Enfin signalons une curieuse méthode de finition de la tige: le dernier rang était garni d'un fil réunissant toutes les mailles.

Les fouilles des nécropoles coptes de Bahnsia el d'Antinoé nous ont fourni un important jalon dans le lent cheminement du tricotage à la main. Après, nous sommes dans l'incertitude. Dans les siècles qui suivirent, le procédé fut-il perdu? Non, sans doute, tout au moins en Orient, où, semble-t-il, il était assez répandu, et la rareté ou même l'absence de témoignages n'implique pas forcément que l'on n'ait pas tricoté pendant le haut Moyen-Age. Il faut comprendre que des chaussettes ou chaussons étaient des articles communs, sans aucune valeur, rapidement usés et mis au rebut aussitôt. L'habitude de placer des objets

et des vêtements dans les tombes était au V^o ou VI^o siècle de notre ère une survivance des croyances des temps pharaoniques, qui disparut bientôt sous l'influence chrétienne.

Il faudra attendre jusqu'au XII^o siècle pour trouver de nouveaux exemples de tricotage, et il semble bien qu'à ce moment le travail se soit exécuté sur deux aiguilles, tout comme à présent.

Il existe à Detroit Institute of Arts un fragment de ce qui pourrait avoir été un bas. Il est exécuté au point de jersey, orné d'un dessin géométrique assez élaboré, en bleu sur fond blanc. Selon certains, ce fragment serait d'origine égypto-islamique, c'est-à-dire un peu postérieur à la conquête de l'Égypte par les Arabes, tandis qu'un échantillon conservé au Metropolitan Museum de New-York n'est autre qu'un bas complet, en tricot épais, traversé de bandes horizontales de couleur vive au milieu desquelles se distinguent des motifs décoratifs inspirés de caractères arabes stylisés (Milton N. Grass, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111, repr.). La semelle et surtout le talon sont maladroitement formés et l'on se demande comment un tel bas pouvait être porté.

C'est également du XII^o siècle l'on peut dater les trois chaussons (sorte de pantoufles d'intérieur) qui ont été trouvés à Beloozero (région de Vologod, U.R.S.S.) à l'occasion de fouilles menées en 1958 et 1960 par Madame L. A. Goloubova. Ils sont conservés au Musée Historique de Moscou. Selon les renseignements que nous devons à l'obligeance de M. S. Dreyzen, secrétaire scientifique du Musée, ils seraient en grosse laine. Au même Musée est conservée une moufle tricotée du XIV^o siècle, découverte à Novgorod en 1960 (fouilles de A. V. Artzikovsky). Il est en très grosse laine, et le point est analogue à celui des pantoufles plus anciennes dont nous venons de parler. (Plates I, II)

Au Musée d'Olsztyn (Pologne) se trouve un fragment de vêtement (peut-être un châle) provenant de Rowminy Dolnej. Il est tricoté au point de jersey avec de la laine très épaisse, formant un fort relief. (Cf. Irena Turnau, *Précis d'Histoire du Textile sur les terres polonaises jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^o siècle*, Varsovie, 1966, p. 88, fig. 55).

D'après tous les exemples que nous venons de citer, il semblerait bien que l'art du tricotage soit venu d'Orient, puis soit passé en Europe orientale, puis centrale. C'est seulement au XIII^o siècle que l'on peut constater la présence d'articles tricotés en Occident et, notamment, en France. C'est la fabrication du gant qui va donner un essor considérable au tricotage à la main. Il s'agit essentiellement de gants liturgiques, ou du

moins, si l'on en fit pour des civils, ce sont seulement ceux des ecclésiastiques qui nous ont été conservés, le plus souvent en excellent état. Ils pouvaient être en lin, en laine, voire en soie. D'après les historiographes du pape Innocent IV (†1254), celui-ci aurait porté des gants en soie tricotée.

On connaît des spécimens de gants de fabrication italienne, espagnole, allemande (Cf. Milton N. Grass, *op. cit.*, reprod. en face de la page 112). En France, on peut voir au Trésor de la Basilique St-Sernin, à Toulouse, une très belle paire de gants en lin écru, tricotée au point de jersey sur des aiguilles de bois ou d'os relativement grosses, et ils sont décorés d'une rosace en cuivre avec rehauts d'émail cousue sur le dos de la main. C'est précisément le style de cette rosace qui a permis d'assigner une date (XIII^e siècle) à cette paire de gants, connue, par ailleurs, sous le nom de 'gants de Saint Remy', on ne sait pourquoi, car elle ne peut évidemment remonter à l'époque de Clovis.

Une belle paire, en laine pourpre avec dessins formés, au tricotage même, à l'aide d'un fil d'or, est conservée au Musée des Arts Décoratifs à Paris, et une autre du même genre se trouve au Musée de Cluny, Paris. L'une et l'autre datent du XV^e siècle. Tous ces exemples étaient-ils de fabrication française? C'est vraisemblable sans toutefois qu'on puisse le prouver. En Angleterre le tricotage était très répandu au XV^e siècle, et dès le début du seizième, de très nombreuses guildes de tricoteurs étaient dotées d'une puissante organisation. L'apprentissage, long et difficile, était réglementé de façon rigoureuse. Que l'on en juge: il durait trois ans, après lesquels l'apprenti, devenu compagnon, devait parfaire sa formation pendant trois autres années, passées à l'étranger. Au bout de cette période de six ans il était admis à prétendre au brevet d'artisan-maître, pour l'obtention duquel il devait présenter:

- 1°/ Un tapis mesurant huit pieds x douze pieds
- 2°/ Une chemise (ou camisole) de laine
- 3°/ Une paire de chaussettes en laine

Tout ce travail devait être exécuté en treize semaines. (Cf. James Norbury, *Le Tricot hier et aujourd'hui*, dans la revue, WOOL KNOWLEDGE, hiver, 1952.)

Le tapis devait présenter un dessin très complexe composé de feuillages, de fleurs et d'oiseaux, stylisés de façon conventionnelle, et comprendre de vingt à trente couleurs. Il s'agissait, non d'un tapis de pied comme nous l'entendons de nos jours, mais d'une véritable tapisserie pour

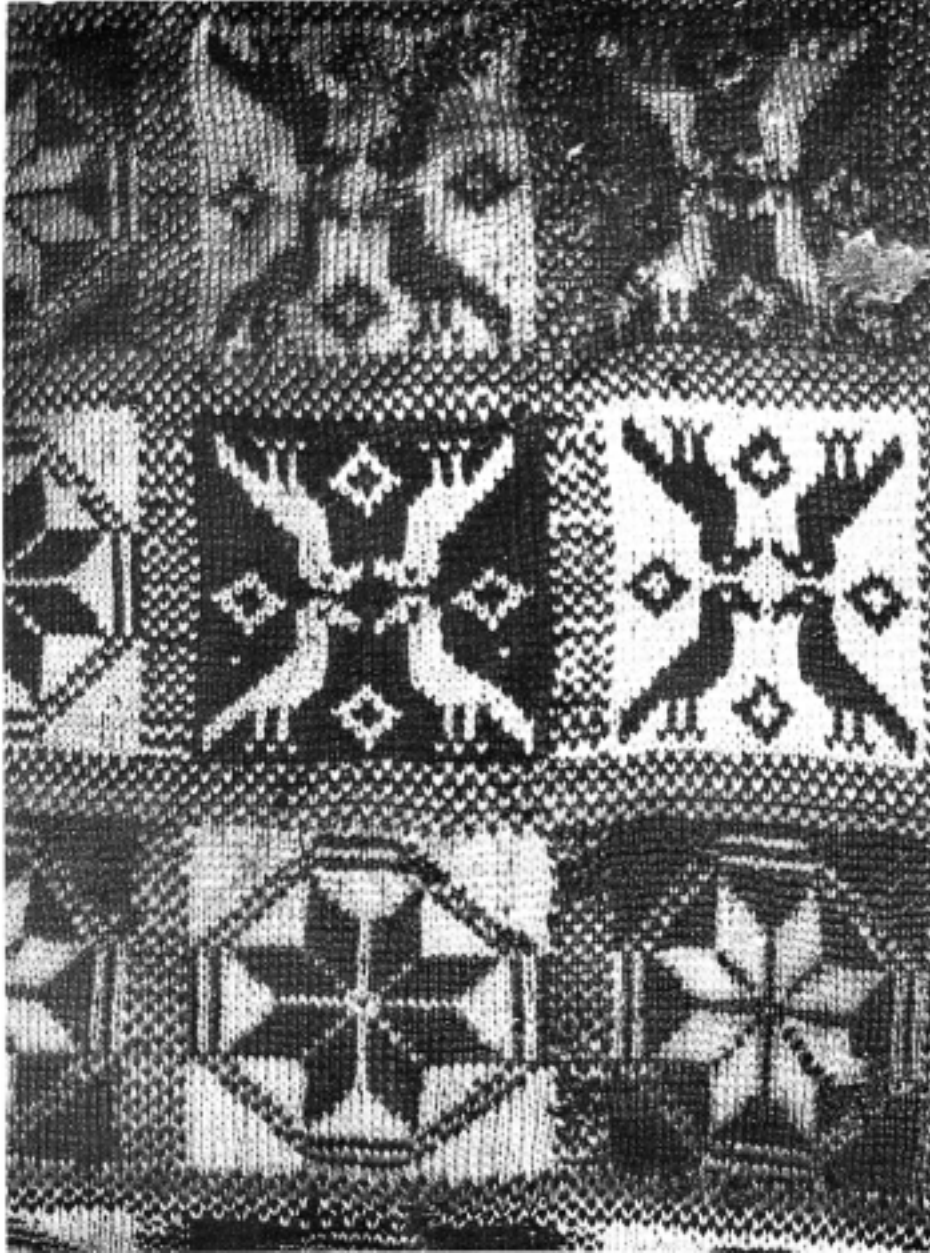


PLATE III

Fragment d'une enveloppe d'oreiller. XV^e siècle. Monastère de Las Huelgas,
près de Burgos (Espagne).

accrocher au mur. Signalons qu'il existe au Musée d'Unterlinden à Colmar plusieurs de ces tapisseries exécutées aux aiguilles, au point de jersey, pour l'obtention du brevet d'artisan-maître de la corporation des bonnetiers de Colmar. Etant donné leur style, on est très étonné d'apprendre qu'elles ne remontent qu'au XVIII^e siècle, et ceci est attesté par les dates inscrites au tricotage sur certains de ces spécimens rarissimes (1740 pour l'un d'entre eux).

Il est curieux de constater que le tricotage, au Moyen-Age et même ultérieurement, était un métier masculin, les femmes, elles, se contentant de filer le textile. Cependant il est absolument certain que, sous le règne de la Reine Elizabeth première, le tricotage, qui offrait un gagne-pain (d'ailleurs très modeste) à un grand nombre d'Anglais du peuple, était pratiqué également par les femmes.

D'après tout les exemples que nous venons de citer, l'application du travail aux aiguilles serait assez restreint : socquettes, chaussons, gants, enfin, tapisseries. Mais on peut supposer qu'il y eut bien d'autres choses exécutées au tricot. En raison du nombre d'articles chaussants que nous avons relevés au cours de cette étude, on peut s'étonner que l'existence du bas tel que nous l'entendons aujourd'hui ne soit attestée qu'à partir du XVI^e siècle. A tout le moins est-ce là l'opinion la plus répandue parmi les historiens de la bonneterie. Cependant nous avons cité plus haut un exemple de bas pouvant remonter au XII^e siècle. D'autre part, une miniature du psautier de la Reine Mary (XIV^e siècle, British Museum; Londres) tendrait à prouver que dès ce moment, le bas existait déjà. En effet on y voit une dame assise sur un lit et mettant ses bas, dont l'un lui est tendu par une servante, tandis que l'autre est déjà sur sa jambe. Bien sûr cela ne suffit pas à attester l'existence de bas tricotés au XIV^e siècle, car il pourrait aussi bien s'agir de chaussettes en étoffes, coupées et cousues, tels que celles qui étaient déjà en usage à l'époque mérovingienne. Mais rien ne le prouve. Certes, le miniaturiste a dessiné très soigneusement ce qui semble bien être un bas diminué, fait pour emboîter étroitement une jambe fine et nerveuse, mais peut-être n'y a-t-il là qu'un artifice de dessin. Il n'est pas aisé de se prononcer. D'autre part, lorsque l'on voit, quelque temps plus tard, les jeunes seigneurs se revêtir de collants tels que l'on en vend à l'heure actuelle dans les magasins, il est permis de se demander si certains de ces maillots n'étaient pas exécutés aux aiguilles. Cependant, au premier Congrès International des Arts du Costume (Venise, 31 août-7 septembre 1952), cette hypothèse n'a pas été retenue, ni même avancée.

Dans tous les cas, dès le début du XV^e siècle, certains vêtements

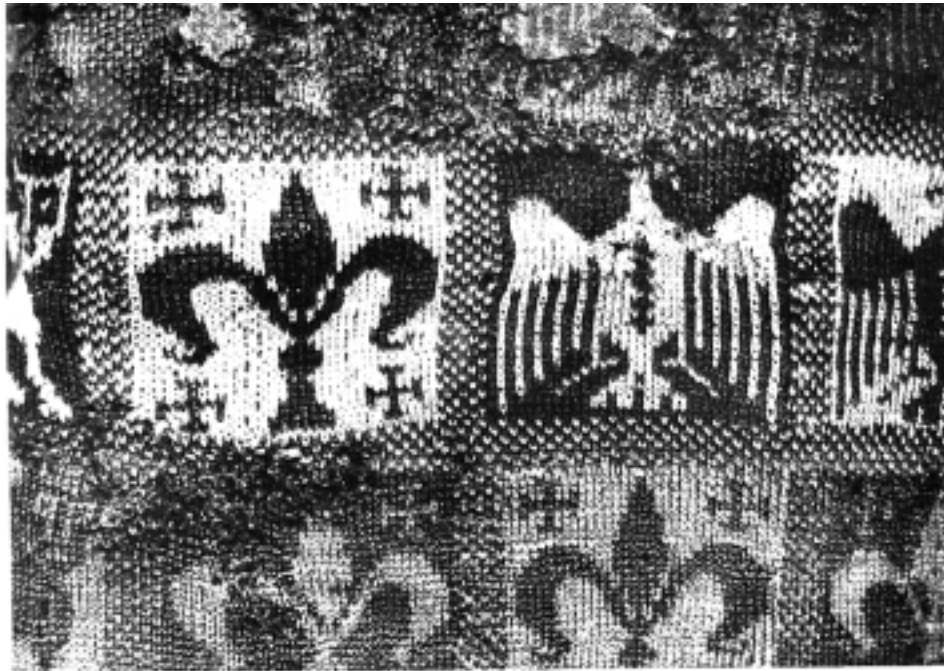


PLATE IV

Fragment d'une enveloppe d'oreiller. Début du XV^e siècle. Monastère
de Las Huelgas, près de Burgos (Espagne).

étaient exécutés au tricot, et le célèbre retable de Buxtehude (Ecole allemande, début du XV^e siècle, Kunsthalle de Hambourg) en est une preuve indiscutable. On y voit une Vierge assise dans une petite chapelle gothique, tricotant une robe pour l'Enfant Jésus, à l'aide de quatre aiguilles. Le vêtement est assez avancé et sa largeur lui permet de former de beaux plis en tuyaux d'orgue; d'élégantes manches courtes, tricotées visiblement du même morceau que le corps, complètent gracieusement celui-ci. Ceci n'est certainement pas de l'invention du vieux maître: il avait sans doute vu tricoter de telles robes.

La monastère de Las Huelgas, près de Burgos, Espagne, conserve des enveloppes de coussins faites au point de jersey, sur deux aiguilles relativement fines, en employant des laines de tonalités opposées qui forment de fort beaux dessins composés de motifs enfermés dans des carrés. Ces motifs représentent des oiseaux, des rosaces, des croix pattées, le tout stylisé d'une manière qui accuse une origine du XV^e siècle, voire même, peut-être, au moins pour l'un d'eux, de la fin du XIV^e. Un troisième échantillon est un fragment d'un gant provenant de l'un des tombeaux érigés dans le chœur de l'église de Las Huelgas. Il s'agit d'un riche exemple de tricot ajouré exécuté en lin (ou, peut-être en soie?) sur de minces aiguilles, probablement métalliques. Le style du dessin, très élaboré, ne nous permet pas d'avancer une date, même approximative; on a pu faire de tels motifs à l'époque romane aussi bien qu'à l'époque gothique. Ce sont donc les renseignements historiques qui peuvent, beaucoup mieux, nous fournir une base de datation. En effet, les tombeaux de Las Huelgas sont ceux d'Alphonse VIII, de sa femme Eléonore d'Angleterre, et de divers membres de la famille royale. Ces tombeaux peuvent donc être datés de la première moitié ou du premier tiers du XIII^e siècle (Alphonse VIII étant mort en 1214). (Plates III, IV) (Plate V)

Un point intéressant: si nous comparons cet échantillon si élaboré et si fin à la production à peu près contemporaine que nous avons trouvée en Russie et en Pologne, ainsi qu'aux exemples égypto-islamiques conservés aux Etats Unis, nous observons combien les Espagnols étaient plus raffinés, à la fois au point de vue de la conception et à celui de la technique. C'est ce raffinement, cette distinction, et aussi le caractère luxueux de leur travail, qui, plus tard, dans le courant du XVI^e siècle, va mettre leur production, notamment pour les bas de soie, au premier rang des industries destinées aux souverains et aux princes. En effet, les Espagnols, seuls en Europe, sont à cette époque capables de tricoter des bas de soie, objets d'un prix très élevé qui les plaçaient hors de la portée du commun

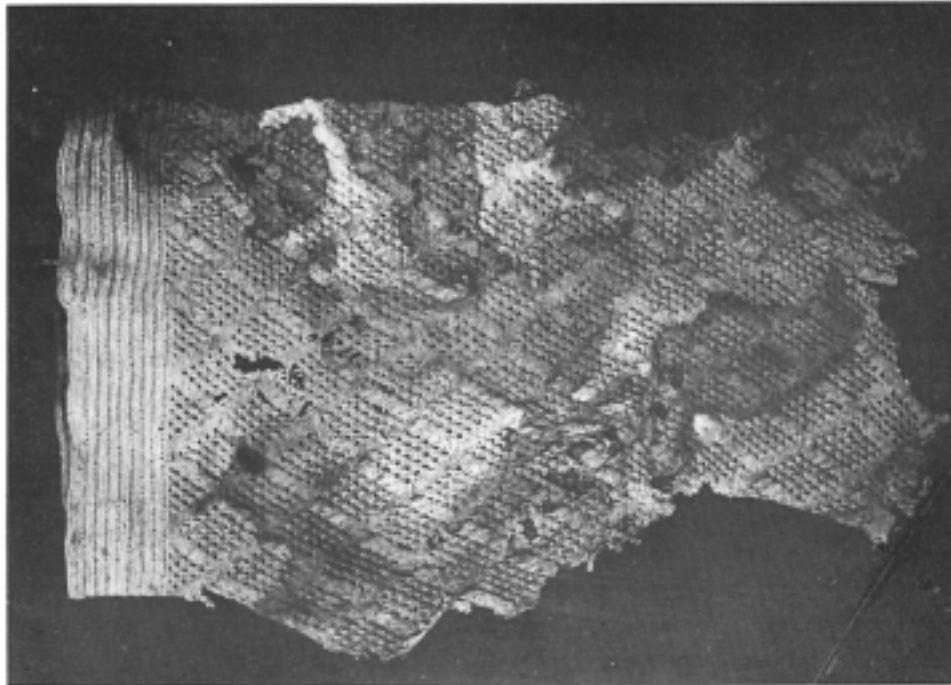


PLATE V

Gant tricoté, provenant d'un tombeau de Las Huelgas, près de Burgos.
Première moitié du XIII^e siècle.

Eupraxia (late fourteenth century, Monastery of Putna (Plates XIII
and XIV).

des mortels. D'ailleurs les grands seigneurs et même les rois ne s'en paraient que de façon exceptionnelle. Selon les *Annales* de John Stow, publiées à Londres en 1615, Henri VIII ne portait que des chausses en étoffes coupées dans un large tissu, à la vérité, très somptueux. Et le vieux chroniqueur ajoute, "A moins que par chance, il arrive d'Espagne une paire de bas de soie."

Commentant la garde-robe d'Edouard VI, successeur d'Henri VIII, ce même Stow observe; "Le roi Edouard VI avait une paire de longs bas de soie, qui lui avaient été envoyés d'Espagne, à titre de très beau présent." Et, dans la marge, nous lisons, "Sir Thomas Gresham la lui avait donnée."

On conserve au château de Hatfield (Hertfordshire, Angleterre) une paire de bas à jours, en soie, qui, dit-on, avaient été tricotés à la main pour la Reine Elizabeth première. L'origine de ces bas n'a jamais été bien déterminée. Cependant la tradition veut que la Reine ait beaucoup apprécié les bas de soie et que ses dames d'honneur, ayant appris la technique espagnole du tricotage du textile fin sur aiguilles d'acier, aient pris l'habitude d'exécuter à son intention de délicates petites merveilles dont malheureusement aucun spécimen ne nous est parvenu (à moins que la paire de Hatfield House n'en soit un).

Nous avons quelque peu dépassé le cadre de cette étude, qui était essentiellement le tricotage au Moyen-Age. Il nous a paru utile, étant donné que la Renaissance n'a rien apporté ni rien changé à la technique du tricot à la main, de jeter un coup d'oeil sur ses dernières manifestations ou, plus exactement, sur les dernières des temps où elle était reine, avant que l'invention de la machine à tricoter ne vienne lui faire une sérieuse concurrence, préfigurant l'industrialisation de la technique de la maille, telle que nous pouvons la voir aujourd'hui.

Toutefois à aucune époque le tricotage à la main ne fut abandonné, et de nos jours encore sa production artisanale et, surtout, domestique, est considérable en France.

BOOK NOTES

THE PLEASURES OF PATTERN
WILLIAM JUSTEMA
REINHOLD BOOK CORPORATION
NEW YORK, 1968

In this presentation of a richly personal point of view on the ancient subject of pattern, Mr. Justema indeed makes us realize its pleasures and fascinations as well as the disciplines needed by today's beginning designers to become its skillful exponents. His interesting and non-didactic definition includes the qualities of quasi patterns as opposed to those of true pattern which he sees as Repetition and Variation, the principles controlling pattern's basic operations; Structure, Scale, Coverage, pattern's most obvious properties; and Emphasis and Counterchange, the leading devices to make pattern effective. Then he adds ". . . along with the deeper satisfactions we get from pattern, one of the most sought-after qualities is caprice."

In the "pattern-tracking excursion into history" that follows, Mr. Justema has obviously read widely, consulted in person many authorities, and looked appreciatively at much historical material. He summarizes some of the leading theories and attributions of textile historians but does not feel constrained by these from discussing all sorts of other possibilities and analogies as an enthusiastic and talented amateur of historical textiles.

Mr. Justema speaks from his own professional specialty in part 2—Eight Lessons in Pattern Making, and his approach seems disarming, original, and full of both insight and common sense, as he proceeds "from the elements of design itself" to discuss Line, Shape, Texture, and Color with the neophyte designer.

Three essays follow on subjects that caught the author's particular fancy in the course of his studies on pattern—new documents for old, or the uses of historical material to the designer; a Victorian genius of pattern-making, William Morris; and a problematical group of historical silks with bizarre designs and mysterious provenance for which Mr. Justema proposes a plausible explanation of his own.

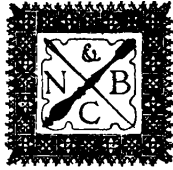
The author is gifted as a writer as well as a designer, and he presents his own ideas with enthusiasm and flair that are always stimulating if sometimes interestingly inconclusive. His book is a treasure trove of off-beat and varied illustrations of all kinds of material. It is not only for pattern-makers and designers but for anyone who enjoys good writing and original views on an ever-present adjunct of civilization. At the end, after a Picture Quiz full of surprises, is an extraordinarily varied bibliography with annotations, leading to further pleasures in pattern and other things, one feels sure, for the reader who follows them up.

NOTES ON AUTHORS

Dr. Luba Gudus has been librarian and research associate for many years at French and Company, New York. She is at present associated with the Frick Art Reference Library in New York.

Mrs. Margaret T. J. Rowe is Curator Emeritus of Textiles of the Yale University Gallery of Art and head of the Colonial Dames of Rhode Island.

Marguerite Dubuisson is Curator of the Museums, Troyes, l'Aube, France.



CLUB NOTES

The members of the Needle and Bobbin Club had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Diane Lee Carroll, writer and consultant on ancient technologies, discuss "The Textile Art in Ancient Greece," on Thursday afternoon, January 25th, at the Lotos Club, through the generous hospitality of Mrs. Chauncey J. Hamlin, Mrs. J. Harper Skillen, Mrs. Russell C. Veit, and Miss Frances Williams, who provided, too, an ample tea.

* * * * *

Dr. Ernst Grube, Curator of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum, conducted the Club through his newly installed Turkish gallery on Thursday afternoon, February 29th. An appetizing tea appeared afterwards in the gallery through the kindness of Mrs. A. Benson Cannon, Mrs. John Gerdes, Mrs. J. Harper Skillen, Mrs. Maurice P. Van Buren, Mrs. Raymond T. von Palmenberg, and Mrs. Eliot Lee Ward.

* * * * *

The Cooper Union Museum eagerly sought the presence of Needle and Bobbin Club members for a lecture on "The Hundred Flowers in Eastern and Western Embroidery," by Mrs. Wanda Harrison of the Field Museum of Chicago. A sumptuous tea was part of the program.

* * * * *

The Annual Meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club was held on Tuesday afternoon, April 16th, at the beautiful home of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York, through the distinguished hospitality of Mrs. A. Victor Barnes, Mrs. Robert McC. Marsh, Mrs. Charles B. Martin, and Mrs. Malcolm E. Smith. Mrs. Francina Irwin of Glasgow University addressed the members on "Scottish Printed Textiles: From Bonnie Prince Charlie to the Crystal Palace." The hostesses provided a delicious tea afterwards.

The historic houses in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia were the goal of the Needle and Bobbin Club's annual all-day Spring Safari on May 23. A chartered station-wagon conveyed the small but enthusiastic group first to luncheon in a restaurant on top of the Barclay Building, famous for its views of Philadelphia, and then on to a tour of five of the Park Houses, carefully selected by Mr. Calvin S. Hathaway, curator of the Philadelphia Museum, for their variety and interest. In spite of a persistent spring rain, the group much enjoyed this tour, spending about a half an hour in each house, under the guidance of a charming young docent from the Museum. They returned to New York with an enhanced appreciation of Philadelphia's rich history and beautiful antiquities.

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The first fall meeting of the Club took place at the Colony Club, where Mrs. J. Stanley Davis, Mrs. William D. Dunaway, Mrs. John E. McCracken, and Mrs. Samuel H. Ordway invited members to hear Mrs. Janice Lourie of the IBM New York Scientific Center speak on "The Computer and the Textile Designer," followed by a generous and delicious tea, where Mrs. Lourie answered many eager questions.

* * * * *

The yearly Fall Safari of the Needle and Bobbin Club fell on a bright October day, the 23rd, and a bus conveyed the ladies to the Hammond Museum in the lovely hills near North Salem, with a stop for luncheon first at the eighteenth-century Inn in Ridgefield. After a meal of crêpes and lemon ice there, the members pressed on to this small, charming museum, where the curators, Miss Hammond and Mrs. Taylor, welcomed them to the famous Japanese stroll gardens. Here the ladies wandered in the afternoon sun and later imbibed Japanese tea in one of the courtyards. For those who could bring themselves to leave this beautiful spot, the new Guild Hall was hung with a nostalgic and titivating exhibition of photographs by Carl van Vechten. The members left for New York regretfully late in the afternoon.

* * * * *

Mr. Malcolm Delacorte of the Textile Study Room at the Metropolitan Museum addressed the Needle and Bobbin Club members on a subject unusually near to their hearts on Thursday, November 21st, when he advised them on his specialty, "The Care of Your Textile Treasures." Through the kindness of Mrs. John Gilpin, Mrs. Chauncey J. Hamlin, Mrs. James Cash Penney, and Miss Elizabeth Riley, this meeting was held at the Metropolitan Museum, where a most imaginative autumn tea was served to members after the lecture.

* * * * *

The Harknesses' much-enjoyed Christmas open-house for the Needle and Bobbin Club members and their guests was held Tuesday afternoon, December 10th. This festive occasion is one of the most crowded and happiest of the many delightful events in the Needle and Bobbin Club year, and many appreciative thanks go to the Harknesses for their timely and heartwarming hospitality.

IN MEMORIAM

The Needle and Bobbin Club cherishes the memory of members who have died during the past year.

Miss Louisa Bellinger, distinguished textile technologist and New England lady;

Mrs. Walter C. Douglas, well-known and much-loved member;

Mrs. Adrienne Iselin Gilbert of Newport, whose daughter, Mrs. Stuart Cary Welch of Cambridge, carries on her strong interest in the Club;

Mrs. Agnes J. Holden, colorful and world-famous collector of printed cottons;

Miss Edith G. Marshall, a devoted member since 1952;

Miss Hannah E. McAllister, who brought professional appreciation from her years in the Islamic department at the Metropolitan Museum, to her happy associations at the Needle and Bobbin Club;

Mrs. Harley Lord Stowell, a woman of seclusive tastes who, nonetheless, lent her support to the Needle and Bobbin Club;

Miss Margaret Tuttle, a generous collector of laces;

Miss Caroline R. Wing, whose warm generosity to many worthy causes embraced the Needle and Bobbin Club, too;

Mrs. John Winslow, much enjoyed by her fellow-members.

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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