OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

Newsletter No. 16 **June 2000**

Wedding robe *uchi-kake*, Japan, 1980's (BMAG 1991 M 30). Man-made fibres, embroidered with coloured silks and gilt thread; see *Connecting Threads, p.* 23.

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EDITORIAL

We are not alone in the Universe! We have made contact with like-minded groups "out there". One, in France, has not yet responded to our signal, but the replies from Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia are most encouraging.

A group of Saudi ladies was so inspired by a sight of our newsletter that they have just launched their own textile group, *Mansoojat.* Their aim is to promote awareness of textiles and costumes from the Arabian Peninsula in particular as well as of the Middle East more widely. The group hopes to publish two newsletters per year and can be contacted by e-mail: mansoojat@hotmail.com. They are eager to welcome members from abroad and invite comments, contributions and suggestions; so those of you who are particularly interested in this area, here's your chance.

The Textile Society of Hong Kong was founded in 1993 (two years earlier than us) by Diana Collins, who is still its President. Its aims are "to explore the multiple facets of both traditional and contemporary textiles". They have a very full programme of activities, including tours to Laos and Shanghai, and a lively newsletter which has hitherto been appearing six times a year. This has rendered the Editor so breathless trying to keep up with it that she has persuaded the committee to let her reduce it to four times a year in future. I have copies of the three numbers that have so far appeared this year and members are welcome to borrow them. They have also produced a very useful guide to Asian textile collections - which gives me ideas.

Closer to home, we have been having conversations with the Costume Society, with the result that their annual symposium will be-held at the Ashmolean next year - 6-8 July. The theme of the symposium is *In the Shadow of Scheherazade: the Influence of Orientalism and Exoticism in Western Dress,* and key speakers include Verity Wilson of the Far Eastern Department at the V.& A. and our own Ruth Barnes. Subject areas will be Eastern Influences in Western Dress, Europeans in Eastern Dress, Textile Design for Dress Decoration, and Dressing for Performance. Accommodation is being arranged at Wadham College, where the Conference dinner will also take place; visits and other social activities are also planned. I hope to be able to include a complete programme in the next newsletter; meanwhile, anyone interested in receiving further information should write to Judy Tregidden, 25 Church Crescent, Finchley, London, N3 1BE.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 21 June
at 5.45 p.m.
Pitt Rivers Research Centre, 64 Banbury Road, Oxford

THE ANCESTORS' CLOTH: NEW TEXTILES IN EASTERN INDONESIA

Ruth Barnes
Ashmolean
Museum

Members free Visitors welcome, £2.00

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Monday 3 July
at the Victoria & Albert Museum

Rosemary Lee has kindly extended an invitation to OATG members to take up any unbooked places for Valery Garrett's talk to the Royal Asiatic Society on the collection of Chinese textiles which she recently gave to the V & A.

Please contact Rosemary Lee direct, after 20 June, on tel. 01491 873 276 or e-mail rosemary.lee@talk21.com

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Future event - please note in your diary
Wednesday 18 October at 5:45 p.m.: AGM
Pitt Rivers Research Centre, 64 Banbury Road, Oxford
and
at 7:00 p.m.: Anne Morrell
will talk about her work at
The Calico Museum of Textiles (Ahmedabad, India)

Further information from Ann Guild, Programme Secretary, The Old School, Ducklington, Witney, Oxfordshire OX8 7UR, Tel. 01993 899033 or e-mail macguild@btinternet.com

MIDDLE EASTERN TEXTILES AND DRESS IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF SCOTLAND

Within the National Museums of Scotland, the Royal Museum of Scotland presents international collections to both a general and a specialist public. The Museum, which began life in 1854, is one of the many museums founded in Britain during the 19th century to continue the enthusiastic response to the Great Exhibition of 1851, held at the Crystal Palace, and is one of the finest Victorian public buildings in Britain, dominated by the Great Hall, a superb example of the use of the techniques of cast iron and plate glass to create a spacious vaulted interior.

The Museum's treasures include several thousand objects from the Middle East illustrating the arts of ceramics and glass, metalwork, arms and armour, painting and lacquer, textiles, dress and jewellery, from the ninth to the twentieth centuries. These collections began modestly in 1858 with the acquisition of some dress and jewellery from Egypt and developed rapidly during the Directorship of Major General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith, KCMG (1885-1900), who came to the Museum after an active career as Director of the Persian Telegraph Service (1865-88) and as a pioneer scholar of Persian art. Through his expert knowledge and contacts the Museum acquired a fine collection of Persian art, notably of the 17th to 19th centuries. Since his day the geographical range has extended to Arabia, Egypt, North Africa, Syria, Turkey and Central Asia through a continuous policy of acquisition by donation, bequest and purchase.

The textile and dress collections, while naturally strong in material from Persia, also include significant holdings from Turkey. Together they illustrate the long and brilliant achievement in technique and design of these two neighbouring cultures. Persian textiles admirably combine function and decoration. In a style of living in which free-standing furniture was not customary, textiles played an important role as soft furnishings. Floors would be covered with soft carpets in both knotted pile and flat-weave techniques, while a range of quilts, covers, hangings and cushions converted a room for dining, entertainment of guests and sleeping. There was ample scope for the full employment of diverse techniques of weaving, printing and embroidery. Fine textiles were also used in Persian dress and accessories.

The Museum's Persian collections feature carpets, woven silks, block-printed cottons and varied examples of embroidery. Most of the carpets are of 19th and early 20th century date and are woven in both wool and silk knotted pile with intricate and graceful foliage designs associated with the major production centres of Kashan, Kerman and Isfahan. Silks dating from the 17th to 19th centuries illustrate the principal techniques of weaving and decoration. Here samples of fabric and women's coats of the 17th and 18th centuries show complex and sophisticated weaves where delicate flower motifs - carnation, rose and iris - are set against backgrounds of either plain silk or silk bonded with silver and gold threads. A woman's jacket and trousers of 19th century date demonstrates both the cut and construction of luxurious dress and also the continuity of textile design of floral motifs against a gold ground.

Woman's jacket, white cotton block printed with a design of red and blue stylized foliate motifs. Iran (Persia) late 19th Century (Royal Museum of Scotland 1976.376)

One of the most versatile and enduring Persian textile crafts is that of wood-block printing on cotton associated with the cities of Isfahan and Yazd. Here the Museum has a good collection, especially of late 19th century pieces which Murdoch Smith acquired through the staff of the Isfahan Telegraph Office. Lengths of finely woven white or cream coloured cotton calico were printed with designs in black, red, blue and yellow; sometimes gold was added as a luxurious touch. Pear-wood blocks, each carved with different motifs were used to build up designs. Patterns include bands of repeating motifs, flowers such as roses and carnations, animals and birds - peacock, lions and tigers. Apart from their obvious use for tablecloths, covers and hangings, block printed textiles were made into garments such as women's jackets with tight waists and long pointed sleeves (see illustration above).

Many techniques and styles of embroidery were practised, ranging from the geometrical precision of whitework in which motifs were worked in drawn thread stitches on a loosely woven fabric, to the richness of effect created by covering material entirely in multicoloured floral designs. Lavish use of gold and silver thread is also seen in court textiles. The Museum's collections feature examples of 19th century date of all these techniques: white and silver drawn threadwork used in face veils and prayer mats, multicoloured diagonal stripes worked in small stitches on lengths to be made into women's trousers, and sumptuous covers of crimson velvet and silk worked with formal designs in gold and silver thread.

The range and quality of the Persian collections is equally matched by those from Turkey where a comparable tradition existed of using textiles to furnish rooms. The use of free-standing furniture to customise functions was only introduced in Turkey during the 19th century as a result of increased contact with the West. Carpets, woven silks and embroidered textiles all played an essential role in furnishing and dress at all levels of Turkish society from the Ottoman court based in Istanbul (Constantinople) to provincial towns.

The Museum's collection of Turkish carpets, while mainly of late 18th and 19th century date, includes one fine and rare example of the 16th century. This is made of knotted pile in red and yellow wools worked in an angular design of repeated and interlaced foliate motifs from the production centre of Ushak which wove carpets both for a domestic and a lucrative export market. Such carpets are found in European collections, are depicted in 15th and 16th century Flemish and Italian paintings, and are a feature of the Protestant churches of Transylvania, whose parishioners included merchants who regularly traded with Turkey.

Silk production in Turkey was a major industry, and here the Museum's collections spectacularly illustrate its achievements in material dating from the 16th to 19th centuries. Ottoman court dress was based on the wearing of layers of garments of heavy fabrics in relatively sombre colours sparingly accessorised with carefully chosen jewellery to create a dignified effect. Textile workshops in Bursa and Istanbul worked to produce the silk brocades and velvets required for this dress system. Among the Museum's holdings are lengths of crimson silk and silver brocade with bold designs of repeated stylised flower motifs of 16th and 17th century date. There is also a collection of garment pieces of early 17th century date which illustrates a range of abstract and naturalistic motifs - interlaced stars, tulip scroll and methods of cut and construction. Nineteenth century examples of women's dress, such as a complete costume of lime green silk embroidered in gold from Istanbul and provincial wedding dresses of crimson and purple velvet also lavishly embroidered in gold from Bursa and Kastamonu, illustrate both the continuity and the evolution of the Turkish silk weaving industry.

Both professional and domestic embroidery flourished. Here the Museum has an extensive collection of embroidered household textiles from Istanbul and provincial centres such as Bursa, Kayseri, Mylas, Bodrum, etc - covers, towels, napkins - all worked in coloured silks with imaginative designs based on flowers (carnations, tulips roses and

hyacinths either as single motifs or arranged in bouquets and vases), fruits (pears, melons), buildings such as mosques and kiosks, and sailing boats. Panels embroidered with bands of geometrical motifs show the decoration of women's garments from central Turkey.

Significant efforts have been made to extend both Persian and Turkish textile and dress collections into the contemporary world through a series of field trips from the 1970s to 1990s. Here the aim was to acquire carefully documented material which related to and strengthened the historical collections and which represented crafts in danger of disappearing through increased industrialization of textile production. The Museum now has collections of 20th century carpets and flat-woven textiles plus examples of both men's and women's dress from the Qashqa'i, Shasevan and Kurdish tribal areas of Persia. Field collecting in Turkey has been comprehensive, ranging from village rugs and associated household textiles from central Turkey, the western and south-western regions respectively of Bodrum and Silifke, modern examples of embroidered table and bed linen, to sophisticated interpretations by Istanbul fashion and interior decorating outlets of Ottoman furnishing fabrics and cushions, silk scarves printed with tulips and roses and bands of Turkish calligraphy, to an evening outfit patterned with traditional carnation motifs on a dark green ground.

Since 1995 the public have had an opportunity to enjoy some of the Museum's Persian and Turkish textiles and dresses through a permanent gallery *Within the Middle East,* where they are displayed in a setting which uses modern techniques of design, graphics, lighting and environmental control combined with decorative themes and colours to illustrate the dominant role of textiles in the domestic interior. Furnishing fabrics are represented by groups of woven and embroidered silks, velvets, block-printed cottons and knotted silk and wool pile carpets dating from the 16th to the 20th century. A tableau of fully costumed figures brings to life the brilliant dress traditions of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and Central Asia during the 19th century.

Jennifer Scarce
Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
Edinburgh University

[May I recommend anyone who would like to pursue this subject further to read Jennifer's book *Domestic Culture in the Middle East,* National Museums of Scotland, 1996, ISBN 07007 0460 4 (£12.99 from the Museum or can be ordered through bookshops). In it she takes the theme of the gallery into a more detailed exploration of the environment and character of the domestic interiors of Persia, Turkey and Egypt. Ed.]

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY WANTED

Due to pressure of other (principally family) affairs, Dymphna Hermans is unable to continue as Membership Secretary even until the A.G.M. in October. Would some computer-friendly member, preferably living in Oxford, please volunteer to take over? Contact Ruth Barnes on 01865 278076 if you can.

THE KASHMIR CONNEXION - A SERIES OF QUESTIONS

At Paisley Museum we are often asked whether the town was named after the pattern, or the pattern after the town. The latter is most definitely the case! The next obvious question is then raised - how did an established design, of unquestioned Eastern origin, end up being almost universally given the name of a small town in the west of Scotland? Like most explanations, there is no simple, straightforward answer.

The design itself is not easy to explain. Its origins are lost in the mists of time, and there are many different stories told of how it came about. Some people will tell you that the "paisley" shape is that of the fruit of the mango, others that it is the shape that would be printed if you were to make a fist, dip the little finger edge into dye or paint, and then print it onto a piece of paper. Some liken the design to Chinese dragonesque shapes, and yet others say that it is the Buddha's footprint. The explanation favoured at Paisley Museum is that the design came from ancient Babylon, where it was a representation of the emerging shoot of the date palm. Like a frond of bracken, the shoot begins as a tight curl before gradually opening out. It is that initial curl that the "paisley" motif is said to resemble. Why, you might reasonably ask, would the Babylonians want to imitate the young shoot of the date palm? In that particular prehistoric culture the date palm was regarded as the tree of life, so its representation in art was basically a fertility symbol! This leads to perhaps the biggest question of all ..... how did the cream of Britain's fashionable, but prudish, 19th century womanhood end up parading along High Streets the length and breadth of the country with their backs covered in ancient Babylonian fertility symbols?

The trail begins with the spread of the symbol throughout the prehistoric world of Europe and Asia. In Europe the cultures of Greece and Rome, with their more representational art forms, pushed the motif to the fringes of the continent, where it survived as what we call Celtic art. In Asia, however, the motif continued to be used through the centuries. It eventually appeared in Kashmir, the very northernmost part of the Indian sub-continent, as a decorative device woven onto the highly-prized *shals.* These were garments for high-ranking men, produced by the skilled craftsmen of the area. One might imagine that an Indian province, nestling at the foothills of the Himalayas, would be a bleak and barren sort of place. In fact, the capital, Srinagar, lies in a very lush and fertile valley, and the weavers of the area took their inspiration from the flora and fauna they saw around them every day. As a result, the earliest shals have motifs made up of floral shapes. The weavers were supported and encouraged by the Mughal Emperors, and the trade in the shals began to flourish.

In the mid-18th century, as British rule spread over the sub-continent, the shals came to the notice of soldiers and administrators. They were perceived to be admirable gifts to take back to the wives and sweethearts waiting patiently at home. Thus they came to the attention of the fashionable elite of Europe. And elite you had to be in order to own one - if you didn't have an employee of the East India Company in the family who could procure one for you! The Company quickly realized that it had stumbled onto a profitable line, and soon began to import the shawls (as they were called in Europe) as a commercial enterprise. Unfortunately, they were almost prohibitively expensive. To buy an imported

Kashmir shawl In the late 18th century would have cost between £200 and £300. I have recently heard it likened to the cost at the time of buying a small London town house! Two factors caused the high price. One was the scarcity of the true Pashmina yarn used for the best quality shawls. It was only produced by a goat living high in the Himalayan mountains, and had to be collected each spring when it was shed onto rocks and bushes. The other factor was the extremely long and laborious twill-tapestry weaving technique employed by the Kashmiri weavers. This involved each individual patch of colours in the motifs being separately darned into the warp using small needle-like bobbins of weft thread. It is said that a skilled weaver might take up to eighteen months to complete one shal.

Despite the high cost, by the last quarter of the 18th century, the shawls were considered very fashionable. This prompted British manufacturers to consider ways of producing cheaper versions. There was much experimentation with both yarns and weaving techniques before an acceptable, cheaper, British-made shawl was available. In another twist to the tale, they were not made in Paisley! The very first "shawls in imitation of the Indian" were actually made in Edinburgh in 1777, closely followed by Norwich in 1784, Paisley was not to venture into the shawl trade for another quarter of a century. In the late 18th century Paisley was following its ancient trade of weaving, but its principal product was silk. Paisley silk was said to be "as good as, if not better than, Spittalfields silk" (though I strongly suspect it was the Paisley manufacturers who were saying it!) Not until the Napoleonic Wars caused shortages of their raw material did the Paisley weavers, and the manufacturers who provided their financial backing, start to look for a new product. The story (probably apocryphal) tells that an Edinburgh manufacturer by the name of Paterson had taken too many shawl orders for his own weavers to cope with. Hearing that there were highly skilled weavers idle in Paisley, he is supposed to have sent work for them to complete for him. This was not a good move, as it seems to have prompted the Paisley manufacturers to examine the product and decide that what Edinburgh could produce, Paisley could rival! Within just a few short years, there were more than a dozen shawl-manufacturing companies established in the town, and over the next thirty years Paisley gradually forced Edinburgh out of business. This was achieved by both the undercutting of costs and by a greater volume of production. For the next sixty years, the production of shawls was to be the mainstay of the town's economy. When shawls were <u>not</u> the height of fashion, the town, and its people, suffered. In the early 1840s, when the shawl took the worst downturn of its fashionable reign, 7000 weavers and their dependent families were receiving parish relief, 67 out of 112 manufacturers failed, and the town itself went bankrupt, not managing to repay its debts for nearly thirty years.

Shawls remained fashionable garments in Britain for around a century, due almost entirely to their versatility. The size, shape and colour combinations could be changed to suit whatever was the prevailing dress shape of each successive decade. Technical improvements meant an increasing sophistication in the product of the European looms, not only in the three British centres, but also in Paris, Lyons and Mulhouse in France, Vienna in Austria, and various factories around Moscow in Russia. With all these different centres of production, why was the Paisley name attached to the majority of the

European-made shawls? Quite simply, Paisley appears to have made more of them than anyone else! At the height of the crinoline era, ladies knew that most of the shawls they looked at in the shops would have been made in Paisley. Therefore they started asking to see a selection of "Paisleys". The name stuck, later transferring itself to the pattern when the shawls themselves went out of fashion.

But we should not forget the original Kashmir shals. They did not disappear just because cheaper versions were available. In fact, right through the shawl era there was cachet in owning a "real" Kashmir. So much so that, by the 1840s, French merchants were sending designs out to Srinagar, so that Kashmirs could be made that were more suitable to European taste. In other words, it seems that Kashmiri weavers were imitating European imitations of Kashmir shals!

The death knell for the shawl came c.1870 when the crinolines, for which the shawls were eminently suited, were replaced by bustle skirts for which they most definitely were not! Virtually overnight the weaving industry of Paisley was decimated. The shawls had such complex patterns that they could only be woven on Jacquard hand looms, meaning that Paisley never made the transition to the power loom industry. Once the specialized product of those hand looms was gone, there was little left that Paisley could economically weave, in competition with the faster power looms. The industry went into terminal decline, to be replaced (in part) by Paisley's other famous textile product, the cotton sewing threads made by J.& J. Clark and their rivals J.& P. Coats.

Ironically, Paisley Museum and Art Galleries first opened its doors to the public in 1871, but did not start to collect shawls seriously until 1905, when spurred into action by the town's larger neighbour, Glasgow, which held a large loan exhibition of Paisley shawls. Paisley, of course, had to organize an even bigger and better one! Afterwards, a former shawl manufacturer persuaded many of the local lenders to make permanent donations, and thus the nucleus of the collection was formed. To-day that collection numbers over a thousand examples, although only a very tiny proportion can be displayed at any one time in our permanent display gallery. However, students, designers, collectors and those with a specialist interest in textiles are always welcome to make an appointment to see the reserve collections in our study centre, and group visits can also be catered for. Our staff includes myself, the Keeper of Textiles, and Dan Coughlan, a weaver who works the various looms we have accumulated over the years. Perhaps we might see some of the members of the Oxford Asian Textile Group visiting? I certainly hope so.

Valerie Reilly

[Again, anyone wishing to pursue the subject could do no better than read Valerie's book *The Paisley Pattern*, Richard Drew, Glasgow, 1987, ISBN 0 86267 193 0. My copy cost £14.95, but that was a long time ago and I am not sure that it is still in print. Ed.]

THE BIOGRAPHY OF OBJECTS: WARREN HASTINGS' SOCKS AND GLOVES IN THE ASHMO1EAN MUSEUM

The Department of Eastern Art in the Ashmolean Museum has a small collection of knitted and crocheted textiles which are noteworthy in their own right, as they are early examples of single-thread looping techniques made in a South Asian context. They are also of interest for their connexion with a famous name: they once belonged to Warren Hastings, first Governor-General of India (1774-1784).

Hastings was born on 6 December 1732 in Churchill, Oxfordshire, the son of an Anglican clergyman. He was brought up by his grandfather and uncle and attended Westminster School in London. In 1750 he was sent to Bengal as a "writer" (the lowest grade of clerk) for the British East India Company, with the unimpressive annual salary of £5. However, he showed considerable administrative talent and was advanced through the ranks of the company, serving on the governing councils of both Calcutta and Madras. He became well versed in Indian languages and customs, and he had a high regard for Indian civilization - to an unusual degree for his time and uncommon among his fellow men in the East India Company. His aims and achievements were full of contradictions. Although he is held to be one of the founders of the British Raj, he did not want the sub-continent to be ruled by a European power, but would have liked to see an Indian administration. On the other hand, he defended British-ruled territory in Bengal against local rulers, and reorganized the Calcutta administration with regard to tax collection and commercial reforms.

Back in England, Parliament passed a bill in 1784 abolishing the political autonomy of the East India Company in India. Hastings felt he could not work under the divided authority of the company and the Crown, and he resigned as Governor-General the same year. After his return to Britain he became the victim of a long political struggle between Parliament and the Company. In 1788 he was brought to trial by a parliamentary group led by his personal enemy and former colleague in Bengal, Sir Philip Francis, and including Edmund Burke. Hastings was accused of high crimes and misdemeanours, mostly relating to confiscations of property and funds while in office. The trial lasted seven years until 1795; although he was acquitted and completely exonerated by the House of Lords, by then he was penniless and demoralized. After 1814 he accepted a pension from the East India Company. He spent his last years at Daylesford, near Stow-on-the-Wold, where he died on 22 August 1818.

In 1933, Mr J.R. Harris of Hall Brothers, the Oxford High Street tailors, presented the University's Indian Institute with an odd assortment of garments which had been acquired in 1919 at an auction of the property of Miss Winter, a descendant of Warren Hastings. The material passed into the Ashmolean collections when the Department of Eastern Art was officially founded in 1962. There were three pairs of long socks, a pair each of long and short gloves, and a single short sock, all of which were said to have belonged to Hastings himself. Their patterning shows distinctly Indian designs, so one can assume that they were in fact made in India, but for use by a European as they follow European fashion. The long gloves are knitted, while the socks and short gloves are

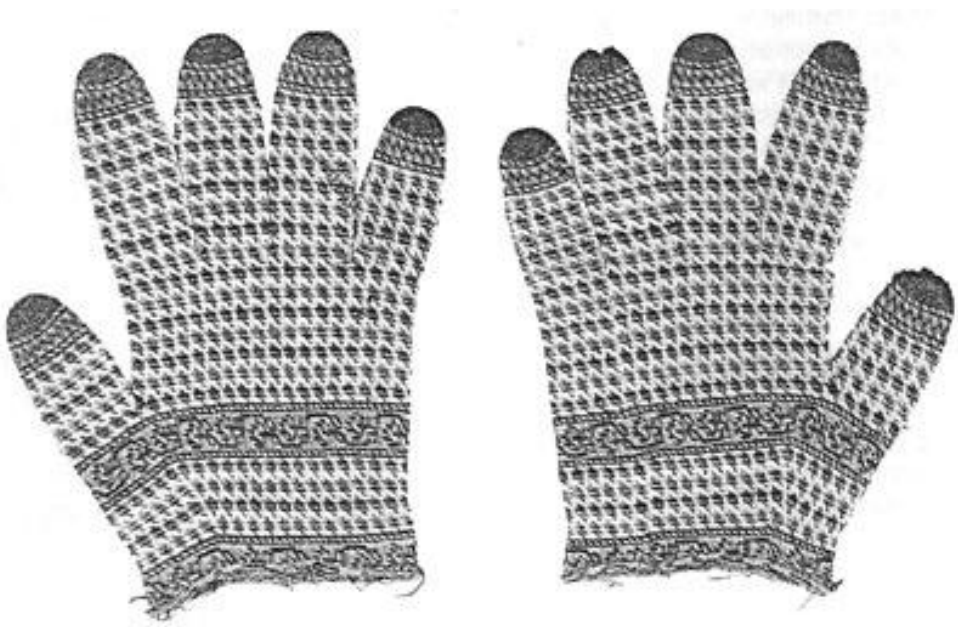
crocheted. All the items are apparently of wool. They were studied in 1986 by Richard Rutt, who refers to the pieces in his *A History of Hand Knitting* (Batsford, London, 1987, ISBN 0 7134 51181). He discusses in some detail the long gloves and relates them to similar material in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The long pair of gloves has a length of 39.5 cm and is knitted at a tension of 10 stitches to a cm. The gloves are entirely covered with rows of single red trefoil flowers, each with a blue stem and a pair of leaves placed against a white background. At the arm opening, wrist, and finger tips are single yellow bands filled with a continuous green vine and pink flower heads. The short pair of gloves (illustrated below) is 17.5 cm long, crocheted at a tension of 18 loops to a cm. The gloves have rows of tiny red and grey flowers against a white background; in addition there are two bands with a continuous vine near the wrist. The single sock (23 cm long) is very similar to these short gloves, both technically and in design. It has rows of larger red and grey flowers linked by tendrils, but the heel and toe have the same red tips with zig-zag borders as do the gloves.

The three pairs of long socks also form a coherent group, with great similarity in technique and patterning. They are all approximately 55 cm long and are crocheted in white wool with a tension of 10 loops to the cm. Each pair is enhanced by a coloured ankle vent with red floral borders; two of these are dark indio and one is green.

For anyone interested in history - whether political, social or intellectual - it is intriguing to study an object that was once owned and used by a person who had some influence on how we experience the world in our own lifetime. Garments provide a particularly intimate connexion with the past; one cannot help but wonder at this tangible link when touching the glove that once covered Warren Hastings' hand. The University has several such "biographical objects" in its collections, and we hope to introduce our readers to more of them from time to time.

Ruth Barnes



REPORTS OF O.A.T.G. MEETINGS

Pleating Skirt Techniques of the Miao, Dong and Bouyei

For the last twelve years Gina Corrigan has been organizing textile focused tours of China, during which she became intrigued by the skirt pleating techniques of the minority groups in Guizhou Province, S.W. China, and her lecture to the Group on 15 March explained her findings to date.

Most of this Province is above 1000 metres high and is difficult to traverse hence a great diversity of costume still remains. There are about 4 million Miao people in Guizhou Province, who started moving into this area from the north about 4000 years ago. The 2 1/2 million Bouyei and 1 1/2 million Dong are indigenous to the area and as a consequence some live in the more fertile lowland regions. Until very recently there has been no written language for these people. Costume has therefore played a particularly important part in their ethnic identity. Within these major groups are many sub-divisions, each group having its own costumes for both everyday and festival wear.

The skirt is a very important part of the women's dress; it is the most difficult to make and also to look after. A slide showed a bride travelling to her husband's home in the back of a truck. She was wearing traditional costume but with tracksuit trousers and would change into her skirt only at the last moment in order to protect it.

Skirts may be constructed from eight to fifty vertical lengths of loom-width cloth, joined at the selvages and gathered into a waistband. Alternatively, three to four horizontal bands of loom-width cloth may be joined and then pleated on to a waistband. Gina's investigation into the pleating techniques was not easy, as there were different methods in each region.

The Bouyei, for instance, pleated the cloth on a basket cylinder, holding the pleats in place with tension ropes. The cloth is dampened with a starch solution and is allowed to dry in the sun. The Eastern Miao used the same principle but employed a metal drum and metal tool for pulling the pleats into place. The long skirts using 44 widths of material are very finely pleated. Rows of threads every 4 cm are used to bring in the pleats. These threads are often kept in at the back.

There were very simple pleats in Central Guizhou, put in place every morning and tied with a thick tie round the waist. In recent times, however, the women have become tired of doing this and now sew the pleats into place.

Hemp and ramie, rather than cotton, are grown in N.W. Guizhou because of the high altitude and poor soil. This results in a tougher, heavier material, which is set in loose pleats on a waistband. The pleats are formed by gathering the first 10-20 cms with 4-10 rows of stitching which is then pulled in to the appropriate waist size. The dance teams, however, use finer, bought cotton.

The people of southern Guizhou are mostly Dong. As it is warmer, the skirts are shorter, but worn with gaiters. The women spin and weave their own fine cotton and 30-40 widths are joined to make a skirt. The shiny indigo cloth is pleated by running a finger nail up and down. The pleats are then massaged into place. Elsewhere, pleating is carried out on a wooden board, using the tips of the fingers and the pleats are then steamed into place over a pot of water.

Gina's wonderful slides gave us a glimpse, not only of the huge spectrum of pleating techniques, but the rich variety of costumes within this Province. It had often been difficult for her to get the full story, as the translators were usually Chinese speaking men while the work was executed by Miao women. Often details vital to the understanding of the total process were lost in translation. Sometimes, when we read of a textile technique we fail to consider the problems involved in teasing out the truth. We were privileged to share in Gina's quest and hope to hear news of further discoveries in the future.

Felicity Wood

Sheila Paine's Open House

By kind invitation of Sheila Paine, two small groups of O.A.T.G. members met at her home on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 April to study her collection of embroidered textiles. I was one of the ten who visited on the second day.

After a welcome cup of coffee, Sheila gave us a brief introductory talk, and then led us on a magical "journey" through her home, where each room housed a display of textiles from different countries. It is impossible to do justice to this outstanding range of embroideries in so short a report. I offer just a little taste of this world tour.

First to India and Pakistan - stunning Swat dresses of black cotton heavily embroidered with medallions of shocking-pink floss silk; fronts of the backless dresses of the Sind covered in rosettes and mirror work, worn with shawls and full skirts. Items ranged from hats, hairplait covers, hoods, caps, children's jackets and heavily embroidered gun covers!

Indian embroidery comes almost entirely from the north, recognized by the use of mirror glass - *shisha* - with open chain stitch on cotton in red, indigo or dark green, along with block-printed fabrics with embroidery, such as stylized peacocks. From the Kutch area there were marriage dresses covered in mirror work. The Banjarah have dense geometric patterning. Rajput have a form of interlaced embroidery. From Kashmir come stunning shawls with paisley type - *boteh* - patterns and a superb red wrap lined with lime green.

From Japan and China - resist paste dyed fabrics; eye-catching rolls on the bottom of an embroidered kimono; minute shoes with tiny embroideries; exquisite coats covered in embroidery representing clouds and flowers and embroidered symbols of patron saints.

Syria produced dresses embroidered with a "V" shape on back, neck and shoulders like a cape, mainly cross-stitch with stylized carnation shapes; Palestine, embroidery worked in a block shape on the front of the dress; Bethlehem, dresses in black and yellow stripes with embroidery in five large "O" shapes. The desert tribes use bright geometric patterns but their work is much cruder. Embroidery from the coastal area of the Yemen can be distinguished by black dresses worked in solid line white cotton thread in a deep "V" shape, while in the Central Highlands, yellow, green and white embroidery is used on an indigo background, sometimes with mother-of-pearl and sequins.

While we ate our packed lunches Sheila miraculously changed all the embroideries and afterwards introduced us to an "ethnic melting pot" - Afghanistan. We then toured Central Asia. Turkmen, we discovered, do not put hems on their clothing. *Chyrpy,* worn by the women, are cloaks with vestigial sleeves in dark green or indigo silk for girls, yellow for married women, and white for the old. The Uzbeks are a nomadic people who produce highly-prized items related to their lifestyle, such as *suzanis* made of cotton or linen and covered in flowers of pink/red silk. There are purses, bags, prayer mats, caps, etc, in a variety of patterns. The Lakai, a sub-group, embroider in circles and loops in varied stitches, and the tribal people of Kohistan embroider patterns of diamonds and zigzags in petit point and cross-stitch with white bead edging.

Our journey ended in Tunisia with a splendidly worked wedding gown with couched gold work from Hammamet and a woven bolero from northern Tunisia.

We all withdrew for a welcome cup of tea and piece of cake. Sheila told us of some of her past journeys and a little about her forthcoming trip to Central Asia. Needless to say, we were all envious of those who are to accompany her. We had a most fascinating day with a very remarkable lady. I should like to thank her on behalf of the groups for allowing us to study her superb collection.

Joy Baldwin

Patola Weavers of Gujarat

Cynthia Cunningham Cort lived for some time in India, where she devoted five years to researching Patola weaving. She is the author of several articles on Indian textiles, in particular ikat weaving and brocade, and is currently guest curating the exhibition *Petals and Plumage - a Collection of Indian Textiles* at Cornell University.

Those of us who were lucky enough to hear her lecture and see her film *Double Ikat Weaving in Western India* on 4 May were privileged to witness in great detail the intricate process of Patola weaving, now a dying craft. Double ikat weaving, when warp and weft threads are tied and dyed before the weaving process begins, so that when woven the threads combine to produce beautiful intricate designs, is a highly complicated technique. Designs in Patola cloth traditionally contain sharply defined, squared geometrics, and often elephants or other animals, birds and flowers. Originally natural dyes were used, to be replaced by synthetic dyes, but now natural dyes are being reintroduced.

The complex tying of the warp and weft is done in several processes with the bundles of thread being tied and retied during several stages of dyeing. The master weaver begins by measuring and marking the threads for tying, then his wife starts the painstaking process of tying tile silk threads with soft cotton. After dyeing the warp threads are untied and gently unravelled so that the pattern becomes visible when laid on a frame. The same process is repeated with the weft threads, which are then wound on to bobbins ready for weaving. Two weavers work to a heddle loom, usually weaving in the morning, while the afternoons are devoted to adjusting so that the threads align exactly to produce the complex designs for which ikat weaving is so famous.

Typically this beautiful woven silk cloth is made into sari lengths which in the past were often exported to Indonesia. Now these costly and highly valued fabrics are popular in India, where they are most often used for weddings, red, the predominant colour, being auspicious. Customers often order five years in advance. A warp length of twenty yards makes three saris and will not be started until two of the three have been ordered. The market to-day is mostly in India.

The tradition of Patola weaving goes back hundreds of years and at one time was practised by around 600 families weaving in Patan, Surat and elsewhere. The technique almost died out in the 1930s, being revived in the '40s and '50s. Now only two extended families of Jains, in Patan, Gujarat, have the necessary expertise to produce this luxurious cloth, while their younger members prefer to attend university rather than to acquire the slow, exacting skills needed for Patola weaving.

The complexity of the process and production of lengths of cloth is an amazing feat. The weaving is relatively minor in comparison with the conceptual work and superb craftsmanship needed to produce Patola cloth.

Ann Guild

Textiles at the Khmer Court: Angkor Origins and Innovations

Gill Green's illustrated talk on May 24 was a fascinating detective story, the denouement of which found no dissenters. The speaker's overall conclusion was that the Khmer elite derived innovative models from India, as well as the bulk of textiles with which to create them. Indeed, this was already evident as early as the 7th century A.D. (the mid-15th century being the terminal point of her study). Indigenous Khmer weaving, however, was never superseded by the availability of imported cloth. Given the perishability of textiles (the royal palaces, constructed of wood, have likewise disappeared), sculpture - in the round and in bas relief - which offers a "significant window on Khmer life of the time", epigraphic evidence in Old Khmer and Sanskrit, as well as modern linguistic analogues, and a single written source, Chinese emissary Zhou Da Guan's account of his late 13th century visit to the Angkorian court, were reviewed.

The use of textiles can be categorized into non-costume (royal regalia and furnishings) and costume. As for the former, the evidence for its being fabric-based is

"really circumstantial", namely the patterns resemble those on costumes worn by people in the same bas reliefs and sculptures, Zhou Du Guan's comments, and the continuity of tradition in modern-day Cambodia.

The costume use of textiles was then examined. The predominant form, worn by all participants in Khmer life, is the hipwrapper, itself divisible into three subforms, defined by the manner the cloth is draped on the body. Sculptural imagery, moreover, indicates "sophisticated composite styles requiring not only a minimum of two lengths of cloth but also cloth of differing widths". The question of width is very important: some costumes worn by the Khmer, such as the *chawng kbun* and the hipcloth, can be made from a narrow length of cloth, as woven on a simple backstrap loom (the only known indigenous weaving technology of the time), but some could not. If the hypothesis of stitching several pieces of cloth together along the selvages is discounted (on the sound grounds that sculptors were meticulous in their depiction of folds, pleats and knots, but show no seams), the question of outside sources is inescapable. India and China would be high on the list of possible sources, but the comparison of Khmer with Indian and Chinese costumes rapidly eliminates the latter. Put simply, the Khmer *chawng kbun* is equivalent to the *dhoti,* the Khmer pendant sash mimics the Indian *patka,* while the Khmer skirt cloth with the bundle of pleats tucked in at the waist echoes the *sari.* Patterns on Khmer and Indian textiles provide further evidential support.

The divine, as well as the devil, is in the detail, and those wishing to acquaint themselves with the particularities of the argumentation, impossible to present in a brief summary (which has omitted motif altogether), should consult two forthcoming articles by Gill Green: Arts of Asia (July) and JESHO (August).

On a personal note, I would advise anyone visiting Cambodia to call at the UNESCO office in Phnom Penh, which has a continuing interest in and several folders full of information on traditional textiles, focusing on the revival of the craft.

Robert Fowler

O.A.T.G. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on or before 1 October. Rates remain at £10 for individuals and £15 for two or more people living at the same address and sharing a newsletter. Until a new Membership Secretary is appointed, please send your subscriptions to Dymphna Hermans, The Warden's Lodgings, All Souls College, Oxford, OX1 4AL, and she will ensure that they go to the right place. But why not make things easier for yourselves by paying by direct debit? Dymphna or her successor will be happy to send you an application form.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am writing you concerning a silk embroidered doeskin(?) coat lined with Russian trade cloth and Central Asian Heat and fringed with what may be mink that possibly dates to the third quarter of the 19th century. I am presently doing research on this garment for an article to be published in *Hali Magazine,* and would be grateful if anyone in the O.A.T.G, has and is willing to share information that will shed light on this coat and the tradition from which it comes. All help will be fully acknowledged in my article.

From the research that I have undertaken so far, it appears that this coat was probably produced by sedentary professionals (Uygur or Dungan?) in Eastern Turkestan (Kashgar, Kuldja?) for a wealthy Kazakh (or Kirghiz) khan. The roundel on the back has a distinct Sino-Tibetan flavour in my opinion, but the other motifs, with the exception of the rosettes, are unfamiliar to me. One of them vaguely harks back to the animal style art of the Eurasian steppe. The fish-like motifs appear on Central Asian embroidered trousers and robes that are probably late 19th or early 20th century.

The coat measures 4'6" hi total length and 78" in total width. A related coat, less elegant and perhaps not as old, is published in *Music for the Eyes*, the catalogue that accompanied an exhibition held in Antwerp in 1997-98 (see cat.194 and p.209 for a brief discussion). Leather pants embroidered in silk were also made (see cat.194 and cat.203).

In *A Collection of the Kazak Folk Art Designs* published by the Xinjiang People's Publishing House and edited by the Kazak Folk Art Designs Editorial Board, the Ili Kazak Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang, there is a roundel that is related in colour and design to the one on our coat, one placed "on the back of men's chamois overcoat" according to the brief description. This coat was evidently found in Urumchi.

According to information I have from a Russian curator, two styles are distinguished in the Russian literature, one associated with Tashkent and the other with Kashgar. If there is any validity in this, I would tend to associate our example with the latter place.

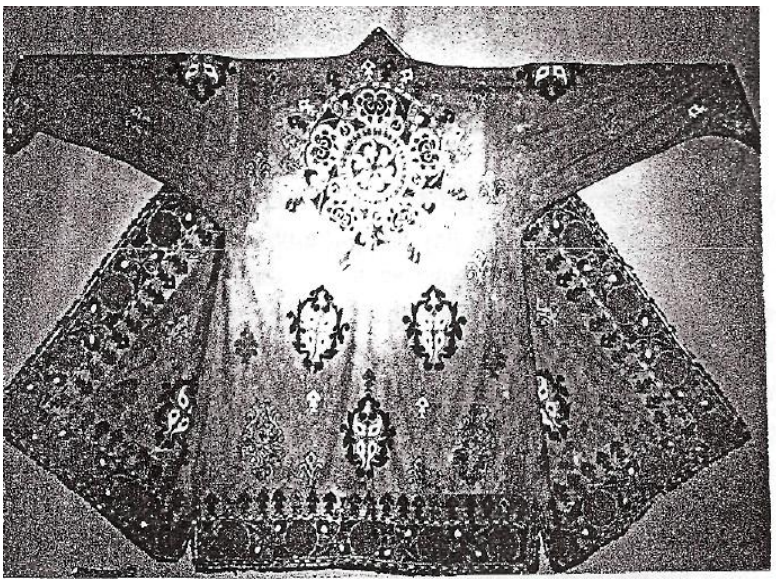
Should any in your Group be interested, I should be happy to send him/her JPEG files of the enclosed images*. Thank you very much for any help you and your members may be able to give.

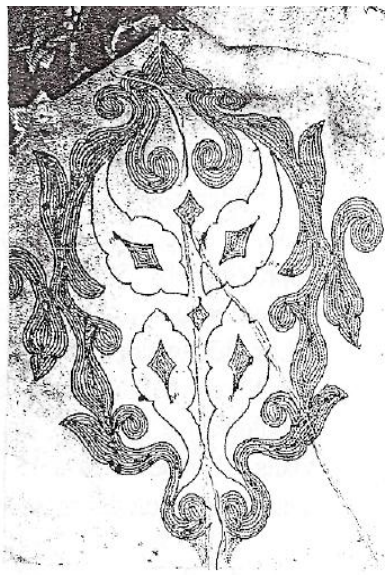
Sincerely yours,

JOHN T. WERTEME

3401-A South Stafford Street, Arlington. Virginia 22206-1905, U.S.A. Tel. 703/379-8528; e-mail: wertime@erols.com

*Copied opposite. Contact me if you would like to see the colour originals and others. Ed.





Dear Editor,

At the risk of sounding horribly pedantic, I nevertheless feel compelled to write and point out a muddled statement in the interesting article called Naga Textiles To-day in your February issue (No.15, p.7).

All too often textile historians are justly concerned to describe exact weaving and stitching techniques, etc., but are often confused when it comes to the descriptions of dyes and dyeing methods used to colour textiles. An example of this occurs in the middle of the article concerned, where the author, describing colours used, states: "Various shades of blue, ranging from black-blue to light blue, are obtained from the leaves of *Strabilanthes flaccidiflious*, a plant somewhat similar to indigo (*my underlining*). This kind of observation only serves to perpetuate misunderstanding about the nature of indigo. Indigo is in fact the blue dyestuff (also a pigment) that is obtained from species of different plant genera. *Strobilanthes fiaccidiflious* (now re-named *Baphicacanthus cusia*) is one such indigo-yielding plant, as is, for example, the European indigo plant known as woad. The reason that one indigo-yielding species was named *Indigofera tinctoria* was because it produced much of the indigo dye that was widely traded during "colonial" times. But the indigo component is identical in all the different indigo plants.

Yours faithfully,
JENNY BALFOUR-PAUL

Dear Editor,

This is with reference to Lyn Stevens Wall's article One Man's Passion - *Indian Textile Sample Books* in Newsletter no. 15 of the O.A.T.G. I would like to add to her list that there are also thirteen volumes of Forbes Watson's sample books in the Bhau Daji Lad Museum (formerly known as the Victoria and Albert Museum) in Bombay. Some of these volumes are still in their original wooden cases - in fact when Rosemary Crill saw them she was most intrigued to see the cases, because the Victoria and Albert Museum (London) does not have these.

With regards,
MONISHA AHMED

MUSEUMS ROUND-UP

Many of you will already have heard rumours of a generous gift from the late carpet scholar, May Beattie, to the Ashmolean Museum. She has left her study collection of approximately 150 carpets, her notes and slides, as well as her extensive library on carpet-related matter to the Department of Eastern Art, and she has provided funds for a fellowship in carpet studies to be held for one term at a time annually by visiting scholars. Her library has now been catalogued by Margaret Davies, and Jon Thompson has been appointed the first May Beattie Fellow. The carpets are, alas! not yet available for study visits. I hope to be able to publish a fuller report on the collection and May Beattie's considerable role in carpet studies in the next Newsletter.

Another gift recently received by the same department is a fine batik cloth from Java, a so-called *batik pasisir* (north coast Javanese) cloth with white calligraphic designs on a blue ground. These patterns, named *tulisan Arab* ("Arabic writing"), were hand-drawn with wax onto a cotton fabric and then dyed with indigo. The layout of the batik is similar to a carpet, including a drawn fringe at both narrow ends. It was probably made in a Javanese workshop in Cirebon for local use or for export to Sumatra. Textiles of this type had, and have, a ceremonial use as wall hangings *(hiasan dinding)* to be displayed at weddings or other life-cycle rituals (see illustration).

The Ruskin Gallery in Sheffield (where some of you may have seen the exhibition of Iranian tribal rugs that has just closed) is to move to a new home, the Millenium Galleries, which are at present being constructed in the city centre and are due to open next spring. The building will have four state-of-the-art galleries, the Ruskin being one, others being dedicated to metalwork - a natural for Sheffield - and contemporary crafts and design. The largest, however, under a unique partnership agreement with the V.& A., will house special exhibitions from that institution, as well as major touring exhibitions of national and international importance.

An interesting new museum has opened in Norfolk: the Straw Museum at Colby. On the face of it, it sounds as if it might be of more appeal to cows and horses than the likes of us, but the exhibits display the wide range of crafts that straw can be put to from corn dollies to marquetry. Nearer to our interests are plaiting, Swiss straw lace, tatting and embroidery. The Museum is the brain-child of Ella Carstairs, a member of the Guild of Straw Craftsmen, who was born in Malaya, and includes a section of work from Asian countries in it. At present the Museum is open until October on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Phone/fax 01263 761615 for further information.

Across the Atlantic, the Textile Museum in Washington D.C. has launched its first virtual exhibition (www.textilemuseum,org/fsg). Developed in conjunction with the exhibition *Flowers of Silk and Gold* (see below p.23), it enables you to sample the exhibition without actually going there. By enhancing themes of the exhibition online the Museum has the potential to reach a far greater audience. Three sections, Textile Gallery, Ottoman Culture and Teacher Source make up *Flowers of Silk and Gold Online.*

Editor

BOOKS

Recommended by Penelope Wooffitt

First of all aplogies to Penelope for dropping a "t" off her name in the last issue.

She has kindly sent a repeat of the list of the books she recommended during her lecture, *Take Two Squares*, reported in the last newsletter, with the following remarks, "they are all so out of date, except the first three. These three are still invaluable. Really it is best for people to look out for books - in any language - that show the diagrams. Almost any pamphlet on ethnic garments, from wherever, will have useful and inspirational details, it is just a question of keeping one's eyes open, or asking friends who travel to do so."

M. Tilke, *Costume Patterns and Designs*, Zwemmer

*D.K. Burnham, *Cut My Cote*, Royal Ontario Museum

Hamre and Meedom, *Making Simple Clothes*, Black, London 1980

Kaori O'Connor, *Creative Dressing*, R.K.P. (Maybe)

Maggie Lane, *Oriental Patchwork*, R.K.P. (Maybe)

Mary Costelow, *Embroidery*, Marshall Cavendish, 1977 (not bad - but very 70s)

Plus - other books too numerous to list, in various languages, on different regional costumes, e.g. English smocks, Molas, Ukrainian Peasant Clothes, Palestinian Costume, Indian Textiles and Embroidery, etc. etc.

*The copies of *Cut My Cote* ordered by Felicity Wood from the Royal Ontario Museum have arrived. The price, including postage and tax, works out at £6. If you ordered this book please send a cheque, made out to Felicity Wood, to her at 2 Frenchay Road, Oxford, OX2 6TG, and she will post the book to you straight away.

New Books

Madder Red: A History of Luxury ami Tfsde, Chenciner, Robert, Curzon Press, London, 2000, ISBN 0 7007 1259 3,288 pp, 80 illus., 4 maps, hb £25.

Sovreign Carpets: Unknown Masterpieces in European Collections, ed. Edoardo Concaro and Alberto Levi, Skira, 1999, ISBN 88 8118 630 6,233 pp, £28.

A short introductory essay leads into detailed descriptions of 208 carpets, rugs, saddle bags, etc, each one illustrated in colour.

Ladder to the Clouds: Intrigue and Tradition in Chinese Rank, Jackson, B., & Hugus, D, Berkeley, 1999 (ISBN unknown), 256 pp, numerous col. illus.

Divided into two parts, an exploration of Chinese customs and symbols followed by an analysis of Mandarin rank badges, complete with descriptions and photographs.

Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery, Sumru Belger Krody, Merrell/Textile Museum, Washington D.C, 2000, ISBN 1 85894 105 9, 160pp. £25,

Published in connexion with the exhibition of the same name (see below p.23), this book, which is copiously illustrated in colour, is not so much a catalogue as a study of the subject, comprising chapters on the history of the Ottoman Empire as well as makers and methods, designs and functions of the embroidery.

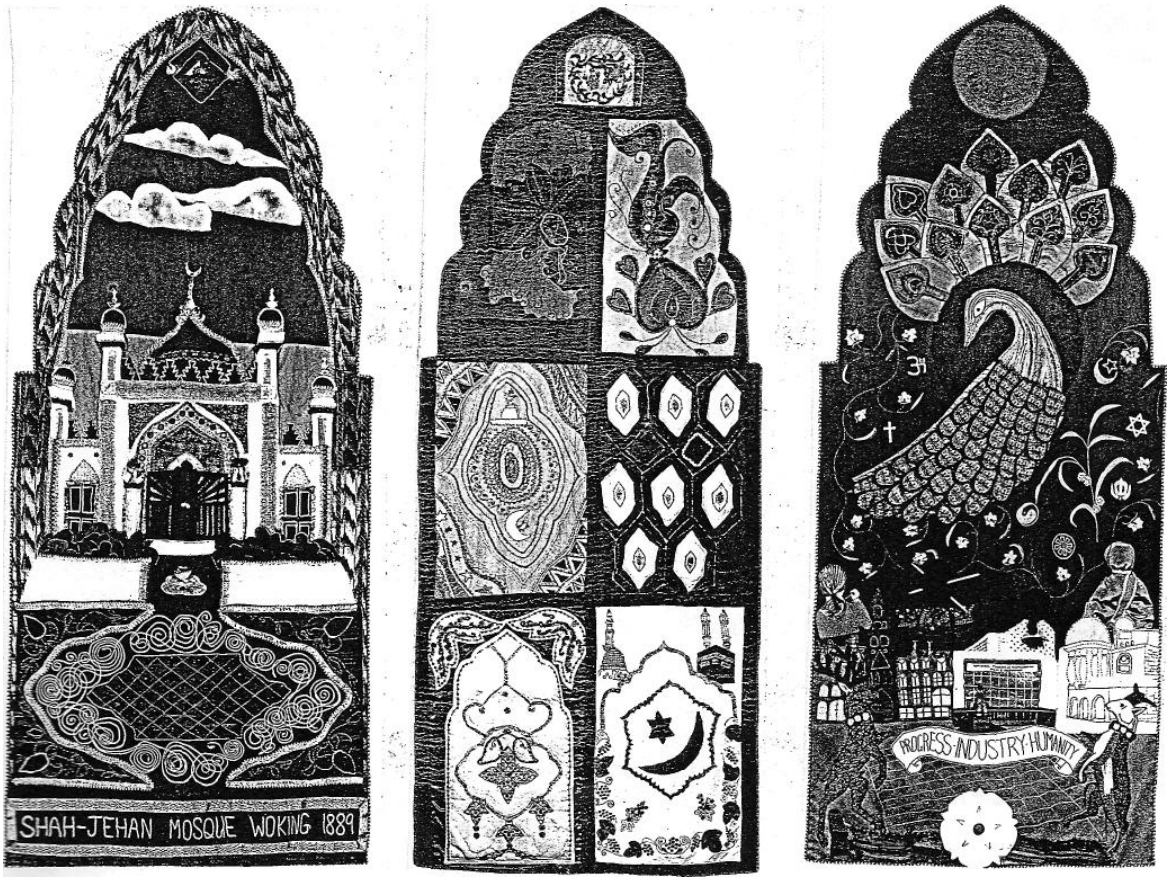
Anatolian Kilims and Radiocarbon Dating, Rageth, Jürg (ed.) Basel, Edition Jürg Rathgeb und Freunde des Orientteppichs, 1999, ISBN 3 85895 993 6, 248pp, numerous col. & b/w illus. No price indicated, but inquiries to Galerie Rageth, Sieglinweg 10, CH-4125 Riehen, Switzerland, e-mail: edition@rageth,com

EXHIBITIONS

Shamiana - The Mughal Tent

Readers will remember the Mughal Tent project developed and co-ordinated by Shireen Akbar at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the 1990s, culminating in an exhibition held there in 1997 and afterwards shown at the Royal Museum of Scotland and elsewhere. Shireen conceived the idea of a tent because of its many connotations - a shamiana is a ceremonial tent - and travelled all over the country encouraging groups of Asian women to visit the Nehru Gallery for inspiration in communal needlework. The groups worked out their own designs and collaborated in their execution to produce 44 individual panels for the tent; another dozen were added by groups overseas.

Asian women are among the most isolated of immigrant groups in the U.K., and many of them have traditional textile skills which were in danger of being lost if not in their own, then in their daughters' generation. Their isolation meant that many of them did not learn English and their social contacts were very limited. Joining one of the groups both encouraged the development of their skills and created lasting friendships as well as forming a cultural focus within their communities. One such group, centred in Birmingham, was the subject of an earlier article in the O.A.T.G. Newsletter (Out of Isolation, no.7, June 1997); another, more recently formed in Oxford, hopes to hold an exhibition of its work in the Ashmolean later in the year - about which more next time.



Shamiana is still on its travels and is at present resting in the oasis of Rochdale, or, at least, 20 of its panels are. As the Asian communities in that area are mainly from Pakistan and Bangladesh, the panels selected are primarily on Muslim themes and include panels made by groups in Lancashire. They can be seen at the Rochdale Art Gallery until 1 July. Further information can be obtained from Penny Thompson, Art Gallery Officer, tel. 01706 342154.

Some of the panels and the tent itself will also be on view at the Sandwell Show, a multi-cultural festival to be held at West Bromwich from 26 to 28 August. Further venues and dates in the next newsletter.

Other Exhibitions

Connecting Threads

Notice of this small exhibition of embroidered textiles from the permanent collection at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery arrived too late for inclusion in the last newsletter, but if you can get there before 25 June when it ends, it is well worth a visit. There are a number of Turkish towels, Pakistani cushion covers, Indian and Chinese garments and the gorgeous Japanese wedding robe *(uchi-kake)* illustrated on p.1., There are related exhibitions running until 17 September at Aston Hall (17th century accessories), Soho House (18th century clothes), Sarehole Mill (photographs showing 19th century rural dress), and the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter (early 20th century fashions), but alas! no Asian items. Tel. 0121.303-2834.

Art Nouveau

This "block buster" exhibition at the V.& A. until 30 July contains a number of textiles (and other things) inspired by Asian sources, mainly Islamic and Japanese. There are a number of events connected with the exhibition, but none of them on this aspect Tel. 020-7942 2644

The House Beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior

This exhibition at the Geffrye Museum from 18 July to 21 January 2001, like the *Art Nouveau* at the V.& A. is of interest not so much for its exhibits of Asian textiles as the way it shows the influence of Asian, especially Japanese and Islamic, artefacts and ideas on the arts and crafts of the Aesthetic Movement. Tel. 020-7739 9893

Overseas

Tribal Traditions: Village and Nomadic Weaving of Anatolia

This exhibition at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C, from 25 August to 28 January 2001 looks at four geographically separate groups - Bergama, Konya, Malarya and Erzerum - and the connexions between flatweave designs and group identity. Tel. 202 6674)441

Last Chance to See -

Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C, finishes 30 July. Tel. 202 667-0441.

LECTURES AND EVENTS

Wednesday 14 June, 6 p.m. - ***Hill Tribe Textiles of South Western China***, a talk by John Gillow to the Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum at the Pitt Rivers Research Building, 64 Banbury Road, Oxford; tea will be served between 5.30 and 5.50 p.m. Non-members £2. Tel. 01869 249565)

Thursday 15 to Monday 19 June - the **Hali Annual Asian Carpets and Textiles Fair** is taking place at Olympia, London.

Saturday 17 June, 2 p.m. - ***Textiles, Jewellery and Garments from Laos and Thailand***, talk by Dorothy Reglar to the Oxford Guild of Weavers and Dyers, at Stanton St John Village Hall, Oxfordshire. Further information from Thelma Robinson, 01908 505289

Wednesday 21 June - **Auction of Oriental Textiles** at Christies, South Kensington, London (viewing from 18th). Enquiries: Patricia Frost, tel. (4420)7321 3212

Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 June - **18th Ars Textrina International Textile Conference** will be held at the University of Leeds and will provide an interdisciplinary forum for scholars with interests in various aspects of textiles and related products. Participants will include museum curators, weavers, surface pattern designers, anthropologists, economic historians, archaeologists, fashion analysts and those with interests in the socio-cultural aspects of historic and contemporary world textiles. For further information contact the Conference Secretary, Mr J. Pattinson,

Tuesday 18 to Friday 21 July - **Art Nouveau: the Style, the Age**, short course at the V.& A. includes lectures on Asian and Islamic influences on the style as well as on textiles. Numbers limited to 70. For further information tel. 020-7942 2197 or to book tel. 020-79422 2209.

Thursday 31 August or Friday 1 September - In connexion with the 7th International Congress on Coptic Studies to be held in Leiden. Netherlands (27 August to 2 September), there will be a textile workshop presented by Jacques van der Vliet on one of these days. For further information contact Sabine Schrenk, Bonner Wall 100, D-50677, Köln, Germany, or Caecilia Fluck, Suederweg 13, D-25923, Suederluegum, Germany.

Friday 8 to Sunday 10 September - **Conference: Migrating Textiles** at Ashburne Hall, Manchester, organized by the Early Textiles Study Group to consider the movement of textiles and textile techniques along the Silk Road and in India, North Africa and Europe before 1500 A.D. Speakers will include Rosemary Crill, Steven Cohen, Jenny Balfour-Paul, Anne-Marie Stauffer, Chris Verhecken-Lammens. For details please contact Dr John Peter Wild, School of Art History and Archaeology, Architecture Building, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL,

Friday 29 & Saturday 30 September - ***Critical Writing About Textiles***, a conference organized by North West Textiles Forum at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester. The conference will draw on current theories, issues and practices in the crafts and in textiles, and will be organized around three themes: Critical Writing in the Public Arena, Developing Practice, and Articulating Regional Identity/ies. For further information or to submit a paper, visit http://www.madasafish.com/-textiles, or contact Gaby Porter, 14 Brixton Avenue, Manchester, M20 1JF, tel. 0161 283 7453, e-mail gaby@yoyo.u-netcom

The O.A.T.G. Newsletter is published three times a year with deadlines on the first Monday in February, June and October

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE - MONDAY 2 OCTOBER

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