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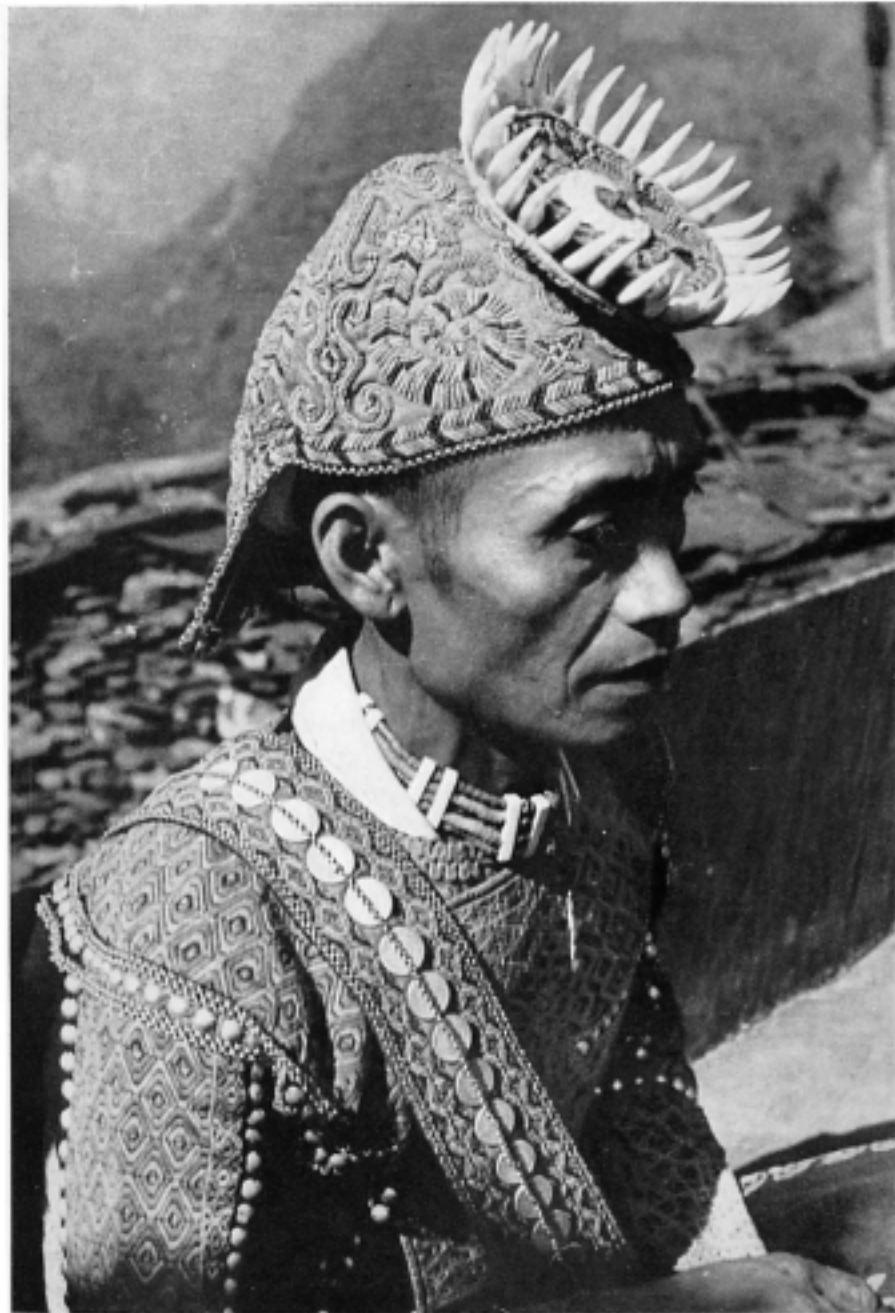
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FRONTISPIECE

CHIEF PUTUAN OF THE RUKAI TRIBE, BUDAI VILLAGE, PAIWAN AREA, WEARING WHAT IS PROBABLY A WOVEN COSTUME AND CROWN OF JAGUAR TEETH.

MUSEUM COLLECTION, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY,
NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, TAIPEI, TAIWAN.

NOTES ON ABORIGINE TEXTILES OF FORMOSA TODAY
FROM A VISIT TO THE ISLAND IN 1954

by

ELIZABETH BAYLEY WILLIS

The writer who has a background of long study of the indigenous arts of the Far East and India has occupied curatorial positions in the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, the San Francisco Museum of Art and the California Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum. This paper is the result of an assignment to Formosa as an expert on handicrafts for the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration. At present the writer is in India as advisor to the Government of India on Handloom Textile export.

This article is a part of a talk given on April 28, 1955, for the Needle and Bobbin Club.

FORMOSA, OR TAIWAN, as the island is now called, has been for centuries, except for brief intervals, an occupied land with an aborigine population whose origin is unknown. As to the beginnings of these people opinions and records vary. Some authorities say that the aborigines have a history on the island of about two thousand years and that they are of proto-Malay stock. Variations among them doubtless are the result of successive migrations from the Pacific islands, the Malay peninsula and the continent.

Today these aborigines are divided into the following groups. Atayal in the north and east; Bunun in the central area; Tsou adjoining the western Bunun; Rukai, south of the Tsou; Paiwan in the extreme south; and Ami extending up the east coast beyond the Puyuma, where they border on the Atayal. The Yami, another group, inhabit a small island off the southeast coast, a region, unlike the others, which was not accessible to me during my stay (Plate I).

Published material on the subject of the aborigines is difficult to find and many of the anthropological and ethnological studies present difficulties for they are for the most part written only in Chinese and Japanese. Historical records likewise are limited and frequently the available data on a subject are controversial. The earliest mention of the island in Chinese books, according to George Kleinwachter, writing in 1883,¹ is in the thirteenth century when the Chinese at that time described the island as a land of vampire demons whose people wore no clothes and spoke an unintelligible language.

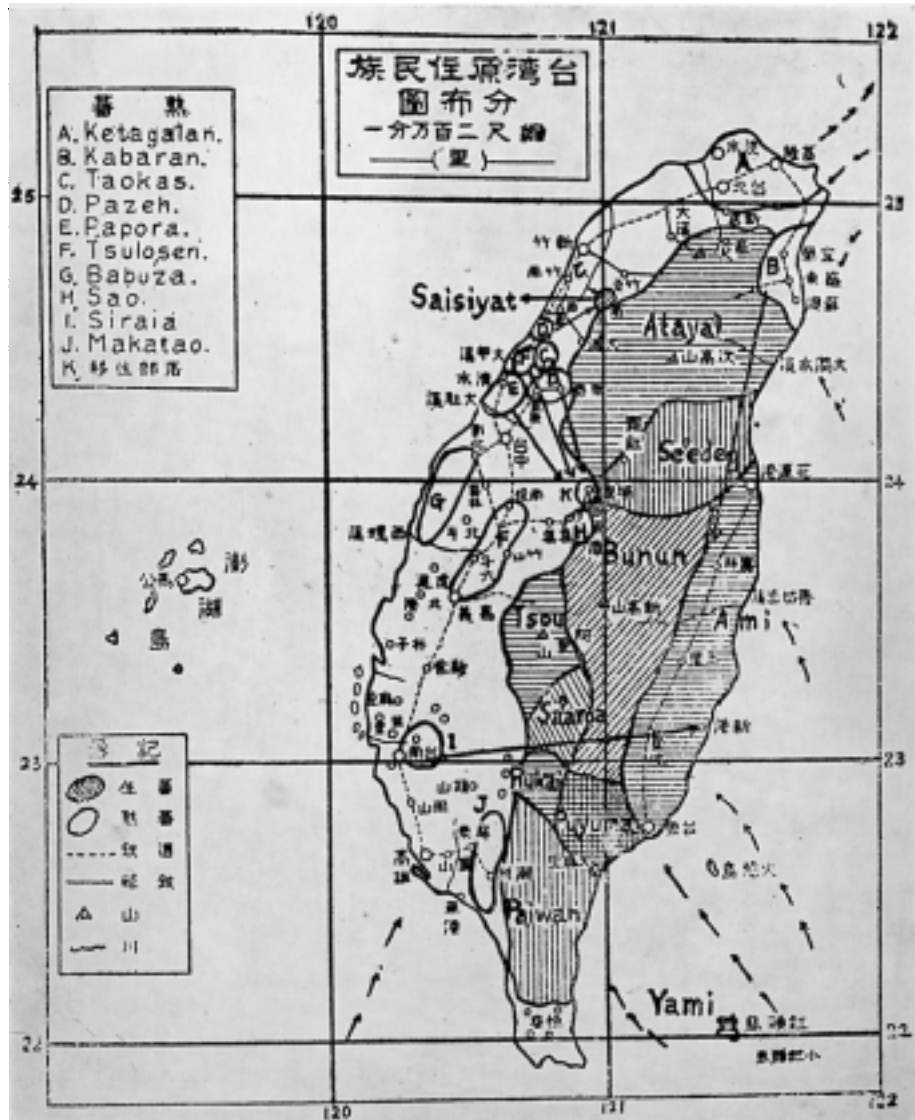


PLATE I
 MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF TRIBES ON FORMOSA.

Legend is more colorful. An old Chinese story,² for example, tells us that Formosa was first settled by dragons from Woo-Noo-Mun (Five Tiger Gate), identified as Foo-Chow on China mainland. The dragons glided under the sea making their ascent to the island by throwing up the high bluff at the northern harbor of Keelung, then writhing the length of the island, heaving the parallel ridges of high mountains into heights from twelve to thirteen thousand feet and shaking them then as now, from time to time, with convulsive earthquakes.

As a matter of history the first Europeans to reach the island were the Portuguese who came in 1590, landing at Keelung like the legendary dragons. Their stay was relatively short, for some years later they were driven off by the Dutch who arrived in 1624. Although Taiwan, translated from the Chinese as Terrace Bay, is the Chinese name for the island, the title bestowed by the Portuguese has remained in use — Formosa, meaning beautiful.

Spanish colonizers attempted briefly to establish holdings on the island in 1626 and a mission was built in the north by the Dominicans.³ But in 1642, like the Portuguese, the Spanish were forced from their holdings on Formosa and driven off by the Dutch.

The Dutch East India Company soon established colonies and trading centers⁴ on the island, where their extensive trade and exchange of goods from all parts of the world was carried on. Numerous references relating to the aborigines appear in Dutch records during this era.⁵ Both missionaries and Dutch officials describe the efforts exerted to subdue and convert the unwilling natives.

It seems, however, that those chosen to bestow the advantages of civilization and Dutch law on these hapless people were sometimes of dubious character. Dutch records cite their own schoolmasters and officials as persevering in wickedness and leading scandalous lives while teaching the law, the catechism, and the Latin alphabet. One was even beheaded for his crimes.

In contrast to this dark picture the aborigine women are described in a Dutch journal of 1629 as fair-skinned, remaining principally indoors and occupying themselves with fine weaving. One missionary remarks that the aborigines were of a fine class, both men and women, and that they were proud and haughty.

In 1644, during the Dutch occupation, Chinese from the mainland began fleeing to Formosa to escape the Tartar conquerors of their own land. Eventually, with the collapse of the Ming empire, the defeated

Ming supporters also sought refuge on the island. Thus reinforced by the growing influx from China mainland, the new arrivals, supported by their countrymen, joined in the struggle to wrest the island from its former conquerors. Finally, after years of savage warfare, the few surviving Dutch, starved, beaten and reduced in numbers, fled in 1661 in the one ship that still remained to them out of their once extensive sea force.

As for the unhappy aborigines, Chinese chronicles of the period refer to them as being subjugated, a process to which the Chinese, now in possession of the island, proved as devoted as had been their predecessors, the Dutch.

By 1727⁶ forty-two aborigine tribes out of an unrecorded earlier number are noted as subjugated and amalgamated with the immigrants from the mainland. Eleven tribes follow, then another fifty until finally a remaining ten are listed also as members of the Flowery Kingdom. The reclaimed "savages" are then described as having achieved, in ironic phase, the status of taxpayers.

The aborigines on the more accessible flat west coast lands were the first to be subjugated. Others were driven up into the less accessible mountain valleys. Those who were conquered and were willing to remain peacefully on the plains were called "tame savages" or "ripe barbarians."⁷ The residue who were tattooed or head-hunters were known as "unripe barbarians" or "savages."

A visitor to Formosa, one Father de Mailla, who in 1715 was engaged, with two hundred soldiers, in mapping the south of the island, pays tribute to the native inhabitants when he observes in his journal of that year that the "savages," as he terms them, were nearer to a true philosophy than a great number of the most celebrated Chinese sages, that they were superior in honesty and morality to their mandarin masters of that time, and that one never saw them cheating or quarrelling.

By the time of the next century the outside world had learned of the riches in timber and ore in the mountainous island. Would-be settlers met with resistance from forays of aborigine head-hunters, and navigators and crews of wrecked ships suffered violence and death when attempting to land. Despite this, Formosa continued to attract outsiders.

During the years from 1848 to 1867, which were known as the Era of Atrocity, armed forces, Prussian, British and American, landed punitive expeditions to combat the seacoast pirates and vengeful defenders of the island territories. Eventually the military forces opened ports which had



PLATE II
SPINNING IN AN ANCIENT FASHION STILL IN USE.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF APPROXIMATELY 1911.

been closed for some two hundred years. Japanese troops, as well, arrived in the south and took up temporary occupation. Robert Swinhoe,⁸ the American consul in Formosa, travelled around the island by ship in 1857 and in that year writes, in describing his voyage, that he fears that the individual aborigine cultures will soon disappear. Five tribes of the native race of Formosa, he says, are fast disappearing, a sixth, he continues, has entirely vanished, and the last but one is completely amalgamated with the Chinese.

Various colonizing efforts were made more than once by the Chinese to settle the mountainous and precipitous east coast. Landings were made there in 1858, 1862 and 1866. Some years after this last attempt a European in charge of another colonizing scheme arrived on the same shore with a like scheme only to be confronted by the spectacle of thirteen skull-less skeletons arranged in a neat row on the sands, conclusive evidence of the failure of the last efforts to colonize on aborigine territory.

Under the "mandarins" so-called, the aborigines had not been much better off. Contemporary chronicles refer to the island as the scene, due to these mandarins, of utmost misery. Visitors at the time in their descriptions of this remote east coast comment on the sad demeanor of the aborigine people and the plaintive songs which they sang about their fate at the hands of their Chinese conquerors.

By 1870 the aborigines were a subject of international concern for it was charged that the Chinese rulers were unable to control them and that the island was no longer safe for foreigners and commerce.

For some years after the opening up of Japan to the outside world and to commerce by American forces under Commodore Perry in 1853-54, Japanese travelers had been coming to Formosa. The subjects of the Emperor, after a long period of seclusion practiced by Japan as a national policy, were now allowed to settle abroad; thus many of them came to Formosa. Japan soon claimed that foreign peoples now on Formosa were being ill-treated by the aborigines.

In 1874 the long struggle for overlordship of Formosa entered a new phase when three thousand Samurai warriors of Japan were dispatched to protect Japanese subjects on the island⁹ which was described by contemporary observers as consisting of a remote forest interior inhabited by ferocious head-hunters with a seaboard overrun by buccaneers from various lands. But despite adverse conditions, the island obviously was coveted by the modern world.

The long process of subduing the aborigines was concluded in 1895

by ceding Formosa to Japan as a possession in order, it was reported, to prevent a land of cannibals being forever established on Formosa.¹⁰ After fifty years as a colony of Japan, during which the history of the island was changed by Japanese programs for development, in 1945, at the close of the Second World War, Formosa was returned to China and all Japan nationals were ordered from their former possessions.

At this time of hope revived, the aborigines and the Chinese-stock inhabitants, considering themselves now as Formosans or Taiwanese, brought forth a plan to obtain independent status for the island. However, at this crucial moment for the Formosans, past history reenacted itself on the China mainland when a national regime again collapsed, driving exiles once more to Formosa. Chiang Kai-shek and some two million followers began to arrive on the island and take steps toward permanent establishment.

The movement for independence by the Taiwan people was put down in 1947 and great numbers of the population, including aborigines, were killed and executed. When I visited the island in 1954, the aborigines were controlled by a corps understood to be under the direction of the son of Chiang Kai-shek. A program of resettlement and education for the aborigines, called the "Life Improvement Movement," was in effect.

Considering the history of Formosa, it was surprising to find that the native inhabitants still carried on traditional arts. Although it is said that year by year various arts and skills have ceased to exist, weaving still remains in all the tribal areas except one, a small section of the Tsou people.¹¹

However, few of the fine and intricate weaves which formerly distinguished the handsome costumes of various tribes are being made today. Appliqué, cross-stitch and embroidery, as a simpler substitute, are being carried on in certain areas. The southern tribes are exceptionally skilled in these arts. The weaving of ramie cloth, however, persists in all centers where weaving is carried on.

This fabric, called aborigine, or savage cloth, has been woven from the time of earliest records. It was obviously the material described by the Dutch in 1628 as a summer dress of cotton. Later accounts refer to hempen cloth, comparing the fabric to cloth woven by savages in the Malay area on similar back-strap looms from similar fiber.

Formosan ramie is made from home-grown, hand-spun ramie fiber which comes from a shrub-like perennial of the nettle family which occurs in Malay regions, Japan, China and East India. This plant yields a fiber

which is extensively used in place of cotton or linen. It is said that ramie was not indigenous to Formosa, and that one form cultivated in mountainous places is a variety common to Malay areas, and that another type was introduced from China.

The woven cloth is called by various names: hempen cloth, flaxen cloth, linen, and grass cloth, as well as ramie cloth.

E. C. Taintor,¹² a visitor to the island in 1869, describes weaving and spinning of ramie. His description gives an excellent account of methods still in practice. He writes, "Spinning is done on a reel (spindle) which they twirl in their hands, a ball of thread being held in a small basket on the arm (Plate II). The cloth is a very strong, durable, woven material of a fiber resembling hemp." The weaving method is laborious, he continues, with the weaver seated on the ground holding by means of her feet the stick which supports one end of the web (the warp threads which run lengthwise). This type of loom is still in use (Plate III). There is as well a loom with a hollowed out log which is used as the warp beam, against which the weaver braces her feet (Plate IV). Each thread of the weft is pushed home with a thin sharp-edged piece of wood called the beater-in or sword. The cloth is woven in a continuous or endless belt, twelve to fourteen inches wide and five to six feet long. The belt is tied or spliced together so that it is woven into a single piece, which is then cut open when it is finished (*see* Plate IV). The cloth is used for blankets, or as a garment. Strips are sewed together. A square piece is draped across the body, tied at one corner over the shoulder (Plate V). Sometimes a piece is used as a skirt, tied at the waist, or thrown over the back as a cloak.

A very general use of this cloth has been for men's tunics or sleeveless jackets. These are made by sewing two pieces of the ramie through half of its length to form a seam at the back, leaving the sleeveless tunic open at the front. In the past tunics were woven into intricate patterns out of wool and ramie. E. C. Taintor described tunics which were "worked" (meaning woven) around the lower edge in neat and tasteful patterns in red and blue. The red in the old pieces was obtained by ravelling red wool Chinese blankets, and the blue was indigo-dyed ramie.

A description of a visit by J. B. Steere in 1869 states that the tamed barbarians in the south wore the tunic with the short loose trousers worn by Chinese in addition to a large square piece of cloth, the two adjacent corners of which were tied in a knot over the shoulder or at the back of the neck. In some places the aborigines wore then, as they do now, a piece of this cloth tied about their loins. The chiefs formerly wore one or two



PLATE III
WEARER HOLDING WITH FEET THE STICK SUPPORTING ONE
END OF THE WEB. THIS TYPE OF LOOM IS STILL IN USE.



PLATE IV
ATAYAL TYPE OF LOOM SHOWING END-
LESS BELT OF WARP TIED TOGETHER.



PLATE V

TATTOOED WOMAN WEARING RAMIE SQUARE AND
BUTTON-TRIMMED BREASTPLATE. TYPICAL ATAYAL PIECES.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D. C.



PLATE VI
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN PRIOR TO 1915 SHOWING ATAYAL WOMEN WEAVING AT TYPICAL ATAYAL LOOMS.



PLATE VII
CHIEF'S COAT OR TUNIC MADE UP OF
ELABORATE WEAVES RARELY SEEN TODAY.

of the "embroidered" (woven) coats in addition to the traditional square of ramie cloth.

The "embroidered" chief's coats or tunics in reality were made of elaborate patterns which are rarely seen today. The old pieces often had wide woven borders or woven bands at the waist or sometimes they might be composed entirely of bands of intricate patterns (Plate VII). This particular type of tunic was made only in the north by the Tsou, Bunun and Atayal tribes.

A small square of unknown origin which is found as well in other islands of the Pacific, and called a "breastplate," is worn by all the tribes on Formosa. It differs in size and type from the large square of ramie cloth since it is the distinguishing mark of the family of a chief. The breastplate illustrated is modern (Plate VIII). The square is worn on the chest as seen in Plate V, with two tapes at the top which go around the neck and two others which fasten around the waist. This piece is woven in a diamond-shaped pattern in magenta, purple, green and red made from commercially available yarns. It is trimmed with white buttons, a traditional mode of decoration in Atayal, Bunun and Tsou breastplates.

The patterned bands of black and white ramie edged with green and red which are fastened to this piece are older than the example itself; bands of this type are woven on tiny looms of bamboo. The tassels at the ends are made of old red yarn used together with blue and black beads and tiny brass bells. Bands such as these once were worn over the blouse of an Ami woman's traditional costume. They fell from around the neck over the shoulders and hung down over the breast to the wide woven belt or sash which was worn with a sheer skirt with a small brocaded diamond pattern spaced regularly on the cloth. The Ami belt (Plate IX) is an old piece which illustrates an intricate interlocking pattern which is usually considered typically Chinese and which today can be found in upper Laos. The Ami no longer weave the brocaded skirts of thin "linen" (so labeled in a museum collection) and the weaving of the belts also is said to be a lost art.

An Atayal chief's daughter in a village on the east coast was weaving a new costume for her father at the time of my visit. She was making a traditional short wool and ramie tunic with a complicated geometric pattern. The piece was much coarser in design than earlier examples and its bright garish colors were a contrast to the soft dark reds and blues in former use. The bright pink, magenta, green and purple yarns were of

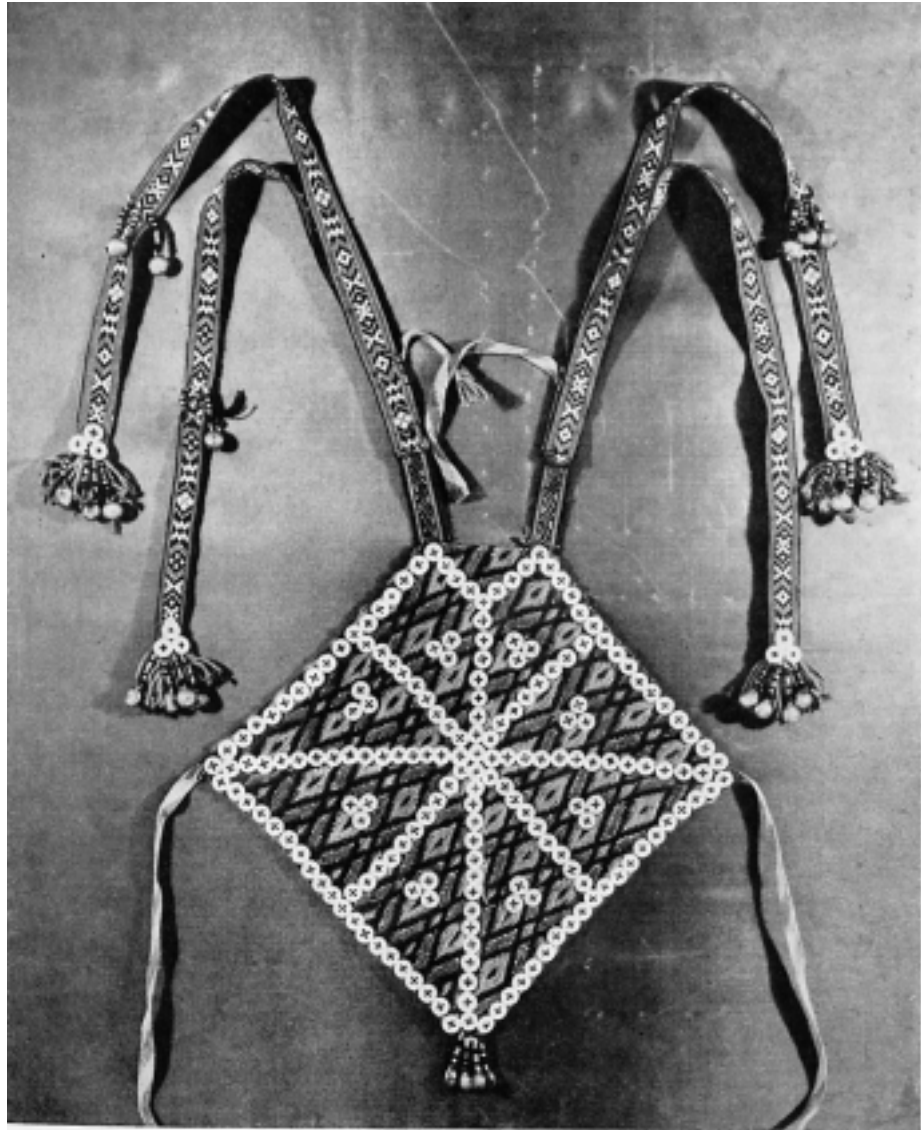


PLATE VIII
BREASTPLATE INDICATIVE OF A CHIEF.

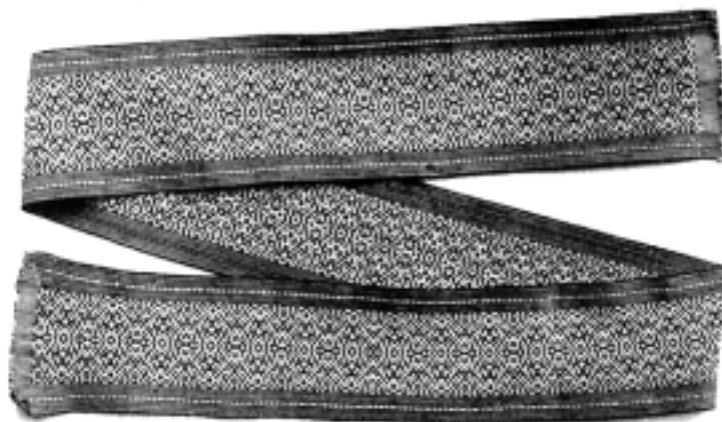


PLATE IX

AMI BELT OR SASH FORMERLY WORN OVER TRADITIONAL AMI COSTUME.

the intensity that is common taste of today.

Each tribe had distinctive patterns to decorate a typical article of common use, as the tobacco pouch which is slung at the wearer's side or from the front of the waist. The weaving in many of the early tobacco pouches is as fine as needlepoint. In the old pieces the colors were dark red, indigo blue and natural white ramie. The pouches made today in the central, western and southern parts of the island are woven in black and white and blue and white cotton in more or less typical patterns which are variations of the star design (Plate X). Today it is used infrequently in garments although formerly the Rukai and Paiwan tribes wove robes and blouses from it. It appears today in yokes and cuffs and trimmings for Rukai and Paiwan robes.

The pouch worn by a Rukai woman shows this pattern in blue and white ramie (Plate XI). It rests on her back, suspended ingeniously across her shoulders and held in place by a finely woven strap worn diagonally over one shoulder. This type of pouch is found in all parts of the island. This particular size is known as "millet" size to distinguish it from a smaller and grimmer type, described with simplicity by an early missionary as a "netted little bead bag," used in reality for the most treasured of trophies, the head of an adversary.



PLATE X
COTTON WEAVE. TYPICAL STAR DESIGN IN BLACK AND WHITE.
PHOTOGRAPH BY CHEN CHI-LU.



PLATE XI
TOBACCO POUCH IN STAR PATTERN WORN BY RUKAI WOMAN.

Patterns such as that shown in the pouch and used to trim robes among the southern tribes bear a resemblance to similar types found in Mexico and South America, introduced there originally by Spanish padres.

A remarkable example of weaving from the central plains is found in the museum collection at the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at National Taiwan University in Taipei. It is a skirt woven by a woman of a small tribal division in that area, known as Peipohoan (Plate XII). The extraordinary design is enhanced by the deep rich shades of indigo blue, yellow and red with bands of white. The materials used are ramie, straw, and cotton. A skirt of this type occurs in the Philippines woven in an ikat pattern from ramie.

The patterns in this Peipohoan weaving show a relationship in design to those woven in Assam, Burma, north Indo-China and Hainan island. The university anthropologists were encouraging the one old woman familiar with these patterns and weaves to teach the younger women of the tribe.

The so-called "aborigine cloth" or ramie which is most commonly made throughout the island, according to travellers, was woven previous to 1947 of natural undyed ramie with strips of vegetable-dyed brown (Plate XIII). Black was sometimes used, though rarely, instead of brown, this dye apparently imported from China or Japan. The traditional striped patterns with the rich browns against the creamy-white undyed ramie ground which are woven by native women on primitive looms are both distinctive and handsome. The restraint and simplicity of the stripes and weaves compare favorably in design and technique with fabrics made today in the modern world by professional weavers.

The Rukai weave a pure white ramie sometimes edged with a thin line of black to wrap the bodies of the dead. The Paiwan sometimes wove a coarse cloth with a diamond-shaped pattern in black and white or a simplified form of the star pattern greatly enlarged. There were no contemporary examples of the black and white weaves available at the time when I was on the island.

The Bunun weave a fine twill from a rare variety of ramie which grows in warmer areas. A tunic of this soft silken type may sometimes be decorated at the waist with woven bands in red and black.

The rich warm brown was the color most often used with the undyed fiber. It is still obtained from a locally grown tuber called the dye yam. This bulb has long been a chief article of trade of the aborigines, who have grown it for generations in the high mountains. Its juice has been used



PLATE XII

SKIRT OF RAMIE, STRAW AND COTTON WOVEN
BY WOMAN IN PEIPOHOAN AREA.
MUSEUM COLLECTION, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY,
NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, TAIPEI.

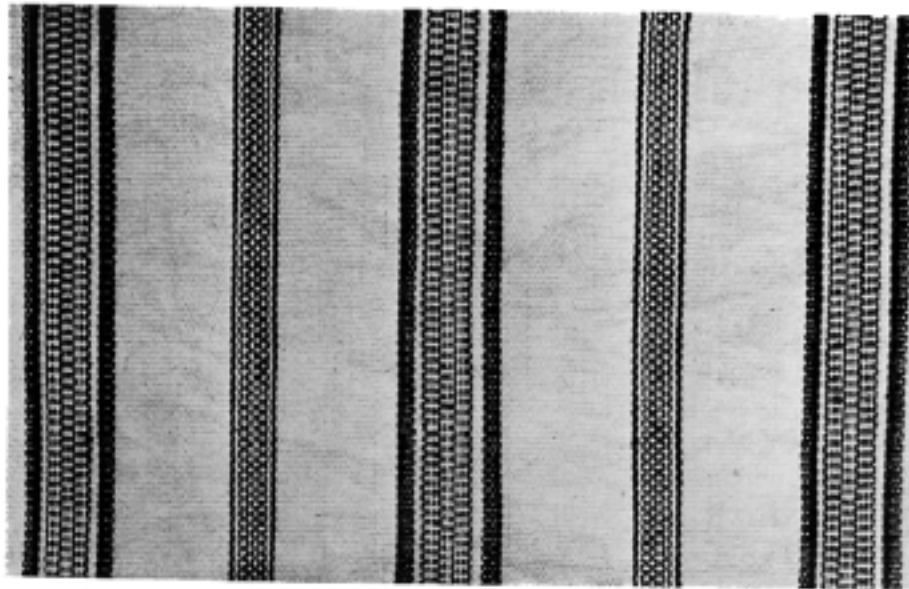


PLATE XIII

BROWN AND WHITE RAMIE WOVEN BEFORE 1936.
COLLECTION OF GEORGE H. KERR.

as a proof against rot. Fish nets, sails and other cloth were dyed with it.

It is regrettable that a coarser, colored ramie is becoming more popular than the vegetable-dyed brown and white. Today ramie cloth is woven from fibers which have been dyed in yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, blue or gray. Often the color combinations are unusual and attractive, but the cloth lacks the distinction of the traditional patterns. Often the lengths are decorated with appliquéd figures and mottoes with tourist appeal reading "Welcome to Taiwan" "Visit Taipei" etc. The colored lengths appeal to tourists and are popular with the wives of American military and mission personnel, hence the brown and white is woven less today than formerly.

A modern example of east coast Atayal ramie cloth is a large piece, fifty-four inches wide and sixty inches long (Plate XIV). Here the village weaver has brocaded the dyed green ramie in a bold pattern in yellow. The cloth is made up of three eighteen-inch wide strips sewn together with pink thread. Fine stripes at the edge of the strips are in pink, red, yellow and green. A braided fringe completes the piece.

In one northern Atayal village I photographed the only weaver left in the village. The Atayal woman sat on a mat inside her hut which was a crude typical Atayal thatched dwelling made of rough slabs of wood, with a dirt floor several feet below the level of the earth. She fastened the back-strap around her waist, braced her feet against the warp-beam, and threw the shuttle. The beating resounded in the hollow beam like a wooden gong which was heard throughout the village. In former days, the loom was the pride of a family, and the reputation of a woman was said to rest upon her weaving skill.

The Bunun tribe use a similar loom with a warp-beam made out of a hollow log, but instead of tapering to the top, as the Atayal loom does, the beam is rectangular.

The Paiwan and the Puyuma use a simple portable back-strap loom with a slender slat of wood for the beam against which the weaver braces the soles of her bare feet as in Plate III.

Another type of loom is used both in the north and south. The weaver sits on a low platform or bed, and fastens the warp to a slat which is braced between posts at the foot of the platform. The loom is held by a back-strap at the weaver's waist (Plate XV).

The most beautiful loom that I saw was in an Ami village where weaving was no longer done because the tribe had been relocated in a locality where proper ramie could not be grown. The loom parts were



PLATE XIV
GREEN RAMIE PANEL BROCADED IN YELLOW.



PLATE XV

PUYUMA WOMAN WEAVING ON LOW PLATFORM OR BED.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHEN CHI-LU.

finely lacquered. The sword was paper thin and the other pieces were delicate. The loom had been carefully hidden away, wrapped in pieces of old cloth. As the weaver showed us her loom her expression brought to mind the story of those east coast people long ago singing their sad songs.

The southern tribes do exceptional embroidery, cross-stitch and appliqué along with weaving. Chief Putuan of Budai village of the Rukai tribe (Frontispiece), who wears so handsomely his embroidered costume worked in a typical Paiwan design of diamond-shaped motifs in yellow, light red, and gray-green silk floss on black cotton, displays on his hat a coiling snake and serpentine design as a natural heritage since the snake is considered the ancestor of his tribe. His costume is reminiscent of a dress which a visitor described in 1771 when he wrote that the village headman was clothed in a droll fashion, partly in the European manner with a sword by his side, a laced hat on his head and stockings made of cloth. It is not impossible that the present costume of the Rukai chief, with its tight-fitting jacket so far removed from native styles, may owe its origin to some European dress once seen on the island in days long gone by.

The serpent designs, similar to those motifs which occur as well on Hainan island, bear a close relationship to those on the robe of a Paiwan village chief's daughter, which she embroidered and cross-stitched herself (Plate XVI). On a ground of black cotton similar scrolling designs appear in the form of bands. The cuffs of this robe are worked in an old pattern of this region in green, yellow, orange and red with an occasional outlining in white. In older times this pattern was worked with ramie thread hand-twisted into two-ply strands; this is cotton (Plate XVII). The hands of this personable figure, resting on a rock, are delicately tattooed across the backs in indigo in accordance with the tradition of the southern tribes, a striking contrast to the style of tattooing the face, though the custom is now dying out, which is done by the Atayal women of the north, as seen in Plate V, where the dark indigo is like a mask.

The custom of tattooing appears more than once among reports written by European visitors. Father de Mailla, for example, who it will be remembered was engaged at one time in mapping the south, after stating that the tribes there wore only a piece of ramie cloth from waist to knee, adds that "our savage friends" made use of their own skins instead of using printed cloth, decorating themselves with animals, trees and flowers.

Over forty years ago, tunics and coats worn by the men of the south were appliquéd with animals, trees and flowers, those patterns once on the skin having been transferred to cloth or animal skin coats.



PLATE XVI

PAIWAN CHIEF'S DAUGHTER IN PAIWAN VILLAGE WEARING ROBE WHICH SHE HAS EMBROIDERED HERSELF.
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARGERY JENSEN.

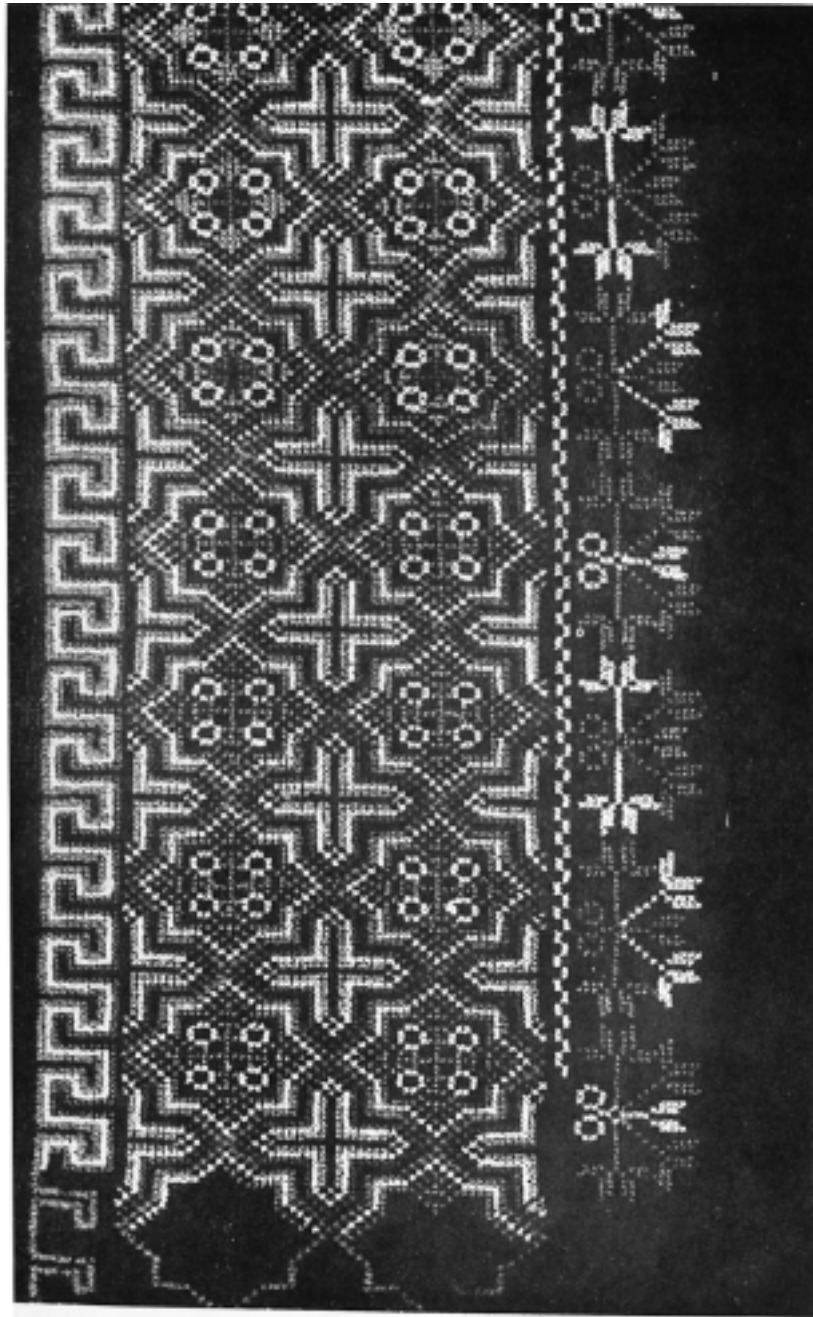


PLATE XVII

RUKAI TYPICAL CROSS-STITCH PATTERN.

MUSEUM COLLECTION, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY, NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, TAIPEI.

Besides the snake motif of the south, human figures and heads or masks are important elements in design. A wooden panel, which is a typical decoration used under the eaves of a slate and stone house, illustrates these elements which are found in Rukai, Paiwan and Puyuma villages (Plate XVIII). These designs are used for appliqué made for several generations out of velvet on red cotton. Paiwan and Rukai village women showed me new appliqué made in this manner which incorporated heads or masks, snakes and human figures into the design. This was used on robes and the new style Westernized skirts.

The Paiwan chief's daughter embroidered for a visitor, as well as her own robe, bands and cuffs on which she worked serpents, heads or masks and stylized floral designs in bright red, yellow, green and white cotton thread on the bands of the familiar black cotton cloth (Plate XIX).

In a Puyuma village tribal communal house, I saw large carvings employing the same motifs. An interesting row of carved wooden heads which rested on a rafter had snakes carved as eyebrows.

Though weaving and embroidery and cross-stitch decline with the increasing prestige of manufactured cloth, these arts which for centuries have been fostered by ritual and tradition are still maintained by the women. In the southern tribes the priestess has exerted a powerful influence; in fact the first missionaries blamed her for their failures, and her influence in tribes where the woman has always enjoyed equality with the men, and frequently superiority, still exists. In several villages where the old arts were thought to be forgotten, we found that young women were still being instructed by accomplished elder women.

Old records voiced regret over the disappearance of aborigine cultures. Death and decay of these races seemed imminent to one writer in 1873. (Quoted but not identified by Janet McGovern.¹³) The history of these people today and the survival of their textiles demonstrate a remarkable courage and persistence. It is sincerely hoped that the aborigine people will be encouraged to continue their arts, which although in decline today, in many respects were still being carried on vigorously, at least up until the last war.



PLATE XVIII

WOODEN PANEL USED FOR DECORATION UNDER EAVES OF SLATE AND
STONE HOUSE SHOWING HEADS, MASKS, SNAKES AND HUMAN FIGURES.



PLATE XIX

DETAIL OF EMBROIDERED BANDS MADE FOR A ROBE BY THE DAUGHTER OF A PAIWAN CHIEF.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement is made to the Department of Reconstruction of the Taiwan Provincial Government and the staff who arranged visits to aborigine areas; to Chen Chi-lu for assistance in identifying aborigine textiles; to S. L. Yen for valuable information; also to Dr. Elizabeth Huff and staff members Albert Dien and William Osuga for assistance at the University of California East Asiatic Library.

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2. Davidson, James W., "A Review of the History of Formosa and a Sketch of the Life of Koxinga, the First King of Formosa," Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, May 28, 1896.
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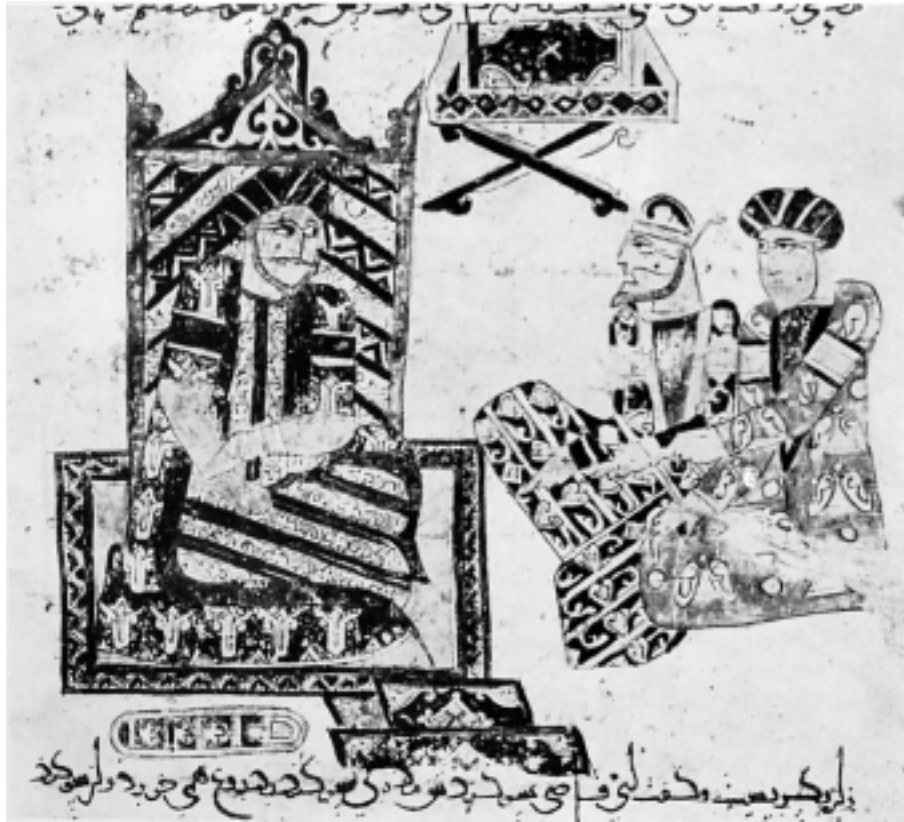


FIG. 1

PAINTING FROM THE *Andarz Nama* MANUSCRIPT, DATED 1090 A.D., IN THE CINCINNATI MUSEUM, SHOWING FOLIATED STRIPES, AND A SPLIT-ACANTHUS POWDERED PATTERN.

SOME MEDIAEVAL SILKS
FROM THE CASPIAN PROVINCES OF IRAN

by

PHYLLIS ACKERMAN

AT THE EASTERN END of the Caspian Sea lies the Persian province, Gurgan. Civilization dawned there very early indeed, and weaving was already established thousands of years ago. Professor Carleton Coon, of the University of Pennsylvania, excavated, in 1951, a cave a few miles from the southeastern corner of the Caspian shore, where people had lived, made pottery, grown crops, raised goats and sheep, and spun and woven the hair and wool about 6000 B.C. — the date scientifically determined by carbon radiation tests. An ancient Persian tradition tells how Jamshid, one of the great Persian legendary rulers, “settled craftsmen and artificers in the province, assigning land to each one.”¹ And Jamshid is associated with the Achaemenid period: the magnificent ruins of the Achaemenid ritual city near Shiraz which we call “Persepolis,” “Persian City,” are called by Persians even today “Jamshid’s Palace,” “Takht-i-Jamshidi.” But any Achaemenid official (even a legendary one!) establishing arts and crafts in an outpost of empire would have included some of the weavers and dyers who produced the famous fine, soft Achaemenid wools, noted for their beautiful tones of violet and mulberry.²

The great period for the province of Gurgan in the history of textiles, however, came with the introduction of silk. How the Chinese, with crafty determination, long concealed the source and nature of this most precious and beautiful of textile fibers has been told and retold, as has the story about the final betrayal of the secret, when a few silkworms were carried out in a hollow staff in the sixth century; and in that same period cocoons were brought into Gurgan, the industry there was soon flourishing, and from there it was carried along the Caspian littoral, first to the adjacent province of Tabaristan (also called Mazanderan), and then to the next coastal province, Gilan, and the mountain area behind that, Dailam. By the early Middle Ages all four of these provinces were famous, not only for their silk production, but also for fine fabrics woven in various towns.

Many stories have been handed down in Persian literature emphasizing the wealth of silk available in this coastal area. Thus a Sasanian Governor of Tabaristan (the title was "Ispahbad," and this title persisted well down into the Middle Ages) sent as an annual tribute to the King a forty-mule caravan of precious things which included 300 bales of silk mats and coverlets, 300 bales of good colored cotton, and 300 bales of gold-worked garments, called, from the towns which specialized in them, "Ruyani" and "Lafuragi"; and when the Caliph al-Mansur (754-775 A.D.) sent the Ispahbad of that period a royal crown and robe of honor, the Ispahbad was so pleased that he agreed to send the Caliph the same tribute that his predecessors had sent to the Sasanian rulers.³

Amul, as well as Ruyan, was an important Tabaristan textile center, the two producing various kinds of fabrics of cotton, wool, silk and linen, and making garments and also draperies and handkerchiefs.⁴ The abundant supply of silk in Amul is conveyed by a boastful tale about a certain rich citizen named 'Ali ibn Hisham, who, when he gave a banquet, instead of strewing the board with cress to give a fresh appearance (in itself a charming custom), had his servants shred green silk and scatter this over the table⁵ (surely not nearly so attractive!).

Textiles from the town of Sari⁶ were described as "sumptuous," and the industry had been stimulated there when the Ispahbad Khurshid (733-766 A.D.) built a bazaar in the town and established in it skilled artisans from all parts of Tabaristan.⁷

Ibn Haukal, writing in 928, gives an impressive account of the textile trades in this central coastal province: "In Tabaristan one finds enough silk thread to supply the whole universe — no other country in the Muslim world produces as much. They make there various qualities of silk fabrics, rich woollen garments, and extraordinary *bouracan* (a fabric named for the Central Asian city of Buchara, and apparently a very fine quality of linen or cotton material). Nowhere else can one find materials as valuable as the garments, *bouracan*, and silk robes (*mitraf*) of Tabaristan. When these textiles are worked with gold they cost as much as those made in Fars, or even a little more. They make cotton handkerchiefs in Tabaristan (cotton was then a luxury material), 'foulards' (*shirabaya*), and cushions — both monochrome and gold-woven. The color resembles the cotton which is dyed yellow of Sa'da and Sar'a, and they weave an especially beautiful fabric from it which is highly prized by the Iraqis."⁸ In addition, rose-colored stamped stuffs from Tabaristan are listed, along

with other valuable things, at the Court of the fabulous Mahmud of Ghazna.⁹

The wealth of silk available in this part of Persia in the twelfth century is suggested by a number of stories. Thus it is said that when the Amir of Hilla took refuge with the Ispahbad 'ala ud-Dawla ibn Shahriyar (1122-1143), the Ispahbad sent the refugee, on the day of his arrival, a welcoming gift which included 300 coats and caps and 100 girdles.¹⁰ Or again, some of the courtiers and friends of another Ispahbad came to visit him one night in Amul and he bestowed on them 500 silken garments.¹¹

In the easternmost coastal province, Gurgan, the city of Astarabad was noted, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, for both silk yarn and silk weaving, and in 1054 it was stated that the majority of the city's population were weavers. Among the fabrics of great value made in Astarabad were *harir* (which merely means a silk fabric, probably most often plain cloth), *mubram*, and a fabric called *Kushkashshi* which was finer and softer than the Nishapur *haffi* (a fine soft white fabric used for turbans, probably cotton). Silk scarves made in Gurgan were exported all the way to the Yemen.¹²

These evidences of the importance of the textile crafts in the Caspian provinces, and specifically in Gurgan, are of special interest now in relation to the numerous, varied and detailed representations of textile designs in the miniatures of an already-famous Gurgan manuscript acquired in 1953 by the Cincinnati Museum of Art.

In 1078 (470 H.) Q'ai Qa'us ibn Washmgir, ruler of Gurgan, began to write, for his son Gilanshah (the sixth and last of his line to hold power), an *Andarz Nama*, a Book of Good Counsel, and two and a half years later the King had finished it. This type of Book of Advice (*Andarz Nama*) continued a Sasanian tradition, for essays setting forth both theoretical and practical principles of personal conduct had begun to be popular in the last century of Sasanian rule, and treatises of this character produced in the post-Sasanian era, of which several examples have survived, were commonly attributed to Sasanian notables, including one which claims no less an author than King Khusraw I Anushirvan himself.¹³

The *Andarz Nama* manuscript which Q'ai Qa'us had finished in 1080 was copied by a Master Calligrapher, Shirda ibn Shirdil al Isfabudi al Tabari, who was very probably on the Palace staff, and it was illustrated, almost certainly by the same hand, with about 100 paintings. His great labor was completed in July, 1090 (27th of Jumada al-Ula, 483 H.). One-half the manuscript, including forty-four of the paintings and both



FIG. 2

PAININGS FROM THE *Andarz Nama* MANUSCRIPT, DATED 1090 A.D., IN THE CINCINNATI MUSEUM, SHOWING FOLIATED STRIPES, POWDERED PATTERNS, AND AN ALL-OVER DESIGN OF SCROLLING FOLIATION.

the frontispiece and the colophon, are now in the Cincinnati Museum. These paintings are two centuries older than the earliest Persian book paintings previously known, and are in a style quite novel and unexpected. The manuscript and its paintings have already received world acclaim among students of Muslim culture.¹⁴

The paintings in the Cincinnati section of the manuscript show over a hundred textile designs, mostly on garments, but also on curtains, cushions, coverlets, mats and saddle-blankets. Since the weavers and users of these fabrics depicted in the paintings were almost all members of the Gurgan Court and silk was so abundant in Gurgan and its neighbor provinces, we can safely assume that in general the materials shown were silks.

An immediately striking characteristic of these textile designs is the extensive use of patterned stripes, especially foliated stripes. While many are in the standard vertical stripe arrangement, an exceptional proportion are horizontally striped, and still more unusual is the frequency of diagonal stripes. Recurrent in the patterns are acanthus bracts, usually split, a direct Sasanian inheritance. These are often attached in symmetrical pairs, to a spot motive: a heart or trefoil (Fig. 1, l. and r.), a disk or ring, or a cross (Fig. 2, two figures on r.), and the unit is repeated in juxtaposed succession to create a foliate continuum. In other patterns the half-acanthus leaves are carried on scrolling stems, and these scrolling foliate stems, deeply curving, with broad full foliage, also are employed as all-over patterns (Fig. 2, l.), an antecedent of the arabesque style that reached its culmination on sixteenth century Persian Court carpets.

On other fabrics shown in the *Andarz Nama* paintings, acanthus bracts are developed into motives for powdered patterns. Thus a leaf on a long stem is split, almost to the base of the stem, an arrow is inserted in this split, and the two halves of the leaf are bent to either side to make a formal treelet (Fig. 1, l.); or the two halves of a split leaf are fitted to either side of a conical pedestal (Fig. 1, r.); or for a richer effect, each of a pair of leaves atop a shorter stem is split, and the segments are curled, one up, so that the pair is "vis-à-vis," the other down, making a fourfold semi-palmette (Fig. 2, next to l. end). Of abstract motives, the equilateral cross is exceptionally conspicuous, and that, too, is often foliated (Fig. 2, next to r. end); likewise, the upper edge of an inverted heart may be foliated, or the figure is set in an acanthus bracket.

Especially broad, strong foliation in exceptionally large scale is shown on saddle-blankets (Fig. 3); and two pieces of silk from the royal graves on the site of the mediaeval capital of Rayy,¹⁵ which are unusually heavy—



FIG. 3

PAINING FROM THE *Andarz Nama* MANUSCRIPT, DATED 1090 A.D., IN THE CINCINNATI MUSEUM, SHOWING A SADDLE-BLANKET DECORATED WITH LARGE-SCALE ACANTHUS FOLIATION, AND ON THE GENTLEMAN'S ROBE A DESIGN OF PAIRED CONFRONTED PEACOCKS WITH OGIVAL PLAQUE TAILS.

as silks for saddle-mats would have to be — have an all-over arrangement of broad strong foliation, closely similar in style to that on saddle-blankets in *Andarz Nama* illustrations. Against this foliation on one of the pieces from the Rayy graves are pairs of confronted peacocks (Fig. 4), the bird's displayed tail stylized as an ogival plaque. But a peacock pattern appears also on the robes of two gentlemen in different miniatures (Fig. 3) in the *Andarz Nama*, with paired birds confronted flanking a small palm, and here, too, the displayed tail is an ogival plaque. The ogival tail-plaque of the peacocks on the silk from the Rayy graves has a narrow border, patterned with a bar alternating with a dot, and this combination — rather unusual despite its simplicity — is found as a stripe-pattern on some of the fabrics depicted in the *Andarz Nama*.

The eyes of horses in the *Andarz Nama* paintings (Fig. 3) — and likewise of many of the human beings — are curiously shaped and often exaggeratedly pointed at one end, with an overemphatic pupil; and the peacocks on the very heavy silk have similar peculiar eyes, as have unusual, fantastic winged deer on the second silk of this type from the Rayy graves.

These two silks are especially notable for the rich and skilful development in the foliation of void patterns which are not representative — save for a bottle-shaped vase at one juncture — so that the background ornament is, in axial areas, dual; i.e., on two levels of attention: the positive, direct composition, and the negative, shadowed pattern, revealed only to skilled exploration. Such depth and subtlety in designing could be expected only in an ancient deep-rooted textile art, and is virtually unknown in either European or Far Eastern ornament.

Another bird pattern on a textile depicted in the *Andarz Nama* (Fig. 5) is of even more immediate and indubitable evidential value in relation to surviving fabrics. On the dark cloak worn by the distinguished personage seated in the foreground are light-toned ring-necked doves standing or walking, slightly spaced in straight bands and columns, alternating with pairs of a trefoil spot, at the levels of the birds' heads and feet.

Falke illustrates a decorative painting in the Egbert Codex from Echternach (Fig. 6),¹⁶ datable about 985, transcribing a textile design which he attributed to Persia, in which the patterned stripe scheme, so conspicuous in the *Andarz Nama* designs, is developed beyond precedent, with five different units carrying four strikingly diversified patterns; and one of these is composed of ring-necked doves, standing or walking, slightly spaced in a straight line, alternating with trefoil spots at the levels of the birds' heads and feet. This is virtually identical with the design on the



FIG. 4

HEAVY SILK TWILL FROM THE ROYAL GRAVES ON THE SITE OF RAYY, WITH SCROLLING FOLIATION AND PEACOCKS IN NATURAL SILK AND DARK BLUE ON A RED GROUND. HOBART MOORE MEMORIAL COLLECTION, YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY.

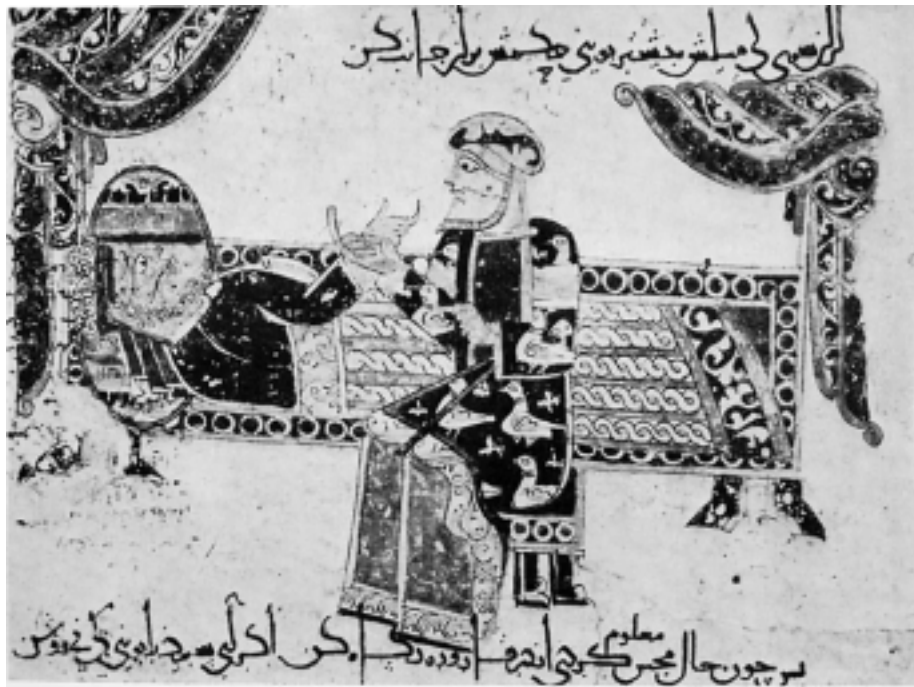


FIG. 5

ON THE CLOAK OF THE SEATED GENTLEMAN IS A PATTERN OF RING-NECKED DOVES CLOSELY SPACED IN STRAIGHT BANDS AND COLUMNS, WITH SMALL TREFOILS BETWEEN, AT THE LEVELS OF THE BIRDS' HEADS AND FEET. PAINTING FROM THE *Andarz Nama* MANUSCRIPT, DATED 1090 A.D., CINCINNATI MUSEUM OF ART.



FIG. 6

PAINING IN THE EGBERT CODEX FROM ECHTERNACH, DATABLE *c.* 985, SHOWING RING-NECKED DOVE PATTERN CLOSELY SIMILAR TO THAT IN FIGURE 5, AND OTHER DESIGNS RELATED TO PATTERNS IN THE *Andarz Nama* MANUSCRIPT.



FIG. 7

SILK TWILL WITH HAWK AND FLABELLUM DESIGN IN RED AND BLUE, RELATED TO THE DOVE DESIGNS IN FIGURES 5 AND 6. BRUSSELS MUSEUM (NO. 374).

cloak in the *Andarz Nama* miniature; indeed, the two could have been drawn by the same hand. The only difference is that in the Codex transcription, each bird carries in its beak a pomegranate leaf, and wears the straight, “floating” Sasanian ribbons — probably the reason why Falke called the design Persian, though the convention was borrowed at other textile centers, notably Antioch-on-the-Orontes.¹⁷

In the adjacent stripe the bird, still wearing the ribbons, which indicate that it was a symbolic bird, faces in the opposite direction and the color combination is changed. In the next stripe a circle enclosing a six-pointed star alternates with a split-acanthus tree, vertically overturned on a spot fulcrum; the same treelet appears in a number of patterns shown in the *Andarz Nama*. In the next, a variant of this duplicated overturned treelet alternates with a dotted ring enclosing an equilateral cross trefflé. Equilateral crosses are, as we have already noted, strikingly frequent in *Andarz Nama* patterns. Finally a “griffon” appears in the next stripe — actually a winged hound, oddly three-legged, with eagle talons for feet. The creature is repeated in overturn, flanking a triple group of pyramidal cypresses, the tallest one, in the center, sprouting branches which bear pomegranate leaves.

(The dove was an attribute of the Sasanian Great Goddess, Ardvi Sura Anahit; the “griffon” is one version of her animal avatar, the Senmurv, or — literally — “Dog-bird,” which nested on her cosmic tree, the Golden Haoma or Tree-of-Many-Seeds, often represented as a pomegranate because of its fruit of many seeds. The cypress, on the other hand, is one of the trees that was used to represent the Silver Haoma, which was the dendritic appendage to the God Tishtriya, personation of the “Rain-star” Sirius, who collaborated with Ardvi Sura in providing health, wealth and happiness for humanity. Loyalty to the old, pre-Islamic ideas and figures was characteristic of the Caspian provinces, which did not accept Islam for some two centuries after the rest of Iran had become Muslim, and even then, Sasanian cultural elements, like the Governor’s title, “Ispahbad,” were retained.)

A red and blue silk twill in the Brussels Museum, with red and yellow introduced arbitrarily in spaced bands, also published by Falke, but classed, surprisingly, as “West Islamic,” presents hawks in exactly the same style as the *Andarz Nama* ring-dove pattern, but with the trefoil spots now scattered on the breasts of the birds (Fig. 7).¹⁸ Between these falcons, paired and confronted in symmetrical overturn, is a pair of split-acanthus bracts “*vis-à-vis*,” closely similar to a motive that recurs in

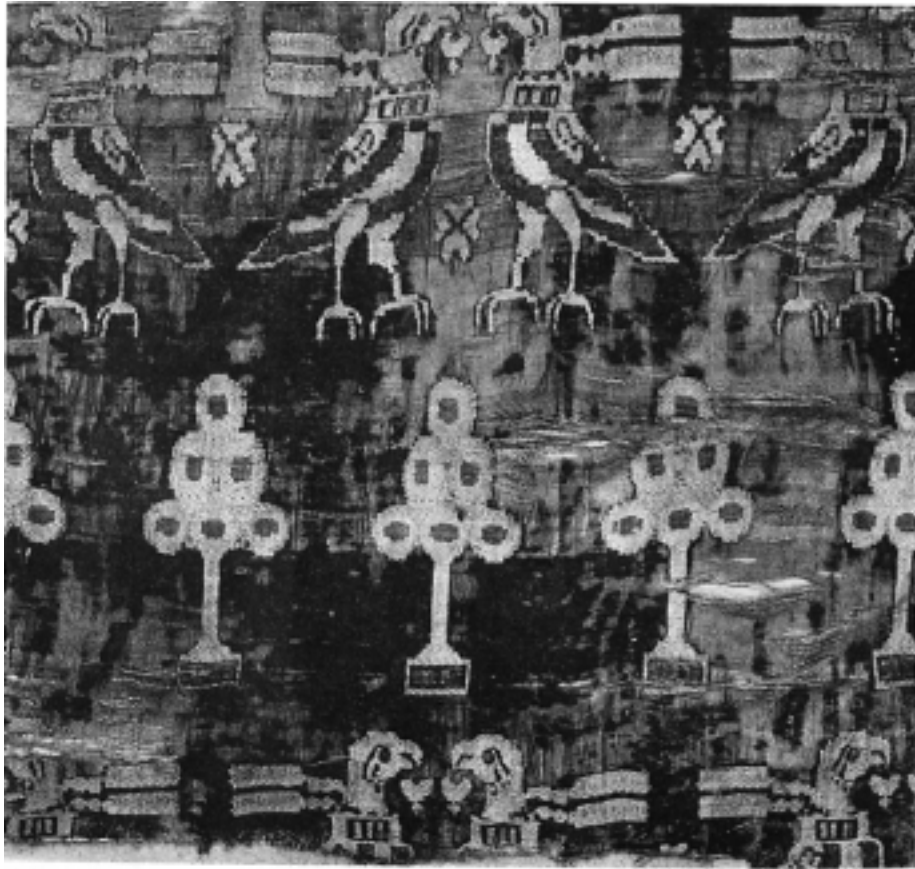


FIG. 8

SILK TWILL IN THE MUSÉE DE CLUNY SHOWING
HAWKS RELATED TO THE BIRDS IN FIGURES 6 AND 7.

Andarz Nama patterns (*cf.* the “semi-palmette” in Fig. 2); and alternating with this group is a disk flabellum, the margin decorated with the small equilateral crosses, so common in the *Andarz Nama* designs, the handle elaborated with a split-acanthus bract of a type repeatedly used in the *Andarz Nama*. The repeats on the Brussels silk are arranged like those on the *Andarz Nama* bird silk, in straight bands and columns, slightly spaced. The falcon is a hunting bird, wearing jesses and, attached to its lower mandible, a bell, which European falconers also have used on short-winged hawks, but attached to the tails.

Falke found a closely similar variant of this design reproduced as a decoration in the Codex Aureus of Echternach, in the Escorial, which is datable prior to 1046.¹⁹ The pattern is arranged in horizontal stripes, so marked a feature of textile designs in the *Andarz Nama*, with a four-stripe repeat, two of the stripes having the falcon, but walking in opposite directions. The bird has the mandible-bell but is not jessed, and has the floating Sasanian ribbons; and alternating with it is a twelve-point star-rosette flabellum on a stand. The next stripe motive is another flabellum on a stand, with the equilateral cross in the center and the upper margin foliated, like the foliation on the upper edge of the inverted heart used as a spot repeat on *Andarz Nama* textiles. A palmette on a festooned stem used in the remaining stripe is so divergent in style, it looks like a substitution introduced by the Codex illuminator.

Almost the same hawk, with floating ribbons and mandible bell, appears on a blue-ground silk twill, in the Musée de Cluny, Paris, hitherto unattributed (Fig. 8). The bird is duplicated in confronted pairs flanking a heart quatrefoil and the group alternates with a heart quatrefoil, while in the alternate band is an artificial tree built of six rings on a slender trunk; the ring is frequently used as point of attachment in paired leaf units in *Andarz Nama* textile patterns.

Finally, a long-puzzling silk, never successfully identified, seems to belong to the same general group. The pattern is known only incompletely from two small circular fragments from a seal-bag in Canterbury Cathedral (Fig. 9). Here are the acanthus bracts “*vis-à-vis*,” as the crown of an artificial tree. The segments meet to form a very obvious void-pattern of a bottle-vase, and a void-vase has already been noted on the heavy, peacock-patterned silk. The tree is flanked by a pair of heavily wattled cocks (pheasants ?), apparently feeding, and the alternate and more important motive was a rich triadic palmette tree flanked by a tonsured individual whose long face, long straight neck, long nose, tiny mouth and big ovoid



FIG. 9

FRAGMENTS OF SILK TWILL FROM A SEAL-BAG, IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL, SHOWING CONFRONTED ACANTHUS BRACETS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN FIG. 6, AND HEAD OF MAN SIMILAR IN STYLE TO FIGURES IN THE *Andarz Nama*.

eyes with a heavy black pupil floating in the center all have counterparts in equally curious looking personalities in the *Andarz Nama*. This design is not as directly related to the *Andarz Nama* paintings as are the bird patterns, but it seems to come within the same artistic orbit, and the figures in the "Book of Good Counsel" are the first that have been found which resemble this odd-looking sacerdotal personality on the famous Canterbury fragments.

That Europe obtained silk from the Caspian coast of Iran has already been suggested more than once, on European documentary grounds. Thus mediaeval European records contain numerous references to a *seta stravai*, also written *stravagi*, *stravatina*, and sometimes, by corruption *stranai*. Just what kind of silk (*seta*) this "*stravai*" meant was long a puzzle, but finally "*stravai*" was interpreted as a latinization of "*strabadi*," from "Astarabad."²⁰ Again, there is a considerable number of rune-stones, in central and southern Sweden, erected chiefly *c.* 1000-1100 A.D., to the memory of men who had died in "Särkland," which at this time was probably, according to Professor T. J. Arne, the southern shore of the Caspian, called "Särkland" because it was the source of silk, "*särk*" being derived from "*sericus*," "silk."²¹

The presence in Europe of these silk fabrics, now attributable to the shore of the Caspian through directly relevant evidence in the *Andarz Nama* paintings, adds support to the thesis of a considerable Caspian-European silk trade, and also shows that woven materials, as well as the silk itself, were carried into European markets.

FOOTNOTES

1. E. G. Browne, *Ibn Isfandiyar's History of Tabaristan*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Vol. II, Leyden-London, 1905, p. 15.
2. Herodotos, *Historia*: Vol. II, pp. 20, 22; Vol. IX, pp. 22, 80, 82; Xenophon, *Kyropaedia*, Vol. VIII, Vol. III, pp. 3, 13; Plutarch, *Lives*, Alexander, *passim*.
3. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
4. Ya'kubi, p. 277; Sir Wm. Ouseley, *Ibn Haukal*, p. 179; *Ibn Rusteh*, p. 154; *Mukaddasi*, p. 359; *Yakut*, Vol. I, p. 68; *see* G. Wiet, *L'Exposition Persane de 1931*, Le Caire, 1933, pp. 122, 93, 94. Also *see*: Ackerman, *Textiles of the Islamic Periods*, *in* A. U. Pope (Ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art*, Oxford, 1939, Vol. III, p. 1995.
5. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
6. *Mukaddasi*, p. 359; G. LeStrange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1930, p. 370.
7. H. L. Rabino, *Mazanderan and Astarabad* (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial N.S. VII), London, 1928, p. 52.
8. *Ibn Haukal*, p. 272 (repeatedly cited).
9. Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 283 ff. (quoting Gardizi).
10. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
12. Muh. 358; *Vis u Ramun*, by Gurgani, ch. 13, v. 16 (reference kindly supplied by Dr. Richard Ettinghausen); *Istakhri*, p. 161 (W. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant*, Leipzig, 1923, Vol. I, p. 46) (also cited Wiet, *op. cit.*, p. 94); *Mukaddasi*, p. 367 (see also LeStrange, *op. cit.*, p. 38) (also cited Wiet, *op. cit.*, p. 101); *Ibn al Fakih*, p. 254; *al-Tha'alabi*, p. 114 (Wiet, p. 101); see also Rabino, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
13. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Copenhagen, 1936, p. 52.
14. See Pope, *The Recently Discovered Eleventh Century Andarz Nama*, *Journal of the Institute for Asian Studies* (Hyderabad-Dekkan) Vol. I, p. 1 (1955), pp. 1-14 (two plates).
15. The Writer formerly tentatively suggested a Yazd origin for this silk and the companion piece, since Yazd was especially famous about this time for a heavy type of silk: Pope (Ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art*, Vol. III, p. 2010. It might be relevant that Yazd weavers were getting silk from Astarabad (Heyd, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 693), suggesting other possible relations between the two cities. The second piece is illustrated in Pope (Ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art*, Vol. VI, pl. 986A.
16. O. v. Falke, *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei*, Berlin, 1913, Abb. 137; or *idem*, *Decorative Silks*, New York, 1922, Fig. 102.
17. See D. Wilber, *Sasanian Motives*, *Bulletin of the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology*, Vol. V, p. 1 (June, 1937).
18. Falke, *Seidenweberei*, Abb. 172; or *Decorative Silks*, Fig. 130.
19. Falke, *Seidenweberei*, Abb. 173; or *Decorative Silks*, Fig. 131.
20. Heyd, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 671.
21. Agnes Geijer, *Oriental Textiles in Sweden*, Copenhagen, 1951, p. 16.

BOOK NOTES

SHAWLS, by John Irwin.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, England, 1955. \$2.85.

The patient student spending hours in museum libraries in quest of material to record the story of the India shawl, will view with envy and appreciation the recent book by John Irwin, Assistant Keeper in the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Under the title of SHAWLS Mr. Irwin has set forth in clear and readable language a detailed account of shawl weaving from the soft wool fleece derived from the mountain goat dwelling in the rigors of winter at high altitudes, to the sumptuous weaves prized in the East by emperors and potentates.

In his narrative the author covers not only the shawls of India but those also of the West where these brilliantly colored fabrics with their sophistication of design and perfection of technique brought into the world of fashion a new note which dominated up to the late nineteenth century the wealthy and discriminating classes. He traces likewise the changes that took place when the intricate processes of the native weaver gave way to the mechanical technique of the Jacquard loom.

It is Mr. Irwin's good fortune to occupy an official position which has given him access to sources closed naturally to the amateur, but of these he has made the utmost use and he shares them generously in his bibliography which gives a list of interesting books along with sample books whose perusal requires official permission, a list of manuscripts and other archival source material, catalogues which include private collections, and what is termed "General Works" which, in its two and a half pages of printed text, would seem to cover every publication which has to do with the use and manufacture of shawls, both domestic and foreign.

The book is illustrated with numbers of fine plates, some in color and all relating to points that occur in the text. With this comprehensive treatment of the multitudinous processes involved in the production of the India shawl the book should prove a delight to the serious reader who is intent on acquiring accurate knowledge. Altogether it is a most admirable little volume.

PARACAS FABRICS AND NAZCA NEEDLEWORK, 3RD CENTURY B.C.—3RD CENTURY A.D., by Junius Bird, with Technical Analysis by Louisa Bellinger.

Published by the National Publishing Co., Washington, D. C., for the Textile Museum, Washington, D. C. 1954. \$18.00.

The author of this handsome volume, Dr. Bird, is associate curator of archeology at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. This is the first part of a Catalogue Raisonné planned ultimately to cover the large collection of Peruvian Textiles in the Textile Museum in Washington, D. C., of which George Hewitt Myers is the President.

The subject of this part one of the catalogue consists of ninety-odd specimens, each of which is illustrated in black and white, while fourteen beautiful color-plates give added details. Many specimens are shown in enlargements which give a clear understanding of the techniques in both weaving and embroidery. It is astonishing to those of us who are familiar with the textiles of the early cultures of comparable periods in the Near East and Far East, to recognize not only similar woven fabrics but also many familiar embroidery techniques, here applied to specimens whose fantastic and often almost sinister designs are so entirely remote from any forms ever seen in the classical countries of the ancient world.

The subject of these Paracas and Nazca fabrics is presented with scholarly care and documentation and there is a long annotated bibliography. The fact that there were no written records before the coming of the Spaniards, adds to the difficulties of the student of the early civilizations of the Andean regions. Modern archaeology and scientific research are gradually constructing a framework which this valuable study should be helpful in amplifying.

SCHWEIZERISCHE LEINENSTICKEREIEN

des Mittelalters und der Renaissance, von Verena Trudel.

Schweizer Heimatbücher, herausgegeben von Dr. Walter Laedrach, Nr.61/62, verlag Paul Haupt, Bern, Switzerland, 1954.

Swiss embroideries on linen of the Middle Ages and Renaissance have long deserved the complete and systematic treatment accorded them in this compact two-volume paperbound book in German. Related in style and subject matter to the better-known German embroideries of the same period, these embroideries form an interesting and often beautiful sub-

ject of study and appreciation by the embroiderer and designer, as well as by the student of history, art history, and iconography.

Dr. Trudel has experience in analyzing and cleaning ancient textiles gained under Dr. Agnes Geijer at the Stockholm National Museum and has written several articles on Swiss embroideries published in Europe. She has presented in one small volume concise chapters on material and techniques, uses, a proposed chronology, composition, embroidery on linen in relation to embroidery in general, preliminary sketches, localizing of types, its care and preservation. This volume is illustrated with eight photographs of actual groups of stitches, eight wood-cuts contemporary to the embroideries and showing same subjects, and thirty-two clear black and white plates of the embroideries themselves.

The second volume is a very complete *catalogue raisonné* of the four hundred and ten embroideries known to Dr. Trudel at the time of writing with an index by theme, and index by place of preservation, and bibliography.



CLUB NOTES

For the first meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club for 1955, Miss Marian Hague and Miss Lois Clark invited the members of the Club to view on Friday, January fourteenth, an exhibition of miniature tapestries woven with delicate perfection by Miss Clark and shown at the apartment of Miss Hague, 333 East 68th Street, from three to five o'clock. With these were shown small tapestries from the Graeco-Roman era to the eighteenth century from Europe, China and ancient Peru.

A sombre note developed with the invitation for Wednesday, February sixteenth following the sudden death of the hostess, Miss E. Mabel Clark, a faithful and valued member of the Club, which was to have been held at her house, 831 Madison Avenue (transferred later to the Colony Club), to hear Miss Erica Wilson of the Royal School of Needlework, speak on church and domestic embroidery done by the School. The talk was illustrated by examples lent by the Museum of Cooper Union and by private collectors.

A generous group of eight members, Mrs. A. Benson Cannon, Mrs. Edwin H. Denby, Mrs. Arthur Liston, Miss Mildred McCormick, Mrs. Carl Newton, Mrs. G. Norman Robinson, Mrs. Frank B. Rowell and Mrs. Raymond T. von Palmenberg, acted as sponsors for the Annual Meeting of the Club at the Colonial Dames House, 215 East 71st Street, on Wednesday afternoon, March thirtieth, at three o'clock. A brief business meeting was followed by an amusing and informative talk with illustrations, by Mrs. Elizabeth Riefstahl, Assistant Curator in the Department of Egyptian Art, Brooklyn Museum, on her experiences as costume consultant for the film "The Egyptian," under the title "Egypt in Hollywood."

Other kind members, Mrs. Herbert S. Darlington, Miss Maud Dillard, Mrs. John Gerdes, Mrs. Robert McC. Marsh, Mrs. John Williams

Morgan and Mrs. Frank B. Rowell were hostesses, also at the Colonial Dames House, 215 East 71st Street, on Thursday afternoon, April twenty-eighth, at three o'clock for an illustrated lecture by Mrs. Elizabeth Bayley Willis on Aborigine Textiles of Formosa and her experiences during her inspection of native arts in primitive localities visited during her recent journey to that island as expert for the Technical Assistance Administration of the United Nations.

On Tuesday, October the twenty-fifth, the beginning of the winter season, the members of the Needle and Bobbin Club were invited by Mrs. Dunham Higgins, Mrs. Homer Reed and Mrs. C. Frederick C. Stout to meet them in the Pennsylvania Museum and to have luncheon at Mrs. Stout's house in Ardmore, all of which was greatly enjoyed.

Of rare interest was the meeting, held through the courtesy of Mrs. Thomas J. Watson, at her home, 4 East 75th Street, on Tuesday afternoon, November fifteenth, at three o'clock, where Mr. John F. Haskins gave an illustrated talk on the burial mounds in the Altai Mountains of Siberia where excavations had uncovered magnificent animal forms in gold together with ancient textiles which had lain for twenty-four hundred years preserved in the ice of these frigid regions.

The last meeting of the year was held on Tuesday afternoon, December sixth, at three o'clock in the Small Ballroom of the Colony Club, 51 East 62nd Street, through the kindness of Mrs. Lawrence Jacob, Mrs. Hardin Orvis, Mrs. Stanley M. Rumbough and Mrs. Edwin A. Stillman. The subject was Chinese Embroideries presented with illustrations and to an attentive audience by Miss Pauline Simmons, Associate Curator in the Department of Far Eastern Art, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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