

THE • BULLETIN • OF  
THE • NEEDLE • AND • BOBBIN  
CLUB

VOLUME • 44 • NUMBERS • 1 & 2  
1960

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Peruvian Tapestry with a Knotted Ground . . . . .	3
INA VANSTAN	
An Unusual Pattern-Loom from Bangkok . . . . .	15
ANNE BLINKS	
Dating a Forgery . . . . .	23
STELLA MARY PEARCE	
Some Recent Textile Accessions in New York Museums . . . . .	34
Book Notes . . . . .	42
Club Notes . . . . .	44
List of Officers . . . . .	47

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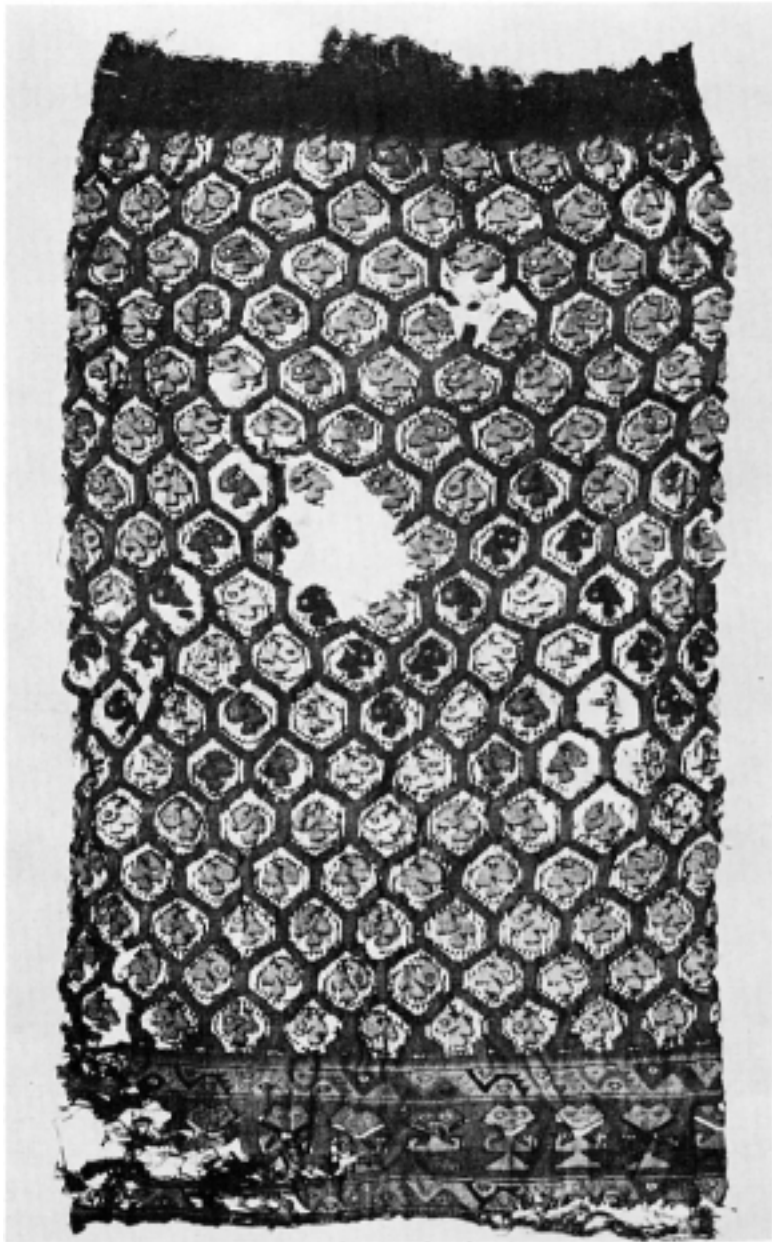


PLATE 1 — A pre-Columbian Peruvian fabric displaying an unusual combination of tapestry weaving and openwork. (Florida State University Museum, specimen number 1-597.)

A PERUVIAN TAPESTRY WITH A KNOTTED  
OPENWORK GROUND

*by*

INA VANSTAN

THE weavers of ancient Peru produced a number of types of openwork textiles, some of which, although basically loom-made, involved techniques that do not fall into the standard classifications of weaving. Notable among these are a few pieces which include mesh sections produced by means of eccentric "weft" yarns, which have been looped or knotted around groups of two or more warps. In so far as is known, all of these fabrics display some added decorative device or devices, either woven-in or superimposed. One specific example (Florida State University Museum specimen number 1-597) may be cited, which, because it is less complex than the others, is more appealing to modern tastes. The decorative features in this case all consist of woven-in polychrome tapestry. The knotted openwork, which is the most interesting feature of the cloth technically, and the one which provides its distinctive character, serves, in so far as the design is concerned, primarily as a monochrome background. In addition, it supplies a texture contrast causing each of the various pattern segments to stand out as an individually distinct unit.

Although only a part of this cloth has been preserved, a design unit remains which is almost completely intact (Plate 1). The ornamental areas include the section of tapestry and openwork, which covers the major part of the remaining web, and a terminal tapestry border. The former shows a small bird motive enclosed in an hexagonal frame and repeated against the openwork ground. The border carries an anthropomorphic figure in a wide central band, and adjacent to this, in each of two narrow bands, an interlocking fish pattern. These ornamental areas appear to have constituted the end section of a plain cotton cloth. The whole cloth was woven in one piece, fifteen and one-half inches in width, and with a length in excess of twenty-nine inches. As is frequently the case with Peruvian fabrics, only the decorative sections have been preserved, the plain undecorated cloth being cut or torn away close to the patterning and discarded. As a consequence, neither the original extent nor form of the textile can be ascertained. Of the twenty-nine inch length that is now intact, twenty-six and one-fourth inches are patterned, while only a two and three-fourths inch fragment remains of the plain cotton cloth which probably constituted the larger section as originally woven. At the opposite end of the web, four



PLATE 2— A section of the openwork and tapestry fabric of Plate 1 showing the rings of knots encircling the birds and the pattern adjustments adjacent to the narrow tapestry band at one end.

inches of the patterned area have been used for the tapestry border. Along the lower edge of this, a bit of an end selvage is intact, indicating that the cloth was constructed with end, as well as side, selvages. The twenty-two and one-fourth inches spreading between the remnant of plain cotton cloth and the border comprise the combination of tapestry and openwork that is distinctive to this fabric. The single web, with its selvage-to-selvage breadth (weft-wise) of fifteen and one-half inches, seems to have been complete in itself, in so far as width is concerned, since it bears no evidence of sewing or extraneous threads of any kind along the sides. At the lower edge of the border a few bits of gold-color thread passing through the fabric suggest that a fringe or other decorative end-finish probably was once sewed along this selvage. Aside from the general assumption that only a small part of the plain cloth remains and that a fourth selvage was present, nothing can be determined regarding the original length or the terminal finish of the other, now ragged, end of the fabric.

Textile analyses show the small remaining undecorated end section to be a plain weave, square count in appearance. The two-ply cotton yarns of the warp, set twenty per inch, extend for the full length of the specimen, but are visible only in this undecorated part and in the openwork section. The weft yarns for the plain area are identical with those used in the warp. Both are of the undyed brown cotton which is common to many ancient Peruvian textiles. All are hard twist, Z-S spun, about one-forty-eighth of an inch in diameter. The weft count is twenty-six per inch.

Adjacent to this is the central area with its allover pattern. It shows an ogee-like arrangement of hexagons formed by red tapestry bands approximately one-fourth of an inch in width. These produce a series of hexagonal spaces, each measuring about one and three-eighths inches from side to side. One of the small bird figures, tapestry-woven and surrounded by the knotted mesh, occupies the center of each of these spaces. The mesh is all brown, like the plain section, and consists of exposed warps held together in pairs by means of additional matching yarns which serve in place of standard wefts. Some of these describe more or less complete circles around the birds, instead of crossing all or part of the warps at right angles (Plate 2). This ring of knots is about three-sixteenths of an inch from the tapestry framework and an equal distance from additional short rows of knots placed adjacent to the bird figure (Plate 3). The warp count of the tapestry of the birds and the hexagonal frames is like that of the plain weave area, since the same warps continue throughout. In the knotted sections the warp yarns have been drawn together in pairs, each pair being split and regrouped

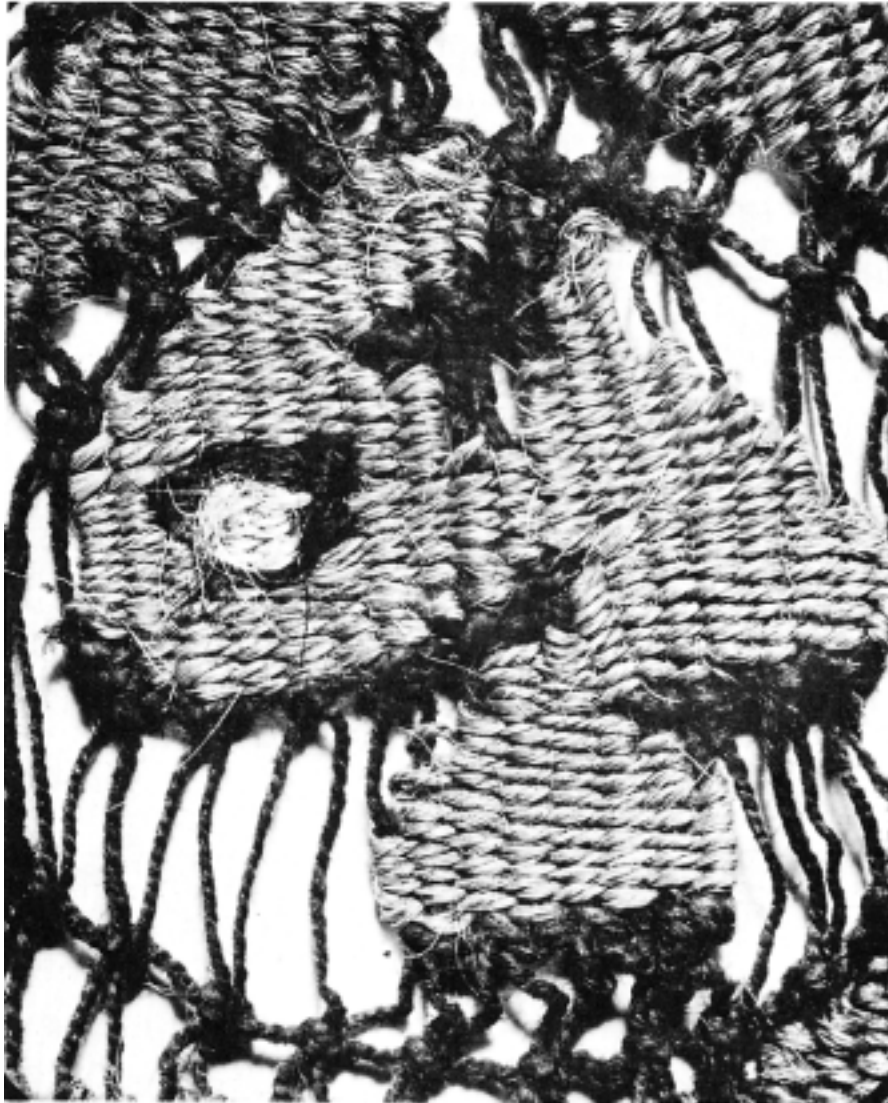


PLATE 3 — A detail of the bird design of the textile presented in Plate 1 enlarged in order that the method of construction of the tapestry figures and of the openwork may be seen.

by the succeeding row of knots, but there is no change in the total number of warps per inch. The weft yarns used for the tapestry weaving are of wool, chiefly two-ply, medium twist, and about one-thirty-second of an inch in diameter. The twist direction is Z-S throughout. (Details are shown in the Table). The weft count averages eighty per inch. All the tapestry weaving is of the traditional one-over-one plain weave in which the wefts cover the warps completely.

The border has been constructed with like yarns and in the same style as that of the other tapestry weaving. As with the above, the warp is continuous and the count remains the same. Although no obvious change in the texture is present, the weft is more compact, the average count being eighty-six per inch, which is somewhat higher than that appearing in the birds and the hexagonal frames. This weaving is of the usual kelim or slot type, in which the weft yarns turn back at the edges of their respective color units. It is technically like that used for the fabrication of the other tapestry sections, but without the unwoven spaces between. Being completely hidden, the warp plays no part in the design, and the demarcations between design segments are dependent upon color change only, rather than upon both color and texture variation. The design of the border consists of a central horizontal band with a simple repeat of a single, full-face anthropomorphic figure. Above and below this band are narrow bands of an interlocking fish design in which the motives are arranged reciprocally, but with an extraneous motive serving as a filler between each pair of fish motives. Three pin stripes, edging both sides of each of the narrow bands, complete the design unit.

Red is the predominant color of the cloth fragment, red forming the framework surrounding the birds and the ground of the central band of the border. One segment of the fish design in every fifth repeat and a few small details, such as eye outlines, are also in red. Second in importance is the gold-color, of which there are several variations, with blue, purple, cream, and pink following in order, the brown staying in its place as background throughout. All the colors mentioned appear in both the bird figures and the border, the border showing in addition two shades of mauve, a henna, a darker blue, and black and white, the latter appearing only as eye outlines, while the black serves both for segments of the fish design and for outlines for the anthropomorphic figures.

The motives of any one type, bird, fish or man-like, differ from each other only in coloring. Each follows a fixed pattern of arrangement.



TABLE  
YARN DETAIL  
Peruvian Tapestry with Knotted Openwork

Yarn Use	Color Tag Name	Maerz & Paul Classification*		Fiber	Ply	Twists**		Diameter	Count	OCCURRENCE
		Color Group	Plate			Direction	Degree			
Warp	Brown	Red to Orange	8-E-11	Cotton	2	Z-S	Hard	1/48"	20	All warp.
Weft	Brown	Red to Orange	8-E-11	Cotton	2	Z-S	Hard	1/48"	26	All of plain section.
	Brown	Red to Orange	8-E-11	Cotton	2	Z-S	Hard	1/48"	--	Knotted "wefts" of openwork.
	Red	Red to Orange***	5-K-2	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/32"	76	Hexagonal tapestry bands and bird eye rings and spots.
	Red	Red to Orange***	5-K-2	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/32"	94	Border ground, detail and lower edge.
	Pink	Red to Orange***	4-J-2	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/32"	96	Birds, eye spots, border detail.
	Mauve	Red to Orange***	7-E-3	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/48"	96	Border detail.
	Light Mauve	Red to Orange	6-D-8	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/48"	112	Border detail.
	Henna	Red to Orange	6-J-8	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	88	Border detail.
	Gold	Orange to Yellow	12-F-7	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	96	Birds, eye spots and rings; border detail.
	Light Gold	Orange to Yellow	12-C-5	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	72	Birds, eye spots and rings; border detail.
	Orange-gold	Orange to Yellow	12-L-8	Wool	2	Z-S	Hard	1/32"	80	Border detail.
	Dull Gold	Orange to Yellow	13-G-7	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	72	Border detail.
	Cream	Orange to Yellow	11-C-3	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/32" - 1/48"	88	Birds and border detail.
	"White"	Orange to Yellow	10-B-2	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/32"	96	Eye spots.
	"Black"*****	Orange to Yellow	16-A-3	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	72	Border detail, eye rings.
	Darker Blue	Green to Blue-Green	31-H-1	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	64	Birds, eye rings, border detail.
	Lighter Blue	Green to Blue-Green	29-F-1	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium-Soft	1/32"	64	Birds, eye rings.
	Purple	Blue to Red	48-E-7	Wool	2	Z-S	Medium	1/32"	80	Birds, eye spots and rings.

\*Maerz, A. and M. Rea Paul. *A Dictionary of Color*, 2nd ed. New York, 1950.

\*\*Osborne, Douglas and Carolyn Osborne. *Twines and Terminologies*. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 56, No. 6, Pt. 1, pp. 1096-1097. Menasha, 1954.

\*\*\*Purplish Red to Red. Maerz and Paul, *ibid.*, p. 3.

\*\*\*\*Cannot be matched exactly, darker than 16-A-3.

All of the birds have been placed in horizontal rows, the figures of alternate rows facing in opposite directions. Each bird is monochrome, with the exception of its eye, which adds two additional hues or values. A horizontal herringbone pattern has been produced through the diagonal arrangement of birds of like colors. The arrangement follows a planned sequence with a basic repeat of seven colors: pink, dull gold, gold, blue, cream, purple, light gold. Although, due to the limited size of the cloth, only one full design repeat is present, the repetitive use of the sequence is clearly evident. It is broken only by the substitution of a darker for a lighter blue in some of the birds of the one complete blue row of the herringbone. These darker birds, presumably, were the last-woven of this group, and the color variation probably indicates a change in the dye-lot of the yarn and not a deliberate difference in the color arrangement. The darker blue is present, also, in the second repeat of the blue birds. In this case there is a minor break in the sequence, a difference appearing in the eye coloring only. In the complete blue row, the center dot of the eye of each bird is red, the ring gold; in the final, partial row, the eye center is cream-color, the outline red. While in this instance the variation in eye color appears to have been wholly incidental, eye-color contrasts seem to have been used deliberately to emphasize the differences between the various rows of gold colors where the color variations are slight. For example, for the eyes of one row of birds, red has been used with cream-color, in a second, blue with light gold, and in another, red with blue.

The basic design of this central section is an all-over pattern, its potential extent being limited only by the dimensions of the fabric. However, at the two ends of the pattern section, minor terminal design adjustments have been made. The row of openwork figures which abuts against the border has been altered so that each figure appears with an extra side, added along the lower edge, changing it from a hexagon to a heptagon (Plate 2). Small rectangular openings help to retain a semblance of the ogee figures and denote the position for the intervening points of the next lower row of hexagons, had these continued in their normal sequence. At the opposite end of the fabric, the openwork hexagons of the final row are intact, but have been slightly flattened at their tops. This flattening is due to the insertion of a few red wefts across the complete breadth of the cloth prior to the beginning of the plain brown section. These continuous red yarns have disrupted the ogee form, since no yarn of the body of the red framework of this central area continues completely across the web. At both ends of this section the final rows of bird figures surrounded by brown knotted

openwork have been kept intact. This is not the case at the sides of the fabric. Where the pattern meets the selvages, it ends with alternate bird figures complete, but with only segments of the intervening set, no pattern adjustment of any kind having been made along these edges. The hexagonal figures are open-sided where the straight lines of the selvages have interrupted completion of the design motives.

It is impossible to determine at the present time the exact sequence of construction within the openwork and tapestry area. There seems to be little doubt that all of this section was completed before being removed from the loom, and that the insertion of the weft proceeded irregularly, various sections of the red tapestry framework, the birds, and the brown openwork being put in part-way across the web, instead of pick by pick across the whole breadth, as is customary in present day weaving. Apparently, after the red framework was woven in any small area, the bird and knot combination was built up so that a single row of knots encircled each bird (Plate 2). In addition, a second row of knots was packed against those edges of the bird motive which are weftwise (Plate 3), or nearly so; that is, where the tightly packed weft yarns of the tapestry weaving would tend to slip along the warps, ruining the compactness of the bird figure and obliterating the mesh. These latter knotted sections vary in length from one-fourth to five-eighths of an inch. They appear to be independent of the circular row and of each other, each length of brown thread being discontinuous, with its ends concealed by being worked back along the row of knots. This knotting, strictly speaking, cannot be classed as weaving, the yarn being twisted around the warps (Plate 3), not interwoven with them. Presumably it was put in while the web remained on the loom, its fabrication moving along parallel to that of the tapestry weaving. Like the tapestry wefts, these yarns may have been inserted by means of either a needle or a very small shuttle. Resembling in many respects one of the techniques common to European drawn-work, this knotting differs in being a part of the original construction and not a replacement for yarns that were removed after fabrication had been completed and the cloth removed from the loom. Yarn slippage was avoided in the red framework by placing four sides of each hexagon diagonally and the other sides vertically or warpwise, thus eliminating straight weftwise lines where the wefts would not stay in place. Only above the upper edge of the border, where the hexagons terminate, have these been modified in a manner which leaves open horizontal lines, where slippage is evident.

The tapestry border offers nothing which is unusual to Peruvian weav-

ing. All the border figures show a greater degree of conventionalization than do the birds. In both the wide and narrow bands, the motives remain the same throughout, color changes producing an impression of variation. The color repeats of the fish design have been set up on a five unit basis, those of the anthropomorphic figures on a four unit plan. Although the colors of the two narrow bands are generally alike, a few divergences are present. A simple sequence of blue, pink, blue appears in the pin-stripes which separate the wide and narrow bands and finish the top and bottom edges of the border section, but no design finish has been provided where the tapestry border ends at the sides of the cloth. The figures terminate abruptly where they meet the side selvage, leaving incomplete motives along the one side that is intact.

If the whole decorative area is considered as a unit of design, it will be noted that the upper and lower limits of the patterning, both as a whole and as separate units, are well defined and leave no unfinished design segments, while along the vertical edges the design is incomplete, simply ending as if cut off along the lines of the selvages. While this radical termination without pattern adjustment provides a certain element of implied continuity, it gives the impression, despite the lack of supporting evidence, that other sections of the pattern, woven separately, were intended to be added at the sides. Given a larger area, the elements of unity and rhythm, already present, would be strengthened, and the feeling of continuity would be enhanced. However, the color arrangement of the central section displays a bilateral balance within the single web, and this one web may have been considered to be a complete decorative entity in itself. The border, similarly, seems to have had a bilaterally balanced accent of light and dark, although damage to one side of the fabric makes the accuracy of this judgment questionable. The chief figures of the wide band have not been placed with respect to a central axis but appear as if a random section had been taken from a continuous strip. To a certain extent the same is true of the narrow bands, but less conspicuously so. In view of this, it might be said that from an artist's point of view, the piece is unfinished, laterally, and needs additional sections to balance and round out the design as a whole; while from the weaver's viewpoint, in so far as the decorative part is concerned, the fabric constitutes a complete entity as woven.

Decoratively, the border and the central section are bound together by the matching colors and the texture of their tapestry areas, and to a lesser degree by the simple repetition present in the arrangement of the motives. The plain brown fabric and the openwork sections show a certain continuity

through their like yarns and matching color. Within the tapestry and openwork area, both the brown background and the red ground and framework act as binders, as does the repetition of the like hues and motives, so that the design holds together within the woven area despite the multiplicity of elements appearing within so small a space. And the number of these is quite impressive. In addition to the variety of motives, the distinct subdivisions, the wide range of colors, and the contrasting textures, complexity is increased by the differing rhythms of the color repeats and the horizontal design emphasis opposed to the diagonal color emphasis. Considering the central section only, there are 161 small bird figures, plus parts of eighteen more, in a space twenty-two and one-fourth by fifteen and one-half inches. These birds, arranged in seventeen rows, are in seven different colors with a greater number of combinations in the eye coloring. Add to this the manner in which the rows of gold-color birds have been placed, with two hues which are very closely akin in adjacent diagonal rows, at the beginning of the color sequence, followed by single rows of alternate dark and light colors, which, while adding interest and a broader rhythm than would have been provided by a simple repeat of light and dark values, also increases the complexity. Likewise, strong value contrasts between the blue, cream, and purple tend to emphasize these rows of the herringbone above the over-all rhythm of the total sequence.

The extensive following of customary Peruvian procedures, such as the use of repetitive designs, interlocking and reciprocal conventionalized figures, repeated color sequences, diagonal color emphasis, and selected tapestry-weaving techniques, indicates a heavy weight of conformity to established practices. However, a few small breaks with traditional methods appear to have been made. In the present instance, the details of the major design areas show evidence of non-conformity in the combination of exposed warps with tapestry weaving, as well as in the method used for making these warps into a network. The idea of using non-continuous weft yarns, which are characteristic of most tapestry, has been carried one step further than is usual to Peruvian weaving. Part of the yarns which generally produce blocks of contrasting color contiguous to one another, as in the border of the specimen, have been omitted to create the openwork spaces. As a result, warps, which normally are completely covered in tapestry weaving, have been left exposed and the problem of weft slippage, introduced by this omission of some of the weft sections, has been met in part by the knotting added over these exposed warps. This, in turn, while not constituting a major decorative feature in itself, has become a basic characteristic

of the design, the factor responsible for the distinctive quality of the specimen.

While appearing to be basically a craftsman's rather than an artist's design, and highly tradition-bound, the result pays tribute to the ancient Peruvian's artistic ability as well as to his skill as a craftsman. It shows the remarkable cohesion between diverse elements which is characteristic of the structure and design of many Peruvian textiles. The specimen exhibits, likewise, the high quality of weaving which distinguishes the finer Peruvian textiles and, in addition, displays an intricacy of technical manipulation which attests to the ingenuity of these pre-Columbian weavers.

No data have been recorded concerning the specific associations or the locale from which this fabric came and, therefore, its immediate relationships to other artifacts are not known. However, it may be said that as compared to the pre-Columbian textiles generally, without regard to specific time and place associations, no single technical feature is unique to this cloth, although the particular use of knotting to produce openwork is by no means prevalent among known Peruvian fabrics. Similarly, from a design viewpoint, only the effect produced through the combination of the openwork with tapestry, in the particular interpretation of small repeating figures enclosed within frames, distinguishes this particular cloth from others.

## APPENDIX

The reader who is interested in comparing the various types of Peruvian openwork fabrics is referred to the following sources which include illustrations of some of the numerous varieties:

- Bird, Junius and Louisa Bellinger, "Paracas Fabrics and Nazca Needlework": *The Textile Museum Catalogue Raisonné*, Pls. XXIX, XXX, XLIV, Washington, 1954.
- Crawford, Morris DeCamp, "Peruvian Fabrics", *American Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Papers*, Vol. XII, Part 4, pp. 105-191, Figs. 21-24, 34. New York, 1916.
- Doering, Heinrich Ubbelohde, *The Art of Ancient Peru*, Pl. 90. New York, 1952.
- Harcourt, Raoul d', *Les Textiles Anciens du Pérou et Leurs Techniques*. Les Editions d'Art et Histoire, Pls. X 4, XI-XIII, XXXII-XXXVII, XXXVIII 1, 2, XXXIX-XLVI, XLIX, LV 2, LVII 2, LX, LXII 3. Paris, 1934.
- Kelemen, Pál, *Medieval American Art*, Pls. 183 b, c, 184, 185 b, c, 199 a. New York, 1950.
- O'Neale, Lila M., "Textiles of the Early Nazca Period." "Archaeological Explorations in Peru, Part III." *Field Museum of Natural History, Anthropology, Memoirs*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 119-218, Pls. XLI a, LIII, LIV. Chicago, 1937.
- O'Neale, Lila M. and Bonnie Jean Clark, "Textile Periods in Ancient Peru III: The Gauze Weaves." *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 143-222, Pls. 3-22. Berkeley, 1948.
- O'Neale, Lila M. and Alfred L. Kroeber, "Textile Periods in Ancient Peru." *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 23-56, Fig. 1, Pls. 4 a, 5, 7 a, 35 b, c. Berkeley, 1930.

- Reiss, Wilhelm and Alphons Stübel, *The Necropolis of Ancon*, Vol. 2, Pls. 70 4, 5, 6, 70a, 71, 74, 12, 13, 16. Berlin, 1880-1887.
- VanStan, Ina, "Problems in Pre-Columbian Textile Classification." *Florida State University Studies*, No. 29, Figs. 3, 4. Tallahassee, 1958.
- VanStan, Ina, "Problems in Pre-Columbian Textile Classification." *Florida State University Studies*, No. 29, Plate IIa, Fig. 1. Tallahassee, 1958 a.
- VanStan, Ina, "A Peruvian Tasseled Fabric." *Notes in Anthropology*, Vol. III, Figs. 3, 4. Tallahassee, 1958 b.

Some repetition of examples will be noted among the reproductions in the above references.

Only a few of the items show any close resemblance to the fabric described in the present paper. One of these, presented by d'Harcourt (1934 pl. XII, diagram p. 31, fig. 13, desc. p. 127) has a similar repeat of small bird figures that are almost identical with those of the above cloth. These birds, woven in tapestry in red, old rose, pale yellow, white, and clear brown wool yarns, are set at regular intervals and provide the sole means of holding the spaced brown cotton warps in place. These warps are in groups of eight and form the ground of the textile. Two fabrics which have the same type of knotted background as that of the present cloth and also tapestry insets are among those illustrated. One of these is shown by both d'Harcourt (*ibid.*, pl. XIII 2) and Kelemen (1958 pl. 185 c); one was reported previously by the present author (1958 b). Both of these examples have elaborate tasseled trimmings.

## AN UNUSUAL PATTERN-LOOM FROM BANGKOK

by

ANNE BLINKS

Photographs by DR. ROBERT L. USINGER and NORRIS W. HARKNESS

WITH the recently renewed interest in the modern textiles of Thailand, it is perhaps reasonable to wonder what manner of loom produces these colorful silks. A somewhat superficial survey of such commercial weavers as could be found in Bangkok in the autumn of 1957 showed eight more or less distinct loom types in actual use—an interesting lack of uniformity, reflecting the divergent cultural and racial backgrounds of the weavers in that ethnological crossroads. Among them was a loom in which an ingenious arrangement of string and sticks produces the same results as the more conventional drawloom, famous for many centuries of textile history.

By far the larger numbers of looms, however, that I saw in Bangkok were simple horizontal 4-8 frame structures with overhead beaters, some with metal heddles (Japanese), almost all with metal reeds, though a few had split bamboo. Many others were elementary drawlooms, variously called “two-harness” or “draw-harness”, in which one set of frames (2-4) equipped with large-eyed heddles, or, in this case, usually heddle-loops, determines the ground; and a second set of frames—usually 8—determines the pattern. These frames, in these small numbers, can be and are treadle-controlled. (Were there more pattern frames, controlled by cord pulls, this loom would be a form of a true drawloom). This type of loom was found in several workshops operated by Chinese and was the one used to produce the bulk of the patterned fabrics seen.

However, having once seen a museum exhibit of a native Siamese loom (though so mounted that it could not possibly operate), and assuming that simpler looms must have been in use there before the influx of Chinese settlers, I searched for such a one in Bangkok. After many false clues, just one was found in actual use—as a matter of sentiment and out of family loyalty to the grand-parent who had owned it. It was a two-harness loom, much slower in operation than the commoner types of today, but well adapted to weave the conventional fine plain-weave silks (100 threads to the inch, warp and weft), common in Thailand for generations. This is the type in Ling Roth's book, *Studies in Primitive Looms*, p. 92, the traditional Cambodian loom. I describe here the one I saw, because an under-



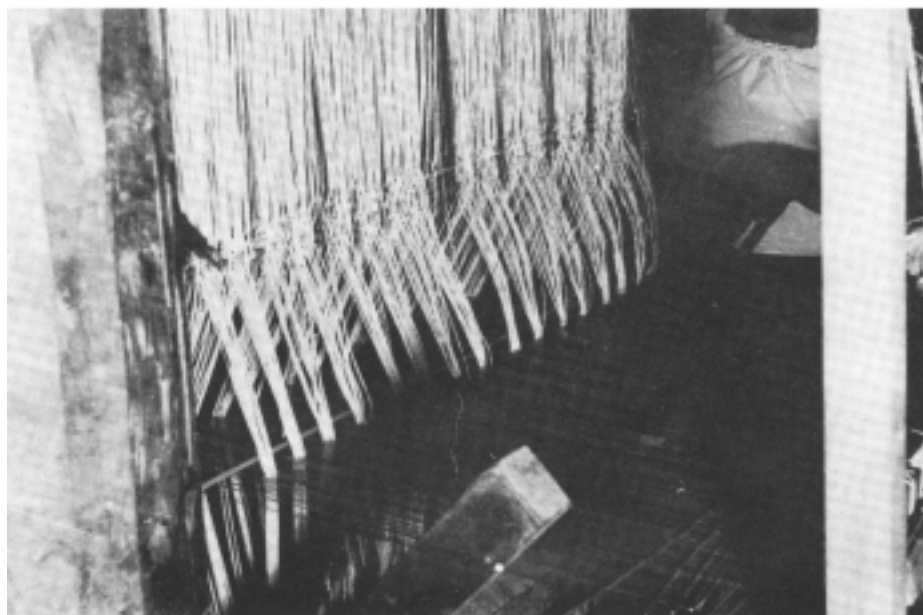


PLATE 1 — (Above) The Siamese two-harness-loom. The back harness is being drawn down by the treadle, while the warp-threads controlled by the front harness are raised.  
PLATE 2 — (Below) The "pattern-loom". The pattern-stick is being moved down and forward in part of the pattern-heddles above the warp.

standing of its structure and operation forms a reasonable basis for the consideration of the "pattern-loom" to follow. It is a simple frame affair (Plate 1), large enough for weaving fabrics to widths equal to the working space of the weaver's arms. Breast and warp beams are spaced a good ten feet apart, the warp sloping down away from the weaver. The beater and two harnesses are suspended from the usual box-like overhead skeleton on cords, the harnesses operated by two foot-treadles arranged transversely. Pressure on one of these pulls down the harness to which it is attached and at the same time raises the other. The heddles are not attached to harness-frames, but consist of cords laced about pairs of rods, interlocking at a point midway between the rods. Instead of each passing through a small eye, the warp ends pass between these interlocked cords. The warp beam is a flat board tied to the back frame of the loom. When the warp is let forward as the weaving progresses, the board must be untied and turned over, loosening six inches or more of warp at once. Some of the slack can be adjusted by the position of the warp beam itself, as it is tied more or less closely to the back of the loom. The very length of the set-up and the elasticity of the silk makes these adjustments somewhat less critical, of course. The shuttle is a simple bamboo tube, open at one end, plugged at the other, into which a plain quill is slipped, the thread feeding out the open end.

The step from this set-up to the more complex one next to be described follows most logically, though what it means in terms of distribution and age can only be guessed here. Again this loom-type, to be called for convenience a "pattern-loom", was found in very limited use, in fact only in one large workshop, owned and managed by a most skillful weaver from Laos. In this case, the horizontal 2-harness set-up and the heddle arrangement are as in the loom described above. Certain changes normal in the Chinese shops in Bangkok have been introduced. The flipping flat warp beam has been replaced by the more familiar round beam controlled by a large crude ratchet and paul. The wooden shuttle is the boat type, single or double, with a slot in the side for the bobbin to emerge. The side-to-side treadles are replaced by the more familiar lengthwise ones, while the beater is equipped with fly-shuttle boxes and rope rig.

Its operation is shown in the photographs. To form the series of sheds needed for one repeat of the pattern, the shedding-order, marked by the sticks in the pattern heddles, must be transferred from the vertical web to the horizontal warp. Thus the pattern heddles, which are held in front of the others by the lowest stick (Plate 2), are lifted with the hand to raise



PLATE 3 — (Above) The “pattern-loom”. Lifting pattern-threads to form a warp-shed. Pattern-stick being inserted into the shed thus formed.

PLATE 4 — (Below) The “pattern-loom”. Pattern-sheds transferred by the warp and marked by sticks. Sword in place for first pattern-shot with one of the many color skeins.

the attached warps. Another stick is then inserted into the shed so marked and pushed toward the ground-harness (Plate 3). This shed is shown performe in the vertical heddle-strings both above and below the warp, and the stick which marked it above the warp is shifted to the same shed, appearing in the heddle-strings below the warp to preserve this shed for the next repeat. The next pattern-rod is then lowered in the vertical heddle-strings and the process repeated. By this means, the series of pattern-sheds is transferred from the upper vertical web to the horizontal warp and preserved in reverse order in the lower section of the string heddles. When all the sticks marking the pattern are inserted in the warp, the first one is lifted, a wide sword is inserted behind the ground-harness in the shed thus formed, and turned on edge, raising the threads for the first pattern shot. (The stick is removed.) Plate 4 shows how the flexible ground-harness accommodates itself to this. The pattern is laid in by as many small colored skeins as may be needed, the sword is let fall, and two tabby binder-shots are put in by treadle and flyshuttle (Plate 5). Then the second pattern-stick in the warp is moved forward, raised, and the sword inserted in this shed, and the whole procedure goes on.

As the weaving progresses, a reverse of the original order of pattern-shedding, transferred from the part of the vertical pattern heddles above the warp to the warp, occurs when the shedding from this upper part is completed; the order of pattern-shedding is then to be transferred to the warp from the pattern-sticks now marking the pattern-shedding-order in the part of the pattern-heddles below the horizontal warp. This is because the order of pattern-shedding with pattern-sticks in the vertical heddles must always proceed from the stick nearest to, to that farthest from, the horizontal warp. Areas of plain-weave (tabby), resulting from the use of the ground-harness only, may alternate with patterned areas. By this simple arrangement, the most intricately patterned silks may be produced (Plate 6). The only necessary further elements are patience and time.

The loom we have here called the Siamese loom is a logical step beyond the typical Malayan loom described by Ling Roth (*loc. cit.*, p. 89); in the latter the warp beam is tied to a fixed frame, while tension is maintained by a back-strap kept taut by the weaver's body. (Neither of these looms is to be confused with the simpler "back-strap" type still used in Northern Siam, Burma, Cambodia, and elsewhere, in which there is no turning, winding-on warp beam at all (see Ling Roth, *op. cit.* p. 74) and which can be rolled up and carried about.) Simple patterns can be made on any loom by supple-

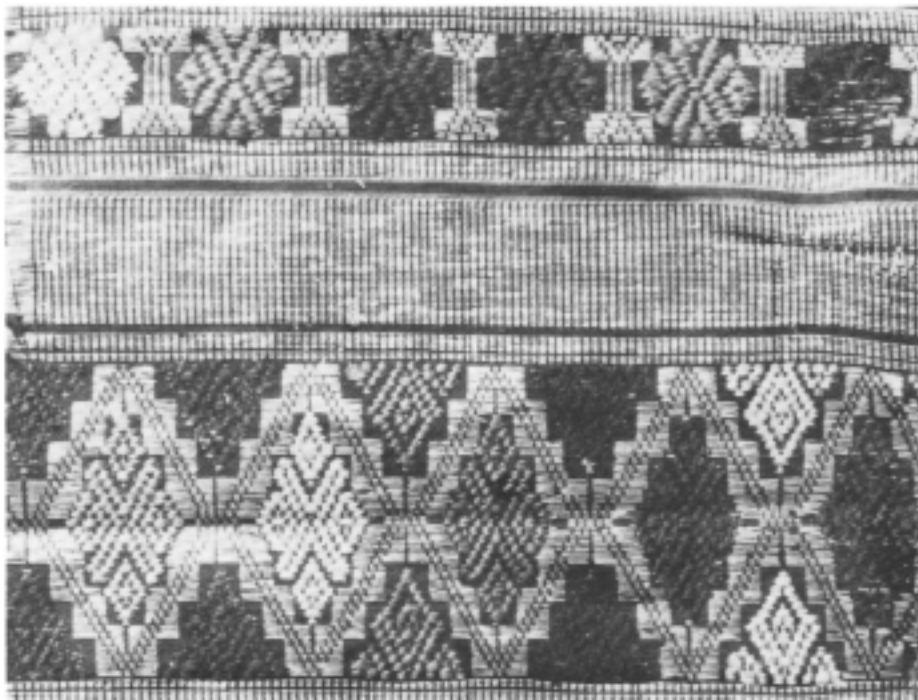
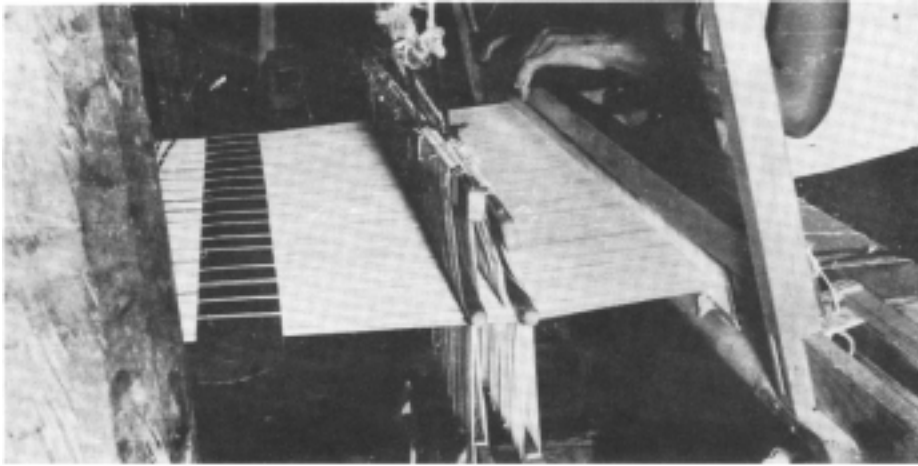


PLATE 5 — (Above) The “pattern-loom”. The sword flat, permitting tabby binder-shots — here beaten in.

PLATE 6 — (Below) Border detail of a traditional Siamese fabric of silk and wrapped gold, woven on a “pattern-loom”, in the workshop in which the preceding pictures were taken.

mentary heddle sticks of the desired length. The key to understanding this process of repeat patterning lies in the absence of rigid perforated heddles attached to a harness frame, and in the flexible nature of this heddling device, whereby the pattern can be shifted to the fell without loss of shed. It is tempting to regard the “pattern-loom” as a further development of the Cambodian loom principle, for on it many more intricate weaves can be produced than are practical or possible on the limited number of harnesses feasible with treadle control. Indeed, this ingenious arrangement of sticks and string may well have produced some of the historic textiles that we have always pictured as products of some kind of drawloom. Speculation on this point is tantalizing, but it should await further investigation.

This note is nowise to be considered a comprehensive survey of the contemporary handwoven-silk industry of Thailand. Only a small proportion of the Bangkok workshops were visited (perhaps a tenth), and of those the larger part used looms of the quite usual design that we think of as European—probably wrongly. It is highly desirable that a more skilled observer carry this matter further to determine the real extent of the distribution of the “pattern-loom”. Is it Laotian, or is it merely a clever invention of more or less local Bangkok use and development?



PLATE 1 — Portrait group, formerly attributed to an Italian 15th century artist. National Gallery, London. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees.

## DATING A FORGERY

by

STELLA MARY PEARCE

THE 1951 catalogue of the Early Italian Schools in the National Gallery in London contains the following entry: "3831. PORTRAIT GROUP. Wood, 16 x 14 $\frac{1}{8}$  (0.406 x 0.365). This picture appears to be modern; there is some evidence, not altogether convincing that it is by Icilio Federico Joni."

The history of the entry of this small painting (Plate 1) into the National Gallery collection is immaterial here, but it is, perhaps, worth mentioning an article on it in the *Burlington Magazine* of 1924, in which it is discussed as an old picture, belonging, from the style of the painting and the costumes, to the second half of the fifteenth century and depicting, in all probability, members of the Montefeltro family.

Like most competent fakes, the *Portrait Group* no doubt looked much more convincing in 1924, when it was more or less recently painted, than it does now when, with the passing of time, its costumes, at least, begin to reveal a strong flavor of the early twentieth century. But leaving aside, for the moment, these fascinating glimpses of twentieth-century fashion which can be seen though what purports to be the dress of the Italian renaissance, the twentieth-century artist's interpretation of this fifteenth century Italian dress can profitably be discussed for the light it throws on the methods and unconscious mistakes of a skillful forger.

The sitters in the *Portrait Group* appear to be a man of middle age, a boy of about ten years old, and a little girl of about six. At first sight, their clothes seem to have been painted with considerable confidence, but on more careful examination it becomes clear that not one of the pitfalls that await the forger has been avoided. The clothes are, at least in several important details, impossible in construction and inconsistent in date; they are, in fact, misunderstood representations of clothes, reminiscent of, if not actually copied from, a number of existing paintings.

From the point of view of construction it is clear that the dress of the middle-aged man could not have been drawn by an artist who had worn similar clothes. He wears a sleeveless over-gown of golden-yellow brocade, with a light design in pale brown, and under this a red tunic with sleeves slashed open to show the shirt beneath; some of the side of the tunic shows





PLATE 2—Vittore Carpaccio, Legend of St. Ursula series, "The reception of the ambassadors", detail. Accademia, Venice. Reproduced by permission.

through the deep arm-hole of the golden over-gown. This arm-hole and the folds that surround it are painted unintelligently. Not only does the edge of the arm-hole itself behave like no known textile, but two inexplicable folds or 'pockets', of stuff appear near it at points where there is no available material to crumple into such folds. The construction of the red sleeve is equally unconvincing. From the point of view of practical tailoring it is impossible; moreover, it is historically inaccurate. Above the elbow is a series of horizontal folds, which, if the arm were dropped, would sag into bulky festoons. Such folds could not exist in view of the sleeve's almost smooth edge—again a contradiction of all the possibilities of tailoring. The whole sleeve is an attempt at depicting a fashion which was popular in the 1490's (Plate 2), but the incorrectness of its detail shows that its function has been misunderstood. Sleeves of this kind were laced together at the wrist, along the upper arm, and across the horizontal slit which served to give 'elbow-room'. The lacing, drawn together through eyelet-holes along the edges of the sleeve could be tightened until, almost closed, it would look neat and taut, or, loosened, would be cool and comfortable. The sleeve in the *Portrait Group* is manifestly too small ever to close, even at the wrist, and it is, furthermore, held together by two permanently attached straps, which have no prototypes in fifteenth century costume. There do appear to be two eyelet-holes on one edge of the horizontal slit, but none to correspond on the other edge. The whole purpose of the sleeve, which in any case is both too narrow and too 'full', is defeated by the introduction of these permanent straps in the place of the adjustable lacing invariably worn in sleeves of this type.

As for what I have referred to as the golden-yellow gown worn by this man, there is no evidence that it is a gown at all. It could well be a stiff, wide tunic ending somewhere about the knee, except that its general character suggests that the spectator should complete it by imagining that it not only reaches the ground, but that it trails in a train behind. A closed gown of this kind was not a part of the masculine dress of the Italian fifteenth century and this particular garment derives, I believe, from a vague memory of the dress of the court ladies in Piero della Francesca's frescoes in Arezzo with their necklines that plunge downwards at the back. This echo from Piero is further emphasized by the soft cap set far back on the head to reveal a little of the retreating hair of a man going bald at the temples. Italian men did not wear their caps on the backs of their heads, but the headdresses of Piero's court ladies, set far back to show their shaved foreheads, were worn at just this angle. It is this unconscious reference to



PLATE 3—Carlo Crivelli, *Annunciation*, detail. National Gallery, London. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees.

a recognizable and authentic feminine fashion of the 1450's that gives what is clearly a male portrait an uncomfortably womanish look.

The cap of the boy, pulled well down on the forehead, is more appropriate to the fashions of the early 1490's, which must be regarded as the date aimed at by the painter of the *Portrait Group*. This cap has prototypes in late fifteenth century portraits, though the black braid trimming belongs, rather, to the taste of the early twentieth century.

The arrangement of the hair and the angle at which the hat or head-dress is worn are features which are always extremely sensitive to changes of fashion, perhaps because they frame the face, the focal point of the human being. Our own contemporaries can invariably be placed and 'dated' by the way they do their hair and wear their hats. Some may cling to the fashion of their youth or early middle-age, but none depart from the fashions of their own life-time unless they are mentally deranged. At no period during the putative life-time of the middle-aged man in the *Portrait Group* (say from 1445 to 1495) were men's caps worn on the back of the head, and it is this angle of the cap and its disparity with that of the cap of the boy that would most immediately arouse the suspicions of the student of historical dress.

The bonnet of the little girl in the background is an equally interesting example of the painter's lack of first-hand experience of the dress he is trying to depict. This kind of bonnet is familiar to us in the Crivelli Annunciation in the London National Gallery, where it is worn by a fetching little child who peeps round the corner of a door at the top of a flight of steps (Plate 3). It probably comes as a surprise to a twentieth-century spectator to discover that this child is not a girl but a boy. His clothes may correspond roughly to the dress of a little girl of today, but in the fifteenth century no little girl would wear either a knee-length dress or an open-sided tunic, both of which, in the Crivelli painting, are juvenile versions of the normal adult male fashion of the time. A similar bonnet and a rather similar open-sided tunic, in a painting by Carpaccio in Frankfurt (Plate 4), are worn by the Infant Christ. There is no doubt, however, that the painter of the *Portrait Group* intended the child who wears the bonnet to be a little girl.

The technical faults of tailoring and the misrepresentations of Italian fashions of the 1490's discussed above may be apparent only to a student of costume, but there is another anachronism in the clothes of the *Portrait Group* that must be recognizable to everyone who is familiar with the early twentieth century's taste in decorative design. The checker-pattern that



PLATE 4— Vittore Carpaccio, Madonna and Child with St. John. Städelsches Kunst-Institut, Frankfurt-am-Main. Reproduced by permission.

trims the cap of the man would not be acceptable to an Italian of the 1490's, though a somewhat similar design is occasionally found in the 16th century, but it is a motif which became extremely popular between the late 1890's and 1914, by which time it had found its way into fashionable dress and commercial art. As a decorative motif it owed its revival to a taste for Byzantine architecture and decoration which appeared almost simultaneously with l'Art Nouveau, but which, unlike l'Art Nouveau, became a part of the vocabulary of the 'Jugendstil'. In the decorations of buildings such as the Glasgow School of Art by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Palais Stoclet in Brussels it plays an important part: it can be found, sometimes in a rather more complicated form, in, for example, the paintings of Klimt in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century (Plate 5), and Leon Bakst used it to give authenticity to the Greek costumes he designed for *l'Après Midi d'un Faune*, one of the Russian ballets which was greeted with delirious enthusiasm in Paris in 1912, after which Bakst was asked to design a set of gowns for the Haute Couture.

These, made up in the work-rooms of Paquin, were launched in the spring of 1913: the *Gazette du Bon Ton* commented, in April of that year, as follows: ". . . Dans les salons et les ateliers d'artistes, dans les maisons de thé et les théâtres, dans les halls des grands hôtels et des paquebots transatlantiques, dans les wagons des trains de luxe, partout, en ce moment, partout l'on ne parle que des robes dessinées par Bakst, réalisées par Mme Paquin et M. Joire . . ."

Bakst drew upon the stage clothes of his Greek ballets for inspiration: his gowns were given Greek names and all of them included some checker-pattern decoration. The gown *Aglaé* was complete with a cap which very closely resembles the middle-aged man's cap in the *Portrait Group* and like it is edged with a border of checker-pattern (Plate 6). Caps of this shape were a part of the general fashion of that year and there is no doubt at all that the cap in the *Portrait Group* derives from a brief fashion of 1913 seen through the eyes of Bakst, though it would, of course, be absurd to suggest that the painter of the *Portrait Group* was directly influenced by the collection of gowns designed by Leon Bakst in 1913 for the Paris Haute Couture. This little group of exotic gowns made a wide stir. Redrawn by fashion artists of the day, they were reproduced in magazines (not all of them devoted exclusively to fashion) in London and, no doubt, in Italy as well as elsewhere, and it would be strange if some of the details and accessories which contributed to those *ensembles* did not very quickly find their



PLATE 5 — Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Fritza Riedler*, 1906. Vienna Osterreichische Galerie. Reproduced by permission. The sitter is painted in a typical Jugendstil interior. The spacing of the decoration on the walls, the accented trimming on the dress, the placing of the figure in the composition and its clear-cut silhouette, are all characteristic of this rival to l'Art Nouveau.

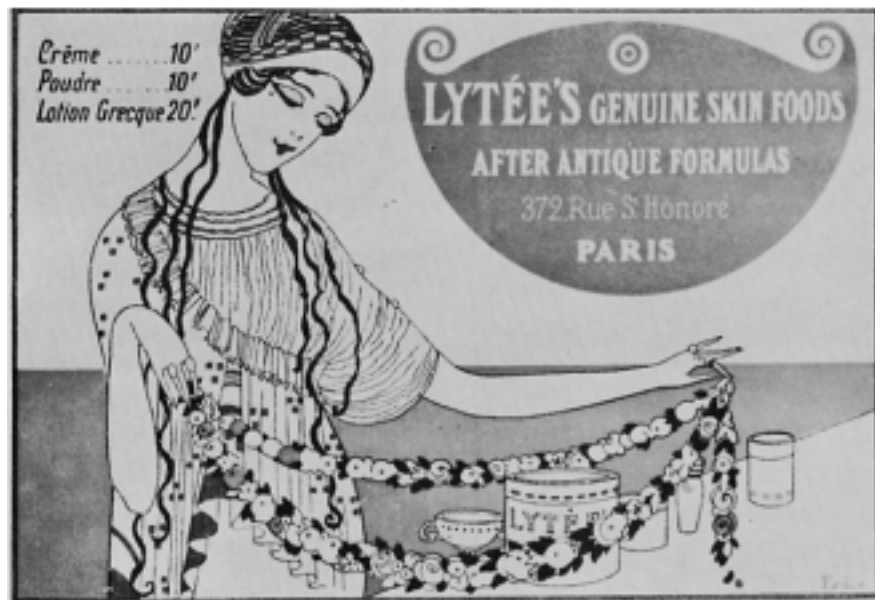
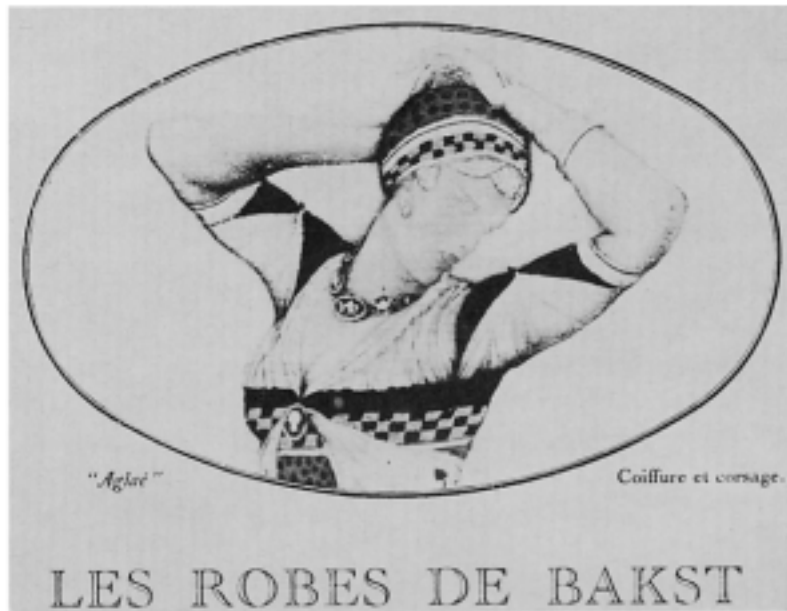


PLATE 6 — (Above) "Aglæe", after a design by Leon Bakst. From the *Gazette du Bon Ton*, Paris, 1913.

PLATE 7 — (Below) Advertisement from the *Gazette du Bon Ton*, Paris, April, 1913.





PLATE 8— (Above) From the *Gazette du Bon Ton*, Paris, April, 1913.

PLATE 9— (Below) "Dione", after a design by Leon Bakst. From the *Journal des Dames*, Paris, May, 1913.

way, through the medium of mass-produced copies, into fashionable stores all over the world (Plates 7 and 8).

By 1913 the checker-pattern and other features borrowed from Jugendstil had become fashionable clichés and once the '1913-ism' of the *Portrait Group* has become apparent, other details of the dress and in, I think, the system of composition of the picture, can be found to support this date. The gloves of the man, for example, are also a part of the fashion of that year. The *Journal des Dames* in May 1913 stresses the importance of gloves and continues: '... Les gants... doivent être longs et rigoureusement de peau... on tâchera à les laisser tirebouchonner négligemment sur les bras. C'est à cette négligence apprêtée que l'on reconnaît depuis quelques jours, une élégante révélation au fait de la dernière mode...'  
(Plate 8). The careless elegance of the gloved hand resting on the window-frame in the *Portrait Group* belongs to this fashion (gloves of the 1490's ended at the wrist); so does the spacing of the trimming on the boy's cap, a stylistic detail difficult to analyse, but quite recognisable; and so does the patterned brocade of which the back of the man's cap is made. Here the pattern, unlike that of his gown, is not painstakingly worked out, but only roughly suggested, and, for that reason, once he had ceased to be pedantically conscientious, the painter unconsciously invented a pattern that has the unmistakable look of the years round about 1913.

It is at this point, I think, that the placing on the wall of the coat-of-arms (raised over a gesso ground), the crisp handling of the distant view through the window and the presentation of the three figures, ranged in absolute profile, begin too to take their places as a part of the legacy left behind by Jugendstil. The present article is not concerned with this aspect of the painting, but it is an aspect which would make the picture look far more attractive to the eyes of 1924 than of today. In the early 'twenties, both Jugendstil and the fashions in dress that eventually emerged from it had ceased to be modish, but had not begun to look 'dated' as they do today. From the evidence of costume, the *Portrait Group* was painted in the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century; in 1923, the year when the National Gallery acquired the picture as an old master, it would look more acceptable than at any other time. Today it cannot fail to arouse immediate suspicion: the interesting fact is that it can now be dated as a forgery.

SOME RECENT TEXTILE ACCESSIONS  
IN NEW YORK MUSEUMS

Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration



PLATE 1 — Detail from the border of an embroidered panel, with a central medallion showing the Nativity. Gold and colored silks on dark green satin. Italian, 16th century. Courtesy of the Cooper Union Museum.



PLATE 2 — Embroidered picture in high relief, worked in silk, metal and coral. French, 16th century. The salamander at the base of the tree is the device of François I. Formerly in the collections of Spitzer, Georges Laville-Seligman, and Marian Hague. Courtesy of the Cooper Union Museum.

Metropolitan Museum of Art



PLATE 3 — Court robe with five-clawed dragons, profile dragon-bands on upper sleeve; original lining. Satin embroidered with silk and metal. Chinese, Yung Cheng period (1723-1735); presumably from the tomb of Kuo Ch'in Wang. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Seymour Fund, 1960.)



PLATE 4—Detail of silk and metal tapestry, showing the *fēng huang* surrounded by birds flowers. Chinese, Ming, first half of the 17th century. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Seymour Fund, 1960.)



PLATE 5 — Copperplate print in red on cotton and linen, with figures representing the Four Parts of the World. English, second half of the 18th century. The absence of blue selvage lines suggests a date before 1774. No other piece of this design has been recorded. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Gift of the Estate of James Hazen Hyde, 1959.)



PLATE 6—Altar hanging, painted. Peru, 18th (?) century. The painting of this transitional colonial piece was done with dyes in the same manner as other painted fabrics in Peru prior to the Spanish Conquest. The oldest examples date back several centuries B.C. and in most cases, as in this one, the dyes do not bleed through to the reverse side.

Almost nothing is known of the history of the specimen. A companion piece of approximately the same size has been acquired by the Textile Museum of Washington, D.C. Both are attributed to the vicinity of Chachapoyas in northeastern Peru, and are said to have been used by traveling priests serving Indian groups whose way of life was not conducive to the erection and maintenance of church buildings. Such paintings are said to have been used as backdrops for temporary altars and are provided with loops along the top edge for suspension.

We can assume that the artist was from the Andean highland area, for the border bands with serrated zigzag motif represent a structural warp pattern which occurs in that area from Colombia into Bolivia.

Only four other examples are known to the writer and only one of these has been reproduced. It is our hope that the presentation of this example will bring suggestions which may lead to other examples or elicit information which will help to establish its age.

The base fabric is of handspun cotton, single ply, yarn with considerable variation in diameter. It is a 1 x 1 plain weave and consists of three cut lengths with a loom width of 28 inches. The seams run vertically, and overall dimensions are 82 by 84 inches. The colors are tan, reddish brown, and gray blue, with the field areas a badly faded blue. In applying the latter, the blue seldom touches the edges of adjacent colors, and a narrow area of the white fabric is visible.

Junius B. Bird





PLATE 7 — Detail from one of a pair of curtains; white taffeta with painted flowering branches. Chinese, about 1760. The material was originally purchased by a member of the de Peyster family of New York. According to family traditions, it was intended to be used by a daughter who was making her *début*, but she is said to have either died of typhoid fever before it arrived or to have disliked it when she saw it, so that it was put away and only much later made into curtains. Another piece of the material, also received from a descendant, is in the Cooper Union Museum. Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York. (Gift of a descendant of the de Peyster family.)



PLATE 8— Brocaded silk dress, colored flowers on cream ground. English (Spitalfields), about 1750. Worn by a member of the family of Captain Frederick Frye, who commanded Fort Jay after the Revolution. Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.

## BOOK NOTES

Appearing as it does only once a year, the *Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* cannot attempt to keep its readers fully informed about books and magazine articles dealing with antique textiles. Fortunately, this service is admirably performed by the *Bulletin de Liaison* published by the International Centre for the Study of Ancient Textiles (CIETA). The formation and activities of this organization were reported in the *Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin* in 1954 and 1957. The *CIETA Bulletin* for July, 1960, contained a bibliography of 79 titles in Czech, English, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Swedish, Italian, Yugoslav, Russian, Norwegian, and Polish, dealing with embroideries, laces, costumes, textile history and commerce, carpets, tapestries, woven and printed fabrics, and miscellaneous textiles. The articles in the *Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin* Vol. 43, 1959, are included. The following notes are therefore not so much formal reviews as recommendations of outstanding books for the benefit of members who do not see the CIETA list.

The name of Irwin Untermyer is familiar to all members of the Needle and Bobbin Club. For many years, he was himself a member, the Club has had the privilege of seeing his collections, and several articles in the *Bulletin* have been concerned with embroideries in his possession. For some years, sumptuous Untermyer catalogues have been slowly but steadily appearing, all with scholarly texts by Dr. Yvonne Hackenbroch, all with a wealth of color plates, so that lovers of fine textiles have waited with the utmost impatience for what, to us, must be the most interesting of the series. At last it has appeared, *English and other needlework, tapestries, and textiles in the Irwin Untermyer Collection*, published for the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Harvard University Press, 1959, price \$25. No one will be disappointed. Here are Judge Untermyer's English embroideries, a collection unparalleled outside the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, presented in all their charm, splendor, and importance; though smaller, the groups of English textiles in other techniques and of works from France, Flanders, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, and America, are equally ably and beautifully displayed. Every piece is illustrated, 75 of them in color and 108 in black and white; many details are shown. A particularly pleasing feature for those who do not own the English furniture catalogue is that the plates of furniture upholstered in embroidery are repeated in the new volume, so that Judge Untermyer's remarkable achievement can be appreciated in its entirety. A modest and agreeable foreword by the collector is followed by Dr. Hackenbroch's authoritative introduction and the superb group of plates. In her "Notes and Comments" at the end of the book, members of the Needle and Bobbin Club will be interested to see frequent references to articles that have appeared in this *Bulletin*.

Another book that can be whole-heartedly recommended is *The Valois tapestries* by Frances A. Yates (London, The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1959). In the Uffizi Gallery in Florence hang eight splendid and enigmatic tapestries, show-

ing courtly festivities. It has long been known that they represent events in the reign of Henri III of France, but who most of the characters are, just what celebrations are taking place, and, above all, why and for whom the tapestries were made have been extremely debatable questions. In a text that reads as excitingly as any detective story, Miss Yates has answered them, incidentally, also, answering what Geoffrey Webb has called the key question for the art historian, "Why does the work of art look the way it does?" She is not a textile specialist, but the characteristics of the tapestries as tapestries are adequately dealt with, and the excellent detail photographs reveal the workmanship effectively. Students of costume will find many of these plates and, especially, Miss Yates' chapter, "Costume and topography," of the greatest interest.

An older book that cannot fail to please members of the Needle and Bobbin Club is *The Bayeux Tapestry: a comprehensive survey*, New York, Phaidon Publishers, 1957. Sir Frank Stenton is the general editor and contributes the opening chapter on the historical background. George Wingfield Digby writes on technique and production, John L. Nevinson on the costumes, and equally well-known authorities on the style and design, on the arms and armor, and on the history of the "tapestry". The plates, fourteen of them in color, were reproduced from new photographs; some of the details show every stitch of the embroidery. Few works of art, and certainly no textiles, have been studied more thoroughly than this most famous historical document; not the least fascinating chapter in this book is the one that tells of its discovery in 1724 and the vicissitudes of its history since that date. Napoleon brooded over it when he hoped to emulate the achievement of William the Conqueror that it records, and the German occupation forces demanded to see it in 1940. The book was produced with the assistance of the Trustees of the Pilgrim Trust and is a noble example of the munificence of that organization, from which all textile lovers will benefit.

The *Workshop Notes* of the Textile Museum, Washington, are primarily intended for specialists and need no commendation here; they are universally consulted and admired. One example, however, is of very general interest; it is "The Bible as a source book for the study of textiles", by Louisa Bellinger. It appeared in November, 1958, as Paper No. 18.

## CLUB NOTES

### *Historical Note*

Volume One, Number One of *The Bulletin of The Needle and Bobbin Club*, is dated December, 1916, though an editorial note on the contents page implies that it was not actually in the members' hands until some time later. The present Volume 44, though dated 1960, is similarly not available until the Spring of 1961. But far more important things than habitual tardiness link the publication of today with its forerunner of forty-four years ago, the most valuable being the continued affection of an astonishingly large number of people, both for the *Bulletin* and for the Club. The first membership list contained 142 names, among them several, such as Mrs. Harris Fahnestock and Mrs. J. P. Morgan, Jr., whose great collections of lace are now museum treasures. Even more happily, some names, including those of Miss Marian Powys and Mr. Richard C. Greenleaf (the first Editor), are recognizable as those of still constant members of today, and, even more remarkably, the first list of officers shows our dearly loved Honorary Director, Miss Marian Hague, as Vice-President.

The Needle and Bobbin Club may well be proud of its record and of its longevity; few such highly specialized groups can ever have held together so long, and fewer still can have produced such a permanently valuable contribution to learning as the *Bulletin*. This publication has a place in the great libraries of the world and its articles are quoted wherever textiles are seriously studied.

The present membership list of the Club contains over two hundred names and new ones are constantly being added. Prospective members who are proposed and seconded by members, supported by at least two letters addressed to the President, and accepted by the Board of Officers, will always be welcomed. As in 1916, Life Members, Patrons, and Active Members are "those whose interest in hand-made fabrics is one of pleasure purely"; Associate Members are those professionally engaged in textile work, if not on a commercial basis. Only when the dues of 1916 are considered does it become apparent that the Club was founded a long, long time ago; an Active Member then paid \$5 a year and an Associate \$1! The figures today for the four classes are \$200, \$25, \$15, and \$7.50. By far the greatest part of these contributions is paid for printing the *Bulletin*; the Club's other activities are relatively inexpensive, thanks mainly to the generous hostesses, who, year after year, open their residences and provide the hospitality that always adds so much conviviality and pleasure to the meetings of the Club.

### *Bulletin Subscriptions*

Certain individuals and institutions subscribe to the *Bulletin* for a fee of \$5 a year. The Board of Officers welcomes such subscriptions from institutions, such as schools, colleges, libraries, and museums, for which Club Membership is inappropriate, and it is willing to continue to send the *Bulletin* to individuals who have subscribed in the past, though these persons are urged to consider the advantages of membership.

However, as it is extremely important that the Club continue to grow, the Board has decided that no new subscriptions will be accepted from individuals, except from persons living outside the Continental United States, or in other unusual circumstances.

#### *Back Numbers of the Bulletin*

Many back numbers of the *Bulletin*, though not of all issues, are available for purchase by members or others. Copies more than three years old can be obtained for \$3 each, more recent numbers for \$5. Requests should be addressed to the President, Mrs. Norris W. Harkness, 580 Park Avenue, New York 21, N. Y. Members are asked to consider whether a gift of these *Bulletins* would not be welcomed by some school, college, library, or museum in which they are interested.

#### *The Embroiderer's Guild, American Branch*

Though the Needle and Bobbin Club was founded "to encourage and maintain interest in hand-made fabrics", many of its members have always been active in producing such fabrics, the heirlooms of the future. Most active needleworkers probably know the Embroiderers' Guild of England, whose headquarters are at 73 Wimpole Street, London, W.1, and its recently founded and highly successful American Branch. However, for the benefit of those who have not heard of these organizations, a few details of the advantages they offer will be given here. The Guild maintains an information centre in London, where American members are always welcome, and publishes the well-known magazine, *Embroidery*. A subscription to this magazine can be placed through the American Branch of the Guild, which also distributes to its members leaflets, instruction books, portfolios of various types of needlework, correspondence courses, transfer designs, and much information about meetings, exhibitions, competitions, and other data of interest. Membership in the Embroiderers' Guild is open to all interested in needlework. Full information can be obtained from the Secretary, Miss Sally Behr, 215 East 72nd Street, New York 21, N. Y. The Needle and Bobbin Club extends a most cordial welcome to the American Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild.

#### *1960 Club Activities*

The first meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club was held at the residence of Mrs. Joseph V. Santry, 71 East 71st Street, on Thursday afternoon, January fourteenth. Joining Mrs. Santry as hostesses were Mrs. Fford Burchell and Mrs. Eliot Lee Ward. Miss Louisa Bellinger, Curator-Analyst of the Textile Museum of Washington, D.C., spoke on "The relation between textile fibers and types of pattern in Near Eastern fabrics". The originality of the material, presented with Miss Bellinger's combination of profound learning, lucidity, and charm, was of great interest to the many members present, who also enjoyed a delightful tea given by the gracious hostesses. Members who wish to have a record of Miss Bellinger's researches

should consult her articles, "Craft habits, Part I: loom types suggested by weaving details", and "Craft habits, Part II: spinning and fibers in warp yarns", published as *Workshop Notes*, Papers Nos. 19, and 20, May and November 1959, by the Textile Museum, Washington.

Annual Meeting. Members and their guests attended in large numbers at the New York Academy of Sciences on Monday afternoon, March 21st. After a brief business meeting, Mr. Adolph S. Cavallo, Curator of Textiles at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, spoke on embroideries in the Elizabeth Day McCormick Collection. This superb collection, now owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, is, of course, too large to be discussed in its entirety in a single lecture, but Mr. Cavallo presented many examples of its riches in beautiful color slides, and added to their interest by his knowledgeable and witty comments. The audience was deeply appreciative of his talk and also of the excellent tea provided by the generous hostesses, Mrs. E. Farrar Bateson and Mrs. Kenneth Boardman.

A group of five hostesses, Miss Maud E. Dilliard, Mrs. Edwin J. Gohr, Mrs. Alan R. Martin, Mr. L. Earle Rowe, and Mrs. Robert D. Sterling, invited members to the Lotus Club on Wednesday afternoon, April 27th. The speaker was Mrs. S. John Worsley of London, needlework designer and lecturer; the title of her talk was "Nigerian weaving of the chieftain's robes". The opportunity of hearing, for once, good news from Africa was not to be missed, and many members enjoyed Mrs. Worsley's fascinating pictures and her vivid account of some extremely unusual textiles. The actual specimens that she brought with her were examined with great interest, and the splendid tea provided by the kind hostesses made an enjoyable finish to an exceptional afternoon.

The meeting of Thursday afternoon, November 17th, was held at the apartment of Mrs. Russel C. Veit, 570 Park Avenue, with an unusually large attendance of members. Miss Edith A. Standen, Associate Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Editor of the *Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin* spoke on the exhibition of English chintz held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in the summer of 1960. As many members had seen this magnificent exhibition, Miss Standen's slides of the fabrics awoke some happy memories; others, less familiar with the material, were impressed by the variety and beauty of English work of this type in the 18th century. A delicious tea was provided by Mrs. Veit and her co-hostess, Mrs. John Gerdes, in the latter's apartment and was deeply appreciated.

The final meeting of the year was to have been held on Monday afternoon, December 12th. Undoubtedly the usual number of indomitable members would have arrived at the stated time (two actually did), traveling by sleigh or ski if necessary, but the staff at the Colony Club were not so hardy. The meeting was postponed to what it is to be hoped will be a blizzard-free day in 1961, and will be reported in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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