Datatèxtil

PUBLISHED BY CIRCUIT DE MUSEUS TÈXTILS I DE MODA A CATALUNYA

Contents

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > CATALÀ

Fabrics and looms in present-day Iran:
Beyond Persian carpets

by Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng
and Kaya Kikuchi Munakata

Sometimes the world seems like a very small place, and it seems that our fate is written in the stars …
In the summer of 2013 I happened to meet Kaya Kikuchi Munakata. Kaya is Japanese, but now lives in Tehran because of her work. She was on a visit the CDMT to spread the word about the fabrics that Iranian artisans continue to make today. Kaya brought samples of their work, and taught me the names of the different fabrics: *karbafi*, *daraibafi*, *shaarbafi* ... She showed me photos of the weavers who had made them, the places where they live, and the makeshift workshops where they produce their creations. Kaya and I became friends immediately. It couldn't really have been otherwise: with her love of fabrics, my love of looms, and our shared passion for the craft of weaving.

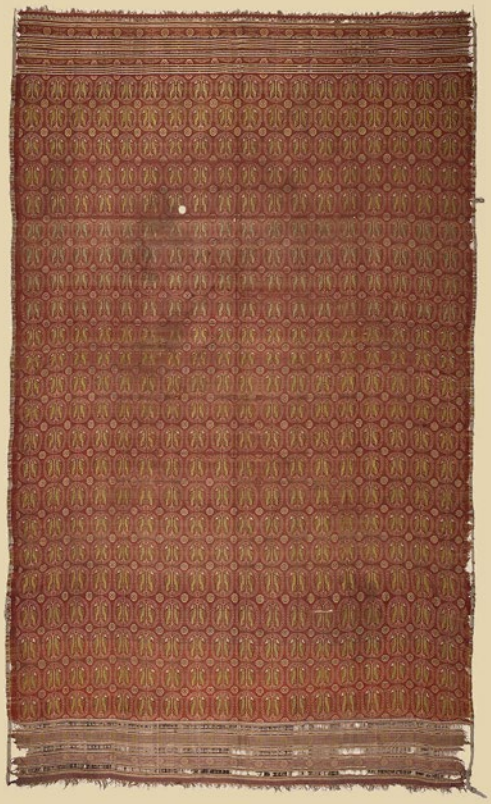
As it happened, at the time I was preparing a study, together with Pilar Borrego[1], of two mediaeval pieces made of silk with elaborate designs, found in Carrión de los Condes (Palencia). One of the most striking features of these fabrics is their size, especially the larger one, the blue – a single, seamless piece of cloth, measuring 140 cm long and 271 cm wide.

Pieces which today surprise us because of their size[2] are kept in museums all over the world, but there is no clear explanation of how they were made, or what kind of loom was used. As a weaver, imagining how these exceptional pieces were woven has always fascinated me and has been one of my main research areas for a long time.

As I explored the published literature, I saw that a type of loom reported in Iran in the early 1960s might prove to be the answer to the question. It was this finding that spurred me on to travel to Iran in order to see this loom for myself.

Now, together with Kaya Kikuchi Munakata, who in the second part of this article describes the project she has launched in support of traditional Iranian weavers, I take pleasure in presenting this text. The idea of the article is not to go into great technical detail about the pieces and processes (a description of that kind would be better suited to a more specialized magazine) but to offer a token of appreciation and respect for all the weavers I met there, artisans who still today work with traditional techniques, and who always welcomed me with a broad smile and a good cup of *chai* (tea).

1 Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural de España (IPCE).
2 Chasuble of Saint Vital, 2,60 mt from selvedge to selvedge; chape de Saint Mexme, 2,57 mt; chasuble of Saint Bernardo de Clairvaux, 2,53 mt; chasuble Saint Ermengol, 1,77 mt de la Seu d'Urgell, among others.



St Zoilus fabrics, Carrión de los Condes (©Centro de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales de Castilla-León). See detail.

Woman working in a pit loom (© JMJI).

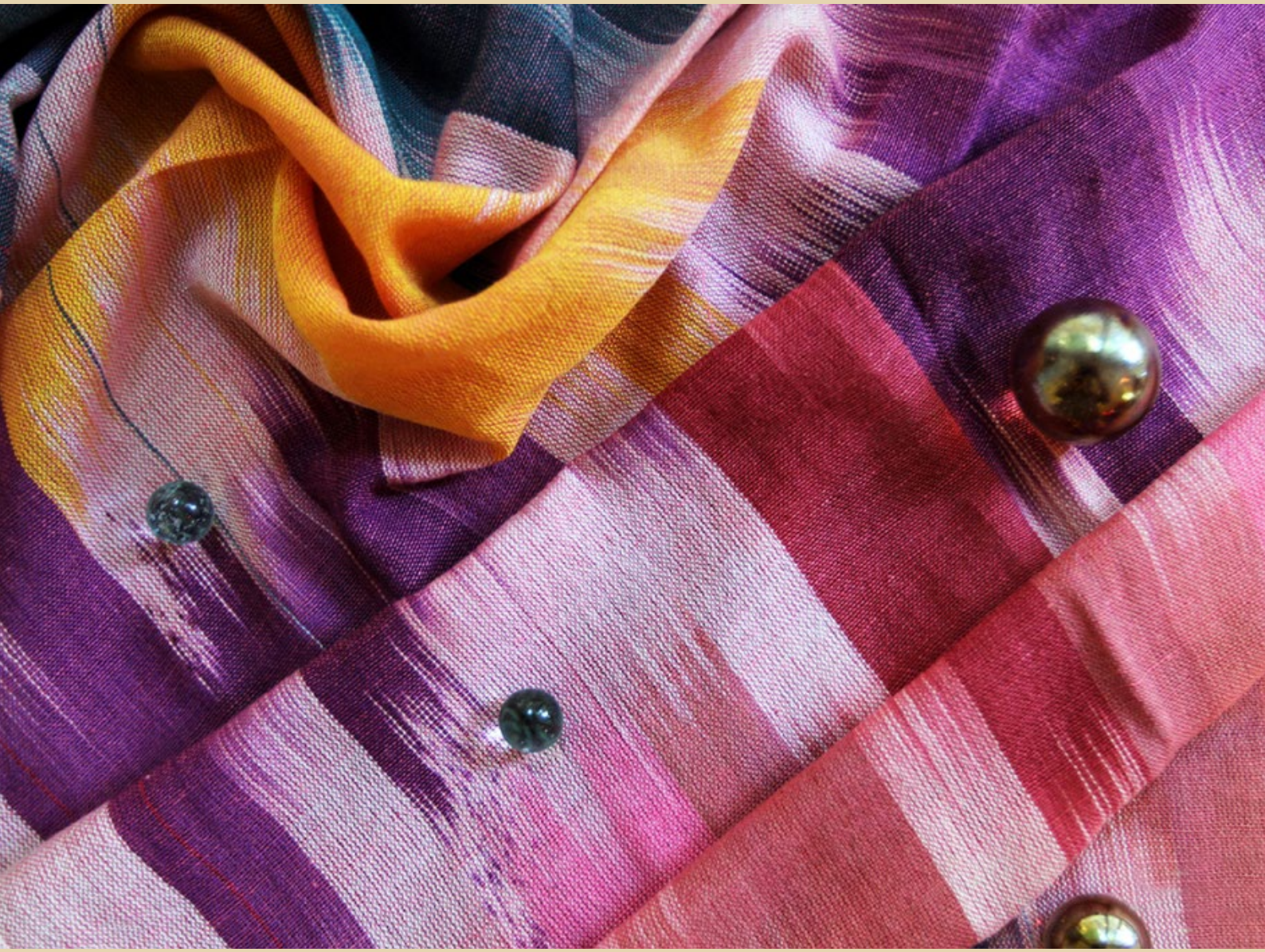
Weavers from the Ancient Arts Centre (Kashan) (© Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

Not just carpets

Iran has always been acknowledged as the largest producer of quality carpets in the world. Persian rugs have been a major element of the country's exports; both humble and luxurious pieces adorn the walls and floors of nomad tents, urban and rural homes, mosques and palaces. Rugs can be found everywhere – from the remotest corner of Iran to the world's most prestigious museums.

But other craft fabrics are also produced in Iran today and in fact are as old as the well-known traditional carpets. Inside the rich Iranian textile tradition we also find simpler, more practical creations, produced on a smaller scale for everyday use.

Kaarbafi, *daraibafi*, *shaarbafi* ... are the names of some of them. *Kaarbafi* is a plain cotton weave, usually with only a few colours. They have been woven for over a thousand years by Iranian women who pass on their designs from generation to generation. *Kaar* means "work" and *bafi* means "weaving", so the word *kaarbafi* reflects the fact that weaving has always been among the main tasks of women in the home. Traditionally this fabric has been used to make bedspreads, tablecloths, napkins, table mats, and so on.



Daraibafi fabric detail (©JMJI).

Karbafi fabric detail (© Quico Ortega).

Darai means reserve dyeing (ikat). In this process, the warp threads are tied before dyeing to achieve a variety of colours for each thread. This technique is known and practised in many other countries, but in Iran it is performed only by men, in the city of Yadz, on the edge of the desert. It has been in use for about 400 years.

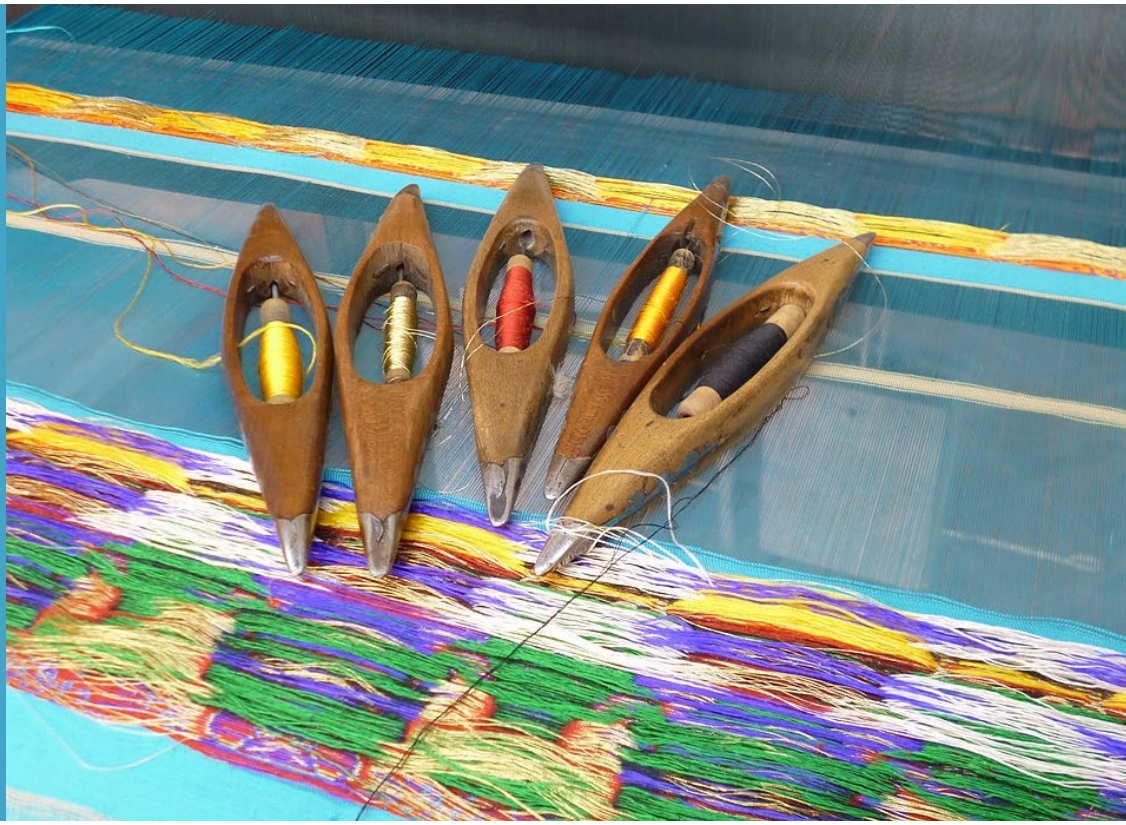
In Kashan, in Isfahan province, *shaarbafi* fabrics are woven. *Shaar* means "very fine hair", and the fabric that receives this name is made with very fine silk or cotton to ensure a smooth, light texture. Woven by men, it may be in one or many colours, and often with stripes. Like *kaarbafi*, it may be a plain weave fabric or also twill.

Other fabrics such as *termeh* and *zaribafi* are much more elaborate, and bear figurative designs such as certain kinds of velvets. *Zaribafi* always works with a gold thread weft (*zari*) creating complicated compositions. And we shouldn't forget the fabrics printed with hand-carved wooden moulds.

Looms and weavers

It is wonderful to see how these fabrics are produced today. Created on handlooms with pedals, some of them date back to the models reproduced in antique miniatures or listed in documents. An example is the "pit loom", for instance, the weaver sits next to a pit dug in the ground, on top of which the harness is placed with the heddles and the pedals attached to them hang down into the pit. The *kaarbafi* fabric, always made by women, is usually produced on this type of loom.

Shaarbafi fabric (©JMJI).



The fabric are woven from the reverse side (© Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

Daraibafi and *shaarbafi* are also made on simple wooden looms, with four heddles and pedals usually driven by a pulley system. None of these looms have a warp beam; the warp is picked up by groups, making several "balls", or with the thread rolled around large spindles, hanging from a structure behind it. This is an interesting way to set up many metres of warp thread in the loom while maintaining good tension and providing an ideal shed opening.

For more elaborate fabrics, two people are needed. A weaver's assistant, sitting on a structure above the loom, holds the warp threads up with a complex system of drawstrings. In this system, the fabric pattern is, so to speak, "memorized" and can be repeated cyclically. The weaver operates the pedals to create the ground fabric and simultaneously passes the different shuttles, made of walnut wood, with the wefts of different colours that correspond to the pattern. To open the shed better, the weaver uses two big wooden wedges, inserted between the strings that raise the warp.

All the wefts go from edge to edge of the fabric and the fabric has two warps: one that maintains the cohesion of the fabric and the other that ties the wefts in a twill pattern. The weave is *samite*[3], and this is the same system as was used to make many of the silk fabrics of mediaeval times. This loom, today called a drawloom, is still in use throughout the Middle East and India, and the width of the fabrics is usually around 80 cm.

But which loom was made to make the large pieces? In the end I found it; it turned out to be a totally different type of loom from any I had seen so far. An amalgam between a vertical two bar loom and a horitzontal heddle loom, its wooden structure may measure more than three metres wide. It is called a *zilu* loom because it is used to weave a kind of prayer mat that bears this name, traditionally made in white and blue cotton.

3 Using the vocabulary of the Centre International d'Etudes des Textiles Anciens.

Warp threads set up in the loom (© Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

▶
Drawboy in the drawloom
(© Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

Drawloom structure. ▶

Zilu loom (© Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

This loom does not have a comb, and there are two warps and two wefts, which make what today we call *taqueté*[4]. Two "heddles" with a system similar to Chinese looms, separate the warp threads and make the structure of the fabric, and a series of strings cross-sectional to the warp located above of them, going from end to end of the loom serve to open the shed for the pattern, which is usually geometrical.

In this loom, the strings are operated directly by the weaver who uses some large wooden hooks that keep the threads open to the passage of the weft, and unlike the drawloom, there is no system to memorize the pattern. Some years ago, an assistant weaver would have participated, opening the threads and moving the weft. But fewer and fewer people are taking up weaving. The work involves a long apprenticeship and is very hard; and not many young people today are interested in it.

Could this *zilu* loom be connected in some way to the Carrión de los Condes fabric? It's possible. We can imagine the same structure, maintaining its great width and another kind of assembly similar to the horizontal drawloom, perhaps with one or two assistants to open the shed for the pattern weft to pass .... we might also imagine a horizontal loom similar to the one used now, but changing the sizes and with more than one assistant helping to make the fabric. At the moment these are only hypotheses; we need to look much further before we can make any conclusive statements.

4 Using the vocabulary of the Centre International d'Etudes des Textiles Anciens.

▲
Detail of the *zilu* loom (©Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

Detail of *zilu* carpet (©Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng). ▶

Zilu weaver
(© Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng).

What is true is that the numbers of weavers who master these skills are falling, and they're all growing older. It is vital to publicize their work while there is still time; this is why projects such as the one promoted by Kaya Kikuchi Munakata deserve all our support.

Kaya's Experience Supporting Weavers: the Project with JMJI

My name is Kaya Kikuchi Munakata, and my first encounter with traditional Iranian hand-woven textiles was at an exhibition at Tehran's Baagh Muze (Garden Museum), organized by the International Institute of Jam-e Miras-e Jahan (JMJI) in May 2013. The exhibits included a variety of Iranian hand-woven textiles besides Persian carpets and amazed visitors with their versatile beauty, their simplicity and practicality, and the warmth that the artisans had woven into them. JMJI is a private Tehran-based organization whose main activities include running workshops on Iranian heritage and culture for

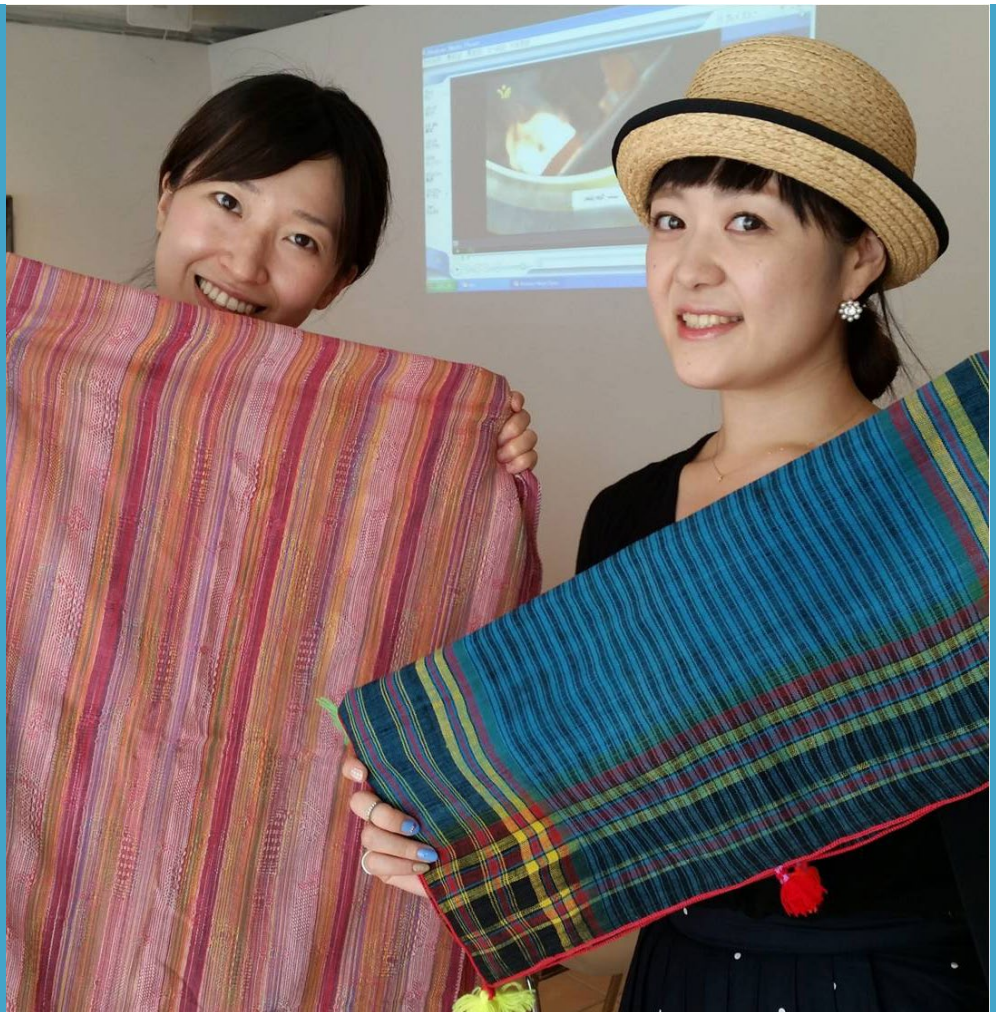
JMJI logo.

children and preserving traditional Iranian weaving arts. In the latter area, they have been supporting female *kaarbafi* weavers in a small town called Meybod in the outskirts of Yazd by supplying cotton threads and repairing worn-out handlooms.

In 2011, JMJI launched its own textile brand named "Sidaar". "Si" means "thirty" and "daar" "handloom" in Persian, and the name reflects the fact that there were originally thirty kinds of hand-woven textiles in Iran in addition to Persian carpets, though some of them unfortunately have already disappeared. Since Sidaar's launch, JMJI has been actively working on preserving Iranian hand-woven textiles – not only *kaarbafi*, but also *daraibafi*, *shaarbafi*, the Iranian silk brocade *zaribafi*, and sheep and camel wool fabrics as well. They established a sustainable production cycle in which they work with weavers to create textile products adding modern design that will appeal to a wider customer base in Tehran; they also donate part of the profits to the weavers to enable them to keep weaving for Sidaar and possibly to achieve a stable income.

Eventually, I wondered why these Iranian hand-woven textiles had never really become known outside Iran. I felt that they deserved as much international recognition as the already famous Persian carpets. After some observation, I came to the conclusion that Iran had been isolated from international communities politically and economically, and that this isolation had had a serious effect on the country's commercial and cultural activity. First of all, since the West imposed economic sanctions and limitations on political and diplomatic relationships on Iran in 2006, the flow of products, visitors and cultural exchange to and from the country has stagnated. Secondly, it is extremely difficult for Iranians to obtain visas to travel overseas. In addition, the information available in the media is also limited so it is very difficult for them to exchange information with abroad.

In spite of all these problems, I still strongly believe that traditional Iranian hand-woven textiles should be recognized internationally by a wider audience outside Iran. JMJI and I discussed possible ways in which I could help these Iranian textile arts to gain global recognition. We agreed that I would take charge of introducing them outside Iran through charity exhibitions and sales, as I was a non-Iranian national living in Tehran and the limitations on travel and other things would not greatly affect me. The reason why we chose charity was that it resonated with JMJI's sustainable production cycle to support weavers and to preserve their textile arts.



Tokyo exhibition
(© Kaya Kikuchi Munakata).

The Tokyo Exhibition

My first charity exhibition of Iranian hand-woven textiles was held in Tokyo on a summer weekend in 2014. The venue was a gallery located in a high-end area of the city called Jiyugaoka, where visitors and residents are generally keen to lead a quality lifestyle with creative, original home products. A range of Iranian textiles including *kaarbafi*, *daraibafi* and *shaarbafi*, mainly scarves, along with two models of tablecloths and dish cloths, were exhibited and available for purchase. I had promised JMJI to donate all the profits to the Iranian hand-woven textile industry which they support. Visitors including adults, students, teenagers and passers-by showed up to see Iranian textiles other than Persian carpets for the first time, and to learn about the textiles and artisans by examining the exhibits, the pamphlets, photos and videos introducing the background of the textiles and artisans, and by listening to my experiences in Iran and with Iranian textile arts.

The Barcelona Exhibition

Silvia Saladrigas Cheng, the CDMT's textile documentation specialist who has personal ties with textile artisans in Iran, offered me the opportunity to hold another charity show in Barcelona. Thanks to Silvia's passion for supporting her artisan friends in Iran, she and I co-hosted our charity exhibition at Taller

Barcelona exhibition, Taller Tèxtil Teranyina (©Kaya Kikuchi Munakata).

Textil Teranyina, near the Ramblas in the city centre, in December 2014. The owner of the venue, Teresa Rosa Aguayo, who is an active weaving artist, supported our cause and kindly provided space in her studio for our exhibition and sales. A similar range of textiles to the Tokyo exhibition was presented, along with audio-visual information on the background of the textiles and weavers. In contrast to the Tokyo exhibition, although most of the visitors were seeing Iranian textiles for the first time, they were either textile experts, weavers or students learning weaving. Once again, I decided to donate the profits to the Iranian textile industry through JMJI, with Silvia's and Teresa's approval.

Effort to Create Sustainable Development

Ever since the Tokyo exhibition, JMJI and I have been discussing how we can support the Iranian textile industry in a meaningful way in which the profits will be used to the fullest. As our primary objective is to support the industry for sustainable development, I insisted the profits should be given to a project

Barcelona exhibition, Taller Tèxtil Teranyina (© Kaya Kikuchi Munakata).

Warp threads for *daraibafi* in the new looms of Hameed Falahi workshop (© Kaya Kikuchi Munakata).

that is not just temporary but continuous, looking towards the future. After careful consideration, we decided to focus on training prospective weavers who will take over textile arts in the years to come.

JMJI introduced me to a young *daraibafi* weaver in his late twenties named Hameed Falahi, from the only *daraibafi* artisan family based in Yazd. Hameed has been preparing to open a weaving training centre where he plans to teach young prospective weavers. He wants to save his family's tradition of *daraibafi* from disappearing, and also to create job opportunities in his community. JMJI and I found Hameed's personal but also social project quite sustainable and contributed by using the profits from the Tokyo exhibition to buy three handlooms for his training centre. We visited Yazd to check upon our handlooms and his centre-to-be in January 2015.

Although JMJI and I acknowledge that Hameed's project has made significant steps forward with our donation, we have to admit that there are still more issues that we need to define as the project progresses. For example, what kind of people should Hameed be teaching? How can trainees be motivated so that they will become weavers in the future for sure? Where or for whom will trainees will be working as weavers after completing the course? I have a responsibility to provide continuous support to Hameed along with JMJI, and I need to come up with a meaningful way of donating the Barcelona profits so that they can be used to encourage his success.

To conclude this report of my project of supporting Iranian textile arts sustainably in collaboration with JMJI, Hameed Falahi, Silvia Saladrigas Cheng, and Teresa Rosa Aguayo, the main point is that we need to encourage the most effective way of ensuring that artisans' traditional values, knowledge

and skills are respected and maintained. In addition, we need to prioritize training in order to increase the number of weavers. Furthermore, I believe the Iranian textile industry also needs new visions to add commercial value to their traditional products which will bring in the income it needs to keep on going. In any case, I am determined to gain international recognition for these beautiful Iranian textile arts through fund-raising exhibitions, mainly outside Iran, and to devote the profits to achieving sustainable development for the Iranian textile industry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BORREGO, Pilar & SALADRIGAS, Sílvia. *Technical and stylistic study of two complete mediaeval cloths found in Carrión de los Condes*, Spain. Vth Purpureae Vestes International Symposium. 2014.

BORREGO, Pilar & SALADRIGAS, Sílvia. *Estudio técnico de los tejidos de San Zoilo*. Junta de Castilla y León (en prensa).

GRANGER TAYLOR, Hero & THOMPSON, John "The Persian zilu loom of Meybod", in: Bulletin du CIETA, vol. 73. (1995-1996).

THOMPSON, John "Looms, carpets and Talims", in: Technology, Tradition and Survival Aspects of Material Culture in the Middle East and Central Asia (History and Society in the Islamic World), 2003.

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > ESPAÑOL

Textile art and tradition in the province of Catamarca, Northwest Argentina

by Ximena Gonzalez Eliçabe*
Photographs:

Summary: Textile traditions in the province of Catamarca are part of a dynamic cultural identity which has developed from a variety of very different origins. This culture manifests itself in textile creations of great quality and beauty. The fabrics bear witness to the history of the area's textile manufacture, which the locals see as part of their distinctive culture and which, regrettably, has begun to die out.

Keywords: Textile art - folklore - weavers - traditional craft heritage - culture – transculturation - aesthetic identity

* Textile Designer (UBA). Professor in the Department of Fashion Design at the School of Design and Communication, University of Palermo. Promoter of design among artisans and micro-entrepreneurs in the Argentinian provinces in projects organized by the Ministry of Tourism, the Federal Investment Council and other public institutions. She has presented exhibitions and won several awards and commendations. At the University of Palermo she has published: "Art, design and craftsmanship. The textile metaphor as sign of identity (2005), "Experimentation, innovation, science and design" (2006), Design, education and preservation of cultural heritage (2006), "Introspection and the body" (2009).

She has organized exhibitions and has won several prizes and awards. She has published articles in academic journals and specialist magazines such as Textile Forum and Datatèxtil.

An ancestral tradition

Catamarca: the blows of the battens resound in the courtyards, tireless hands slide the fabric to form the fabric under the vines, the galleries or the branches of the trees. The pedals of the creole loom accompany the rhythm with the rise and fall of the heddles. The weaver applies the knowledge of two traditions: the American and the European.

The European village loom with two or four heddles brought by the Jesuits and the early Spanish settlers was adapted for use in these earthen courtyards. The new creation was made of posts of local wood, and in place of combs the Andean heritage contributed the battens of hard, smooth wood that adjusted the shots of weft to create a compact, even fabric. These battens are the legacy passed on by grandmothers and mothers to their daughters, who treasure them and use them to continue something that is not just a tradition, but a lifestyle.

Catamarca is a province with a vast tangible and intangible heritage, but this heritage is often little known or undervalued. From an archaeological point of

Don Francisco Alvarez, wearing a lambswool poncho woven by himself.

view, the territory was home to the most representative pre-Hispanic cultures of our country, particularly those who were part of the "period of regional integration of the North-west of Argentina" (Pérez Gollán 1991). This period was characterized by a political organization based on chieftainships and a trading model; by agriculture and livestock farming, and caravan life; the use of productive resources in permanent settlements; and the use of material and symbolic elements integrated into the surrounding area (Pérez Gollán and Heredia 1991; Dillehay and Nuñez, 1988). These societies were "centres of power administered information or knowledge and the circulation of luxury and utility goods" (Tartusi and Nuñez Regueiro, 1993).

To interpret the development of these communities, Alberto Rex González divided their development into three stages – early, middle and late – which spanned around 1500 years, until the invasions of the Incas and later the Spaniards.

However, few archaeological textile pieces have come down to us, if we think of the vast amounts of ceramics, metals and stones which represent findings of great aesthetic value and display the technical mastery characteristic of the different historical periods. Because of the climate and the extreme fragility of the fibres (readily decomposable organic materials) only fragments of textiles found in very dry areas have survived. According to the researcher Ruth Corcuera (2006) some of these pieces are not from the province of Catamarca, although some fabrics of the Aguada culture (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries AD) were found in

Lorohuasi near the town of Fiambalá. Other pieces, all belonging to the Aguada culture, were found in Angualasto, in the present-day province of San Juan, and in San Pedro de Atacama in the north of Chile. These are fabrics made with camelid fibres, made with weft face or warp face techniques.

In the first case, the densest element is the weft, and the colours that are inserted are the ones that delimit the motif seen in the fabric; in the second case, the thickest element is the warp, and so the design appears in accordance with the arrangement of colours in the fabric structure. Complex forms of making patterns are found with this technique, such as discontinuous warps which change colour along their length creating blocks of colour in the design. Another popular technique was "reserve dyeing"; sometimes performed on the already woven garment: the areas to be protected from the dye were tied with thread, or the warps were tied and extended on the beams of the loom (a technique known in other parts of the world as *ikat*). Others are fabrics with double warp and patterns on both sides, pieces of basketry combined with wrapping warps. This combination of textiles and basketry techniques, using plant and animal fibres, was applied on pieces which the locals called *tipas* or grain sieves, and until the early twentieth century they continued to be made and used. The small museum in Fiambalá displays garments that were associated with two mummies in Lorohuasi, in which *tipas* bearing colourful Aguada motifs can be seen. An *unku*, a jacket or poncho, with geometric motifs, made in weft face is particularly interesting.

A constant feature of Catamarca fabrics over the years is the skill with which the spinners created yarns from different raw materials such as wool, cotton, llama, vicuña and even wild silk. The yarns are made in the pre-Hispanic fashion with spindle and disc, or in the European fashion with a wheel.

With the passage of time, European or Arabic traditions have merged with original textile techniques. Sometimes they have replaced them, but in general they have given rise to distinctive Creole styles.

Let's look at modern-day production in more detail. Ponchos, blankets, *pullos*, *peleros*, tapestries, shawls, ties, and other garments are made with the simplicity and luxury of the noblest fibres in their natural colours or adorned with geometric calchaquí motifs such as the jaguar or the snake, or creole motifs with flowers and birds that show the influence of the East and the trade routes of Antiquity.

This priceless heritage is the material expression of a culture of a people, the result of the fusion of cultures that has been passed down orally from generation to generation. Sadly, it now runs the risk of extinction.

As in all arts and crafts, expert weavers are for the most part very elderly. Only rarely have their children decided to keep this craft legacy alive. With limited prospects in the countryside, the youth prefer to migrate to the big cities in order to get any kind of job that provides a monthly salary.

El Chango Real loom, owned by Demetrio and Susana Gómez, in Belén.

Testimony

The Department of Belén, in the north of the province, is one of the most prolific areas of Catamarca crafts. Its inhabitants claim that it is the birthplace of the poncho. The truth is that this pre-Columbian garment, which actually predates the Incas, has always been produced in large numbers in Belén and the quality and variety are renowned.

Belén was home to several flourishing pre-Hispanic cultures: Condorhuasi, Aguada, Belén, and finally Inca. The traces of these cultures can be seen everywhere, but perhaps the mark of the Incas on the architecture of the Shincal near Londres is the most striking. Although archaeologists have named an area inside Shincal "the house of textiles", there are no fragments of fabrics there, or in the site museum. Textiles, always silent, were initially overlooked by the archaeologists; this may be another reason why so few textile remains have come down to us.

In the Andean world, then, textiles were highly valued, but the first Spaniards who arrived with the conquest largely ignored them. Textiles had many functions (for instance, they were used to pay taxes) and, because of their ease of transport they might even be used to create banners or tents, or as clothing expressing a particular message. The Incas were well aware of their value and stipulated strict dress codes with respect to the use of colour and the distribution of motifs in the design of woven garments. The *conquistadors* were more interested in gold and other precious metals than in textiles; but once

Ramon Baigorria, Belén. Fabric dyed with natural dyestuffs.

established, the early settlers began to value what they called "the wools of the earth", and they admired the spinning and weaving skills of the native peoples. The sea trade routes from the Pacific and the Atlantic brought to America goods such as Eastern silks and other kinds of linen and cotton from Europe, but they were very costly and did not arrive in sufficient quantities to supply the local market.

When the first mills were installed, the priests took on native labour to manufacture fabrics. These pieces were made on European looms and were then cut to make clothes. For their part, the indigenous population used backstrap looms; according to the Andean tradition the fabric should not be cut, which limited the type of garment that could be made.

Since the sixteenth century, with corvee labour systems such as the *mit'a* and the *encomienda*, trade in textiles, especially cotton spun and woven by indigenous women, was a thriving business. In Catamarca cotton came to be used as currency; in 1684 the council of the province declared it to be a better currency even than metal, as Corcuera notes:

> "By 1778, the weaving industry was fully established. In the production of cotton, the natural skill of the women, who had been spinners, went hand in hand with the impulse given by the Jesuits on their estate in Alpatauca. In cotton, camelid and sheep's wool, cottage industries created a tradition that has endured until today. It was so popular that even the clergy wore these long black *bayetones* and the lay people white or coloured versions of the same garment. Moreover, the use of horses and ease of transporting textiles meant that the production of *ponchos*, *pellones* and *encimeras* were among the major rural industries of the age" (Corcuera, 2006, p 60).

Catamarca textile traditions intermingled with life itself, the people and the land; it is said that forty years ago in Barranca Larga, in the Department of Belén, the making of a *pullo* required a process with a strong magical element, in which mothers guided their daughters. First, the yarn was prepared in a particular way; the type of twist, the way it was spun, and its width were all specified. It had to be done at a specific time, in conjunction with the sacred map of the stars. The number of threads was not random either, and the colours represented an encrypted universe. Time was of no importance; each piece was unique, as was the person to whom it was dedicated.

> "Since the dawn of culture, through its desire to protect and provide, the fabric has been part of the emotional and the female worlds" (Corcuera, 2006, p.11)

In conversation, the author said that Argentina lacks the tradition of markets found in other countries in Latin America. The fabrics were made for someone dear – a family member, close friend. The creator thought of the person as she wove. Sometimes, out of necessity, pieces might be exchanged for other goods.

However, for many years the production of handmade textiles helped men and women to support their families, send their children to school, and made them proud to be able to earn a decent living from their work, which was generally made to order. This knowledge was transmitted within the family, and often several members took on different roles in the preparation of the raw material, the spinning, and the weaving. Large looms for making *pullos* (compact, heavy bed clothes) might cover several metres, an entire patio, and two people would weave together to be able to handle the heavy battens along the width of the fabric.

As mentioned above, in Belén and in many small villages in the department the fabrics are of a very high quality and present an unmistakeable style. The pieces are now made on creole looms with two or four heddles. All the weavers have their own distinctive styles, in terms of the material used, the natural colours of the camelid fibres or wool, the range of colours obtained with natural dyes, the techniques of the weaves like birdseye, ladder, and stripes, but the common features are the fineness of the yarn hand-spun on a spindle or spinning wheel, the beautiful finishing of the fabrics and the high density of the threads. The ponchos known as *belichos* (from the name of the town, Belén) are masterpieces that contain the essence of the creole tradition, with its pre-Columbian and European elements, and proudly display the identity of Catamarca people.

Ponchos woven by Demetrio and Susana Gómez. Pure vicuña and llama fibre with birdseye design.

Selva Díaz's workshop, Londres, Catamarca. Warp for ikat ponchos.

Londres, in the province of Catamarca, is one of the oldest cities in the country. It was the second city founded by the Spanish in what is now Argentina, and was named in 1558 in honour of the birthplace of Queen Mary Tudor, wife of King Philip II of Spain. Here tie-dyed ponchos are made, with geometric patterns of varying complexity. The stripes are obtained with the tie-dye method, tying together the threads of the base colour, usually *écru* or light brown, into groups forming a symmetrical pattern inside a band, when the warp is arranged on the beam and the fabric's density has already been determined. Then the warp beam is removed and the threads are exposed to the dye which is heated in a pot and fixed to the mordant. Once the dyeing is finished, the beams are reinserted in the loom and, when dry, the knots (of which there may be hundreds) are untied, revealing the resulting motif. As the density of the threads in the warp is greater, the figure created by the tie-dyeing stands out on the face of the fabric, as the weft, which is of a single plain colour, remains hidden.

Selva Díaz's workshop, Londres, Catamarca. Warp for ikat ponchos.

Selva dyeing. ▶

Aldacira Flores de Andrada, of Tinogasta, with her niece.

In Antofagasta de la Sierra, besides garments made on the loom, there are others which are knitted with two or five needles. With a more rustic look, they are often used by the inhabitants to combat the cold winters and extreme temperatures of the Puna. The fabrics are carded to give them an appearance similar to an animal skin and to provide more heat. For the carding, dry thistles are inserted into a cane or rod; tied together, they raise up the fibre of the llama hair, stretching it and achieving a velvety, smooth, shiny surface. The knitted fabrics do not date from pre-Hispanic times (although in some burial sites in the Andes knitted fabrics made with techniques of Amazonian origin have been found), but were introduced by the Spaniards. It is believed that they were brought to Spain by the Arabs and then spread to the rest of Europe.

In Tinogasta, in the northwest of the province of Catamarca, lives Doña Aldacira, a recognized master weaver who is 90 years old. The work of this creative, incessant perfectionist represents the perfect balance between the pre-Hispanic and Spanish traditions. Her huge blankets woven and embroidered with the exquisite floral delicacy of a Manila shawl, but made with wool from sheep or camelids, are created from memory, without the use of a pattern; the symmetrical plant designs exist only in the mind of the weaver. The sides of the pieces end in large macrame fringes, a technique of Moorish origin which was

Bedspread woven by Aldacira Flores de Andrada, of Tinogasta.

very common in southern Spain. Aldacira says that the motifs for the fringes are suggested by the materials themselves and by the mood of the moment; in her own words, it is a work of repentance.

In Fiambalá, near Tinogasta, we still find fabric with weft faces and geometric patterns very similar to those found in the Lorohuasi mummies, but with a different range of colours. In place of the harmonious lands of the past, vibrant colours burst out, expressing the joy of the only hands that still master this ancient technique.

Santa Maria, in the Calchaquí valleys, is a land of weavers, where brave warriors resisted the Inca invasion until 1480 and left a legacy that can still be admired today in the tapestries made by its inhabitants – men and women dedicated to weaving. The town's population is *mestizo* but the indigenous influence is still strong. The *calchaquí* legacy includes symbols like the serpent, the jaguar, the suri and the condor, and countless geometrized motifs deriving from them.

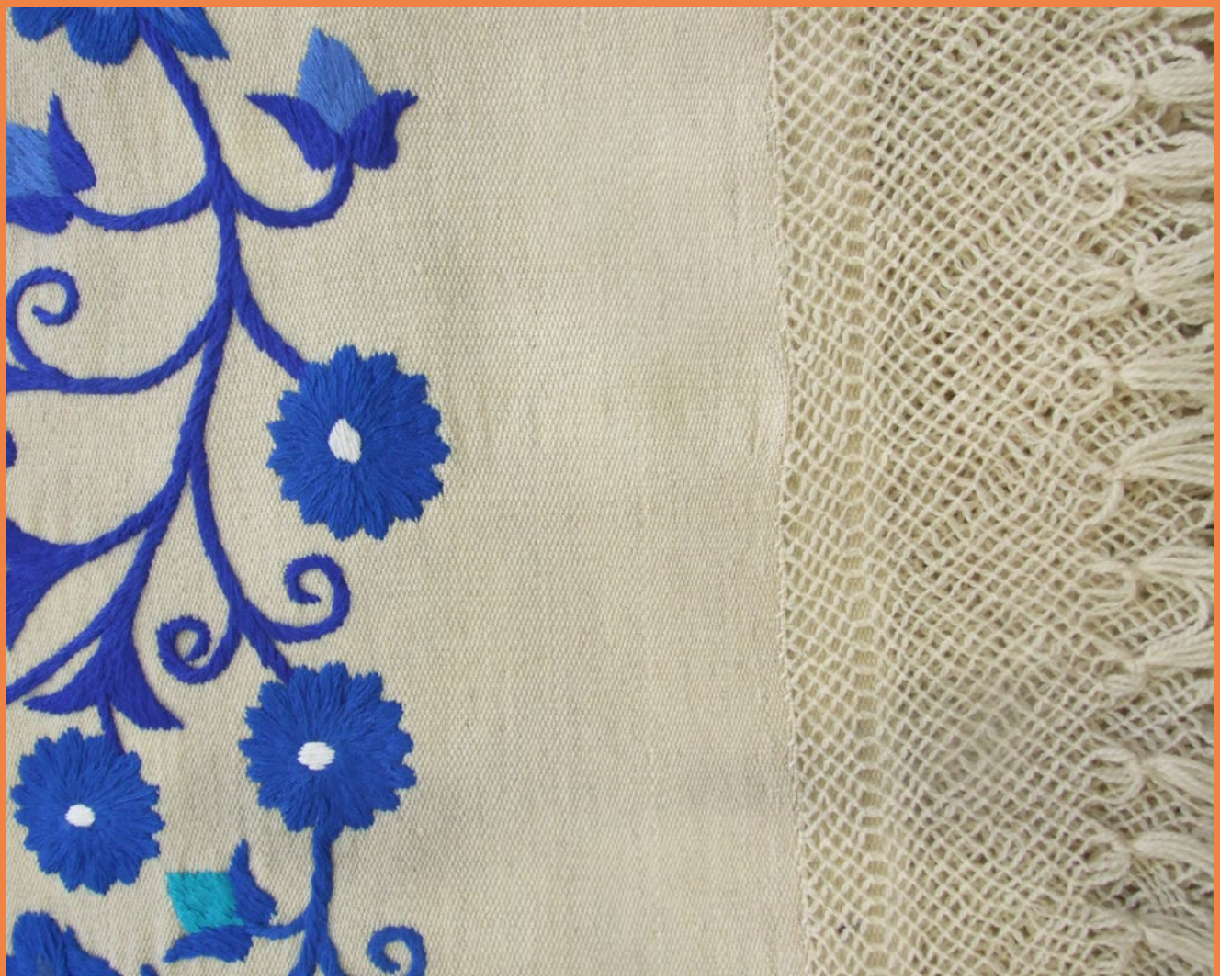
While many of the motifs have come down to the present through representations on other substrates such as ceramic or stone, the weavers of Santa Maria have honoured their memory in their fabrics. The tapestry technique reached its greatest development during the pre-Columbian cultures of Tiahuanaco (200-1000 AD) and Huari (700-1200 AD).

> "In the tapestry technique, the warp is the passive element and is hidden by the weft. The weft plays the active role and is visible on both sides of the fabric. The warp yarns are placed further apart than those of the weft and are thicker, allowing the weft, much finer and thinner, to slide more easily between the warp threads. The density of weft yarns is much greater than that of the warp yarns ... the tapestry is identical on both faces. The particularity of the tapestry is that the weft does not cross the entire width of the fabric continuously, but several weft threads, of different colours, cover various sectors of the warp .... "(Gisbert, 1988 p.39-40)

Near San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, the provincial capital, after crossing the Portezuelo slope which immortalized the traditional dance the zamba, is the Sierra of Ancasti. From here comes a wild silk known as coyoyo. Mountain silk, or *purucha* as it is also called, is obtained from the chrysalis of a butterfly of the Saturniidae family, Rothschildia genus, which nests in shrubs such as *ancoche*, *afato* or *tinajera*. Ruth Corcuera pioneered research into this precious material which she remembered from references in her childhood, since her father's family was from Catamarca.

Hardly anything was known about this silk until the early 1990s. Ruth Corcuera began to explore the matter after the finding of a silk poncho which she included in her book "Ponchos de las tierras del Plata". The caterpillar that produces these cocoons feeds on the leaves of the trees in the forest and can grow to 8 cm. when it begins to produce the thread that will form the cocoon in droplets measuring about 5 cm. The colour of the silk varies according to the type of plant on which the insect feeds; the philologist Elsa Gómez, cited by Corcuera in her study, reports that the silk is light brown if the insect feeds on *tinajera*; more greenish brown if it feeds on *ancoche*; yellower in the case of *afato*, reddish brown in the case of *piquillín*; brown in the case of *churqui*, dark brown with *clavilo*, light grey with *alamo* and white with *lechillo*. Since pre-Columbine times, mountain silk has been carefully spun on small spindles made of bone or wood. Girls learn the craft of spinning this silk at a very early age, but today hardly any practitioners remain who are able to spin and weave coyoyo silk.

The cocoons must be collected by hand in the summer. This arduous work is usually dome by children, as their hands are small and soft. The cocoons are then stored in bags and boiled with bleach or ash. In this procedure it is not always necessary for the pupa to be inside. The cocoons are softened by the action of hot water which breaks down the sericin that keeps them compact,



Bedspread woven by Aldacira Flores de Andrada, of Tinogasta.

until they flake off; they are then rinsed and left to dry. The strands of filament are rolled around the spinner's wrist and, with the aid of spindle and the disc, she gives them the torsion required. The artisans Corcuera interviewed explained that the thick yarn is used to make quilts and ponchos, and is sometimes mixed with cotton yarns in the warp, but if the thread is thin it is used to make shawls, scarves or blankets, similar to those made of vicuña; small items such as blankets and baby clothes are also made. As this material is so fine, a large number of cocoons are needed to weave a garment; around five hundred to make a poncho, say the weavers. Ponchos are usually woven using a warp face technique, with two-ply twisted yarns; the silk tends to be used in its natural colour, similar to the vicuña, or its tonal variations. Coloured threads are very rarely applied.

The Museum of Luján in Buenos Aires displays several silk ponchos which belonged to leading figures in the country's history.

Today, just two or three artisans continue the tradition of spinning Ancasti silk. Attempts have been made to encourage girls to learn these techniques, but even though the work is well paid, it is a very complex task that requires a great deal of patience and dedication and, above all, a profound love of the craft.

Heritage

The textile art of Catamarca has always been refined, silent, and discreet. In this way it is like its creators who, with their great wisdom, aesthetic instinct and their feeling for the nature that surrounds them, have managed to convey their sense of belonging to their land. Preserving the dreams of their ancestors – Indians, Spaniards and Arabs – they created the creole identity, able to withstand drought, dust, war and looting, and wove and embroidered the secrets of the Daiguita-Calchaquí cosmovision or the lost paradise of the old world.

In the days before colonization, the Argentinian north-west was a cultural and commercial bridge between the Puna and Chaco, between the Pacific and the Amazon, as evidenced by archaeological finds and the Inca trails that still survive. Catamarca remained a bridge between cultures: the colourful Chinese embroidered flowers of its shawls which turned the wools of the land into the bedspreads of Tinogasta, the fashioned fringes of Moorish Andalusia, and the mountain silk and vicuña that created shawls and mantillas for the devout ladies of the Virgen del Valle are all testimony to this tradition.

This heritage, the guardian of knowledge, is in grave risk today. The transculturation produced by the mass media, the few opportunities that artisans in rural areas have to obtain fair prices for their work, and the difficulty of accessing the rest of the province means that, with very few exceptions, the new generations are abandoning the work undertaken by their ancestors. Those who value this tradition will be the privileged owners of a unique knowledge and also have the task of transmitting it to the rest of society. In the academic world we can study and document this heritage, but it is up to the people themselves to keep it alive and make it theirs. ●

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CORCUERA, R. (2006) "Mujeres de seda y Tierra", Buenos Aires: Editorial Argentina.

DILLEHAY, T. & L. NUNEZ A. 1988 "Camelids, caravans and complex societies in the south central Andes in: Recent studies in precolumbian archaeology". Saunders & Montmollin Eds. BAR International Series 421. Oxford.

GISBERT, T.; ARZE S.; CAJÍAS M. (2006) "Arte textil y mundo andino". Museo Nacional de etnografía y Folklore - Embajada de Francia en Bolivia, La Paz: Plural Editores.

NÚÑEZ REGUEIRO, V. y TARTUSI, M. (2001) "Aguada y el proceso de integración regional". Instituto Interdisciplinario de Estudios Andinos (INTERDEA), Facultad de Ciencias Naturales e Instituto Miguel Lillo, UNT - CONICET - Tucumán, Argentina.

PÉREZ GOLLÁN, J. A. (1991) "La cultura de La Aguada vista desde el valle de Ambato". Publicaciones 46, Centro de Investigaciones de la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

TARTUSI, M. & NUÑEZ REGUEIRO, V. (1993). "Los Centros Ceremoniales del NOA". Publicaciones 5, Serie: Ensayos 1. S. M. de Tucumán.

http://www.argentinaxplora.com/actividad/artesano/artesano.htm#.VTaK3GTF-nB

The Ricard Viñas Geis fabrics collection at the CDMT:
a lesson in cataloguing

by Sílvia Carbonell Basté
Photographs: ©CDMT, Quico Ortega

All collections are of interest, but I do not think that any other kind is the equal, from either a historical or an artistic point of view, of a fabrics collection … because fabrics come into contact with man more than any other collectible item, accompanying him from his birth until his death.[1]

Ricard Viñas, 1949

Ricard Viñas i Geis (Rubí 1893 – Barcelona 1982), the son of a textile manufacturer, studied at the School of Commerce in Barcelona and completed his studies in England with the intention of carrying on the family cotton firm[2]. But already very early in his life he showed himself to be more interested in culture and patronage than in business, and over his lifetime he amassed not just one collection, but several[3]. The most significant of them, without a doubt, was his collection of fabrics, which is also the only one that has been preserved in its entirety.

From a very young age Viñas was a collector of great sensitivity, impulsive, with an innate sense of his vocation. As he himself explained, he looked for pieces of artistic value and loved to admire his acquisitions[4]. But the perhaps the feature that sets his collection apart from others of the time is the fact that it was systematically catalogued.

Viñas himself recalls[5] that when he realized how many fabrics he had accumulated he decided to embark on the cataloguing and conservation of the collection. Thanks, probably, to the need to have the collections ordered and the desire to monitor the costs invested, we now have a number of notebooks with hand-written notes and typewritten documents that tell us a great deal about Ricard Viñas's character, and provide us with highly reliable information regarding the origin of the fabrics, the prices paid, the names of the restorers who worked for him, their salaries and other details regarding the expansion of the collection and its organization in rooms and display cases in his house. We also know the names of the people who helped him to order and catalogue the fabrics[6].

1 *Llibre d'or de la col·lecció de teixits antics Viñas* (the Golden Book of the Viñas collection of antique fabrics, unpublished), introduction by Ricard Viñas, Barcelona, 1949.
2 They owned the cotton and textiles firm Fábricas Viñas, S.A in Balsareny, in the *colònia* of Santa Cecília.
3 He also collected books, ceramics, and glass.
4 *Llibre d'or*: "The inclination for collecting must have been inherent in me, since from childhood I had this obsession (...)", p.1.
5 *Llibre d'or.*
6 Unpublished material preserved in the archives of the CDMT, Terrassa, and in the Design Museum of Barcelona.

Fragment of printed taffeta cotton, Catalonia, Eighteenth century. CDMT 5773.
Previous owner: Gaspar Homar. See detail.

Fragment of a cloth of *aresta*, in silk and metal thread. From the monastery of Graeces. Twelfth-thirteenth centuries. CDMT 5980. Acquired from Víctor Torres.

Also part of this legacy is the *Llibre d'or de la col·lecció de teixits Viñas*[7], where he describes how he started his collection and in which Josep Gudiol i Ricard (Vic, 1904-Barcelona, 1985), university professor and director of the Amatller Institute of Hispanic Art, explains how the fabrics were catalogued and stored in closets. So this is the first private Catalan textile collection to have reached a museum already catalogued, numbered, photographed and documented.

In the first pages of the Llibre d'or, bound by Emili Brugalla in 1950, Viñas detailed how he had gradually acquired the textiles until, one day, he realized the importance of the material gathered. He had begun with a few pieces, without any clear idea of creating a fabrics collection, but on seeing how it had grown, he decided that the textiles required systematic cataloguing. In early 1947, his friend Gudiol offered to help him sort and catalogue it together with Pilar Tomàs Farell[8], who worked with him at the Amatller Institute. Together, the three devised a system of presentation on wooden frames that was very innovative at the time, the premise being that the fabrics should not be put in frames like gallery exhibits, because this would decrease their educational purpose; they should also be kept away from light and dust, and inappropriate handling should be avoided. The only pieces that were not included were the rugs, which were placed on the floor of the cabinets, and others of unusual size such as a frontal from Toledo, two capes, a chasuble and three extremely wide pieces.

A typed document preserved in the archive of Design Museum of Barcelona records that in April 1948 the collection included 1080 samples, of which only the first 382 were classified. We see at once that Viñas had begun to organize

7 In possession of the family.
8 Pilar Tomàs was later in charge of the textile collection of the Art Museums of Barcelona.

Fragment of a fabric made of silk and gold and metallic thread, from the cover of the coffin of Enrique I. From the monastery of Las Huelgas. Twelfth-thirteenth centuries. CDMT 6148. Acquired from Víctor Torres.

collections of duplicates which he sold to other organizations or even to private individuals. On 31 December 1954, the collection totalled 2,515 fabrics (Coptic, Peruvian, Arabic, Byzantine, Andalusian, from Europe, Africa and Oceania – velvets, brocades, brocatelles, silks, damasks, mixtures, prints, and reproductions).

This collection, acquired mostly between 1947 and 1957, comprises pieces from all countries, from the Coptic period until the nineteenth century. Particularly numerous are the Hispanic, Andalusian, European and Oriental items. We do not know the total number of pieces because Viñas made at least two collections. The main one is the one which he sold to Barcelona Provincial Council in 1957 and which is today preserved at the CDMT. The collection has 2,661 fabrics, which Viñas, with advice from Gudiol and Joan Ainaud Lasarte (Barcelona, 1919-1995, director of the Art Museums of Barcelona), classified into thirteen groups:

1. Serves Valley (Bronze Age)
2. Coptic
3. Egyptian-Arabic
4. Hispano-Arabic and Moorish
5. Moroccan
6. Islamic East and Far East
7. Indonesia
8. Peruvian
9. Velvets and brocades, embroidered silks and *brocatelles*
10. Damasks, various, prints
11. Rugs
12. Embroidery and hand work
13. Reproductions

Fragment of silk and metallic thread, from Burgo de Osma. Thirteenth century. CDMT 5972. Acquired from Víctor Torres.

At the same time, Viñas also had a collection of fragments from the Far East bound in twelve volumes in the form of a folding screen and containing 250 samples, mostly from China and Japan, and a collection of braid and *passementerie* of some four hundred pieces.

Only rarely do we know where collectors acquire pieces. A great deal of information is lost along the way, but in the case of Ricard Viñas, thanks to the handwritten inventory preserved at the CDMT, in many cases we know the identities of the original owner. We believe that the inventory must have been written by Pilar Tomàs[9]. The fabrics are numbered from 1 to 2661, and the type of piece and the date are recorded. Up until nº 1945, the sellers are not consistently recorded[10], but from this date onwards this information appears. Among the sellers were Fortunato Hamu (Tangier), Olive Marcal (Barcelona), Arnaldo Rosenstingl (Barcelona), Mme Niclause (Paris), Víctor Torres (Valladolid), Gaspar Homar (Barcelona), Jacques Kassapian (Paris), Augusto Malvehy (Barcelona), Hotel Drouot (Paris), Roure (Vic), Juan Rodriguez-Mora (Córdoba), Salvador Aran (Barcelona), and Forcada antiquarians (Barcelona), among others.

We know that Viñas had a network of important contacts and bought fabrics in various towns in Catalonia. Like the fine collector he was, he always went in search of the most valuable pieces, and that he also exchanged many pieces with his contemporaries. Among his companions in the adventure, there were, in addition to his wife Josefina Riera Iglesias, who put together a lace collection, an antiquarian from Vic who accompanied Viñas in this region on his searches, although we do not know his name (possibly Roure?). Viñas said that he went in search of fabrics in the Maresme, but that he obtained especially good results in Barcelona, Tarragona and Reus[11].

Viñas's relationship with both the cultural and industrial world both in Spain and abroad is reflected once again in the *Llibre d'or*, which contains one hundred sixty four signatures, some with dedications of people who had admired his collection: Carreras Candi, Santiago Alcolea, Joan Ainaud, Llorens Artigas, M. Dalí de Bas, Roig Raventós, Dorothy Shepherd, the Abeggs, Coll Bardolet, Homar and Malvehy.

The *restorations*

From February 1947 until the sale of the collection in 1957, Pilar Tomàs (who received a fixed salary), Montserrat Boldú Tomàs and Dolors and Ma Rosa

9 The writing is not Viñas's or Gudiol's, which we find in the *Llibre d'or*.

10 There are only 18 references to buyers between nos. 1 and 1944.

11 *Llibre d'or*.

Fragment of a Coptic fabric. Tapestry technique, wool and linen. Seventh-eighth centuries. CDMT 5991. Previous owner: A. Indandya.

Fragment of embroidered fabric, silk. China, Qing dynasty, eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. CDMT 5857. Previous owner: Gaspar Homar.

Noguera Urgellés[12] dedicated themselves to unstitching, cutting, adding, mending and ironing the fabrics, leaving them at a standard size of 110x60 cm., thus unifying the sizes of the fabrics in terms of width and length. Once cut to the desired size, they were sewn onto cotton supports mounted on wooden racks which were then placed in the cabinets. Sometimes recompositions were made with the same fabric or a similar one if the piece was not large enough. Although in some pieces some of the information is lost due to cuts, this is the first example of a well-organized collection, inventoried, catalogued and stored. The metal labels with registration numbers sewn onto each piece in some cases have rusted and caused damage, but they so allow us to identify the pieces, which is not the case in most collections. We should add that the corresponding filing cards are kept in files at the CDMT, grouped by registration number on the one hand and by type on the other. These cards include the name of the piece, material, technique used, photographs or bibliography and any parallels.

The work of the restorers is recorded in the annual reports and in other accounting documents[13]. In the entry for late 1954, for example, we read: *a number of fabrics that had been left behind have been restored and put in place in the cabinets (...) although not all the corresponding cards have been made. We have added all the pieces that complement others from the Hamu set from Tanger. Forty-six Eastern fragments were recovered from the auction at the Hotel Drouot in Paris.*

Of course, restoration policy has changed over the past fifty years, and certain aspects of the work of the restorers might raise eyebrows today – such as adding fragments of several collections when it is not clear whether they come from the same piece. Nevertheless it was thanks to their efforts that the pieces have been preserved in very good condition, in spite of all the toing and froing.

Of the remaining fragments, we know that there was at least one more collection, which was until recently in possession of a private individual. And there were probably other smaller fragments which Viñas donated or sold. Finally, in 1968 Viñas gave several twentieth-century pieces to the Textile Museum of Barcelona, now the Design Museum[14].

Thanks to this systematic work prior to the acquisition of the collection by the Barcelona Provincial Council, we have a great deal of information on the pieces that were sold to the Provincial Council and later transferred to the Provincial Textile Museum in Terrassa. Evidently, photography plays an important role in identifying the pieces.

12 The Barcelona Design Museum has three handwritten notebooks and some typed documents referring to the "restoration" work carried out, and the costs involved (from 1948 to 1957): hours of work, materials, and the price of the pieces. As well as references to the people already mentioned, there are also references to payments to Ma Rosa Bertran, Montserrat Tous, Maria Tomàs, Magda Viñas and "apprentices".

13 Notebooks and typed documents in the archive of the Barcelona Design Museum.

14 In the registry book: London cotton fabrics for upholstery and decoration in 1954, several cloths from the early twentieth century and albums with a range of samples from the twentieth century (from reg nº. 101.118 to 101.140)

Fragment of *bizarre* style fabric. Silk damask, metallic thread brocade. Italy? First quarter of eighteenth century. CDMT 6234. Previous owner: A. Malvehy.

The sale of the collection

In the late 1950s, Ricard Viñas was facing economic difficulties and decided to sell the textile collection. On 11 December 1956, the Official Gazette of the Province of Barcelona announced the offer of sale of the collection of fabrics Viñas at a price of ten million pesetas. A committee of experts declared the sale of this historical and artistic collection, which included 2,661 fabrics, 250 Eastern samples, 450 *passementerie* items "of interest to the province". In terms of numbers, it was the largest collection accumulated in Catalonia at that time. It was agreed that the collection should not be broken up – as had happened with the Francesc Miquel i Badia collection, whose sale to the American Pierpont Morgan had aroused such criticism in the early twentieth century.

Finally, on 28 June 1957, Barcelona Provincial Council, chaired by the Marquis de Castell-Florite, approved the acquisition at a final value of 10,240,000 pesetas. On the same day, the proposal to move the collection to the Biosca Museum in Terrassa was discussed for the first time.

The Barcelona press, initially unaware of the plan to move the collection, was full of praise for the initiative. Not since the purchase of the Josep Pascó fabrics collection in 1913, had the museums of Barcelona "acquired one of such importance".

Sempronio[15] praised the collector not only for the fabrics he had accumulated, but also for his foresight in organizing the cataloguing, and spoke highly of the textiles library that accompanied it. He recommended that the collection should form part of the fabrics on display of the first floor of the old building of the Hospital de la Santa Creu de Barcelona. He was nonetheless aware that Terrassa had been home to a textile museum since 1946.

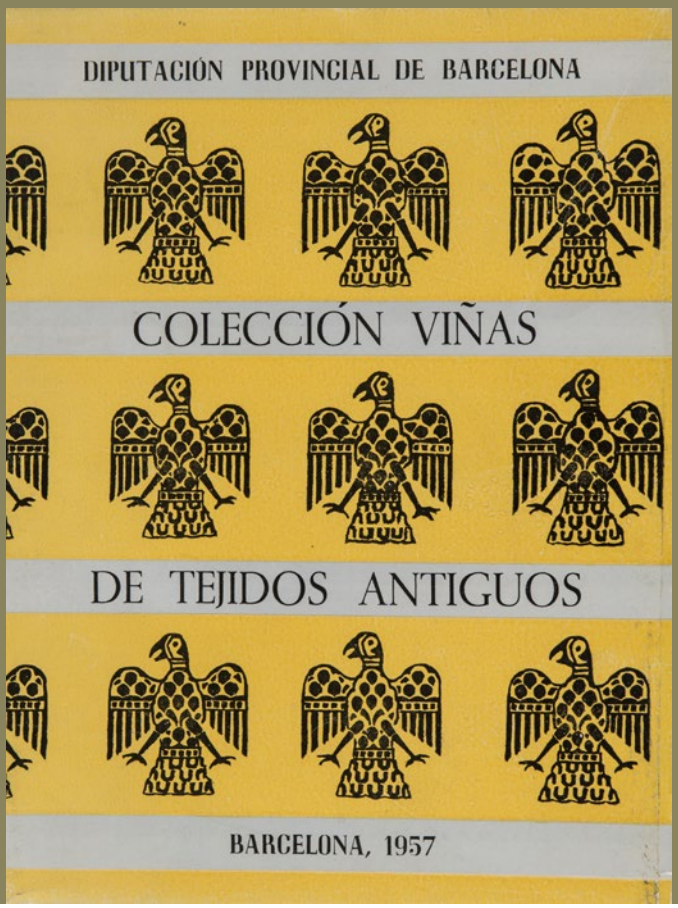
On 2 November 1957, Folch i Torres[16] wrote: *The Provincial Government of Barcelona has just acquired Catalonia's most recent collection of antique fabrics, and perhaps the most important, which is now bound for the museums of the city.*

A few days after Folch's announcement, the weekly magazine *Revista* noted the risk that the collection might be sent to Terrassa: *What will happen to this collection? We are well aware that the Biosca Textile Museum in Terrassa has its eye on this rich collection that would be a worthy addition to its magnificent stocks: however, as residents of Barcelona, we would stress the crucial importance of our city as a centre of study, and oppose any provincial decision that would separate from our treasures the remarkable collections and splendid library, and their entire catalogue, compiled by the patience and sacrifice of Don Ricardo Vinyas Geis*[17].

15 Sempronio. "Tejidos en vitrina", Las cosas como son, Diario de Barcelona, 15 September 1957

16 Folch i Torres, J. "La colección de tejidos antiguos Ricardo Vinyas Geis, adquirida por la Diputación de Barcelona". *Destino*, 2 November 1957, p.33.

17 "La colección Vinyas", Pulso de la ciudad, *Revista*, nº. 292, 16 -20 November 1957.



Catalogue *Colección Viñas de tejidos antiguos*. Diputació de Barcelona, 1957.

Barcelona had one of the most important collections in Europe and the experts were well aware that the arrival of the Viñas collection would extend its reputation, even though it lacked a museum dedicated specifically to fabrics[18].

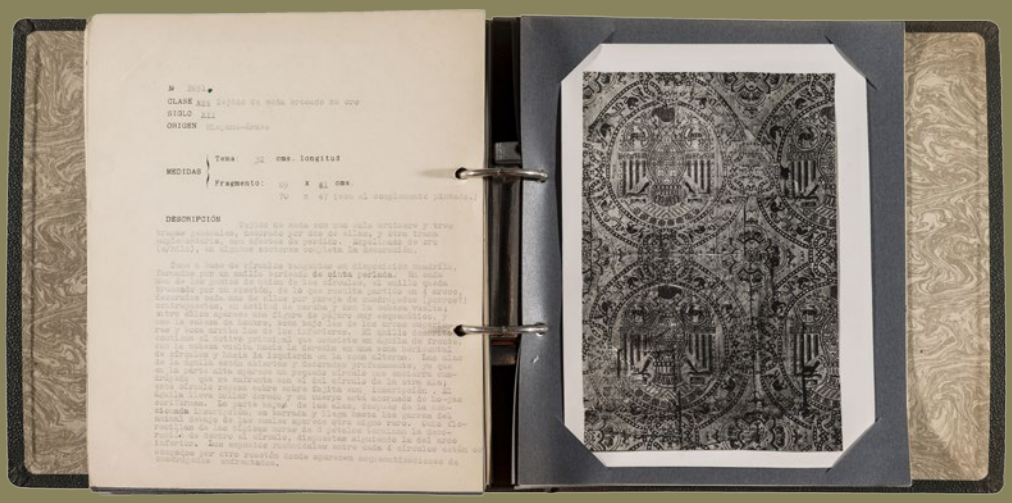
The Viñas collection was officially given over to the Provincial Council of Barcelona on 12, 13 and 14 September 1957 at the Virreina Palace. As the debate regarding its future ensued, on 25 October 1957 the collection was presented to the public with a major exhibition at the Virreina Palace, opened by Franco's wife, Carmen Polo.

The catalogue of the *Colección Viñas de tejidos antiguos* (the Viñas collection of antique fabrics), published by the Provincial Council following the purchase, contained an inventory of all the items. The introduction to the catalogue stressed the role of the textile industry in Catalonia over the centuries and noted the importance of the collection as an educational resource for schools. The purchase coincided exactly with the 50th anniversary of the Barcelona Museum Board, which strongly approved of the new acquisition and made plans to preserve it in the museums of the city. Once again, the cooperation between different government institutions had made possible the purchase of a textile collection, as had happened years before with the collections of Josep Pascó and Plandiura. The Board celebrated the fact that its 50th anniversary coincided with the Viñas purchase.

After the exhibition at the Virreina, and while the discussions regarding the collection's new home continued, an agreement between the City Council and the Provincial Council allowed the collection to be installed in the premises

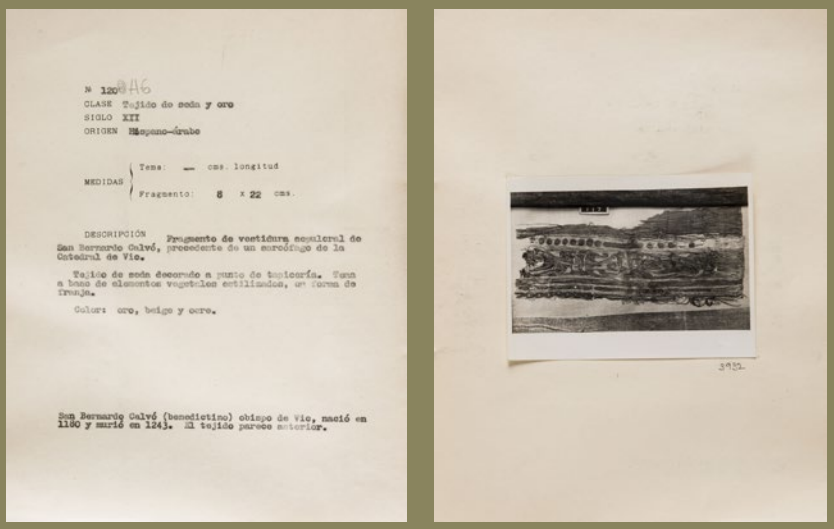
18 From the end of the nineteenth century the museums of Barcelona, led by the Museums Board, had acquired several collections of fabrics: Pompeu Gener, Golferichs, Homar, Pascó and Plandiura, among others, but did not have a venue exclusively devoted to their display.

Fragment of the reliquary pouch of Santa Liberada, Sigüenza. Lampas, silk and gold, Cyprus. Twelfth century. CDMT 6470. See detail.



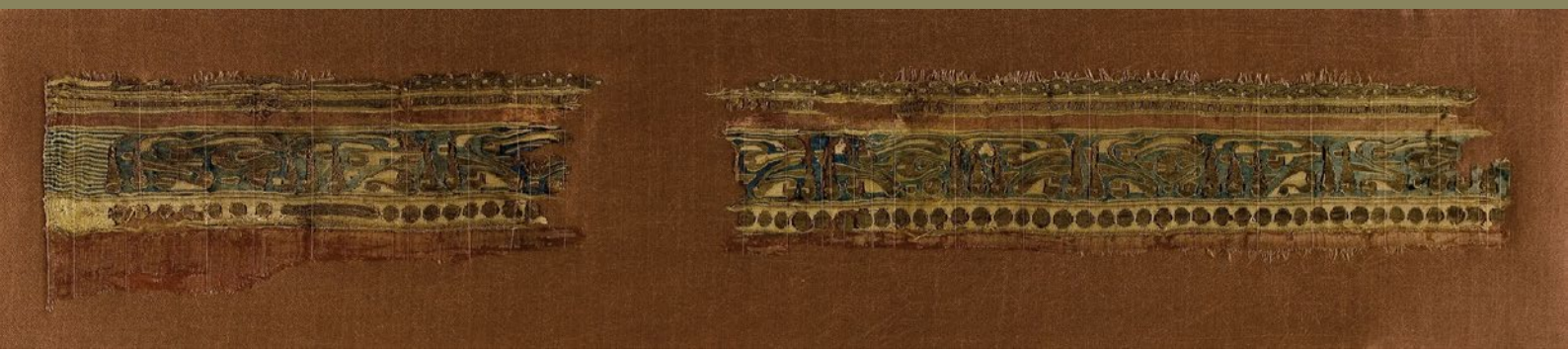
Filing card and photograph by Ricard Viñas and his team. CDMT archive.

Filing card and photograph by Ricard Viñas and his team. CDMT archive. ▶



N 120 046
CLASE Tejido de seda y oro
SIGLO XII
ORIGEN Hispano-árabe
MEDIDAS Tema: — cms. longitud
Fragmento: 6 x 22 cms.
DESCRIPCIÓN Fragmento de vestidura sacerdotal de San Bernardo Calvó, procedente de un arcaduz de la Catedral de Vic.
Tejido de seda decorado a punto de tapicería. Tema a base de elementos vegetales estilizados, en forma de trenzado.
Color: oro, beige y ocre.
San Bernardo Calvó (benedictino) obispo de Vic, nació en 1180 y murió en 1243. El tejido parece anterior.

Fragment of the ornamental band of the pontifical vestments of Sant Bernat Calbó, Vic, after restoration. Taffeta and tapestry technique, silk and gold of Cyprus. Twelfth century. CDMT 3932. ▼



of the old Hospital de la Santa Creu in c/ Hospital, 56, on the floor above the offices of the small museum of antique fabrics[19], which was closed to the public. The collection remained under the custody of the Art Museums of Barcelona.

A few weeks later, at the plenary meeting of the Provincial Council of 27 November 1957, the creation of a provincial textile museum was approved, and the Biosca Textile Museum in Terrassa was considered to be an ideal candidate. Probably thanks to the Mayor of Terrassa, Josep Clapés Targarona[20], and the obvious interest of the director of the Biosca Textile Museum Francesc Torrella Niubó, this museum was chosen to house the Ricard Viñas collection of antique fabrics. As Francesc Torrella noted[21], the competition between himself as the director of the Terrassa Textile Museum and Joan Ainaud Lasarte as director of the museums of Barcelona put what had until then been a close friendship under considerable strain[22]. As a new building had to be built the pieces were not transferred until 1968. The building was inaugurated the following year.

In addition to the textiles, Viñas gathered together a considerable volume of ceramics, paintings and bookplates, and other small collections. But more important than these were his collection of books, most of them bound by

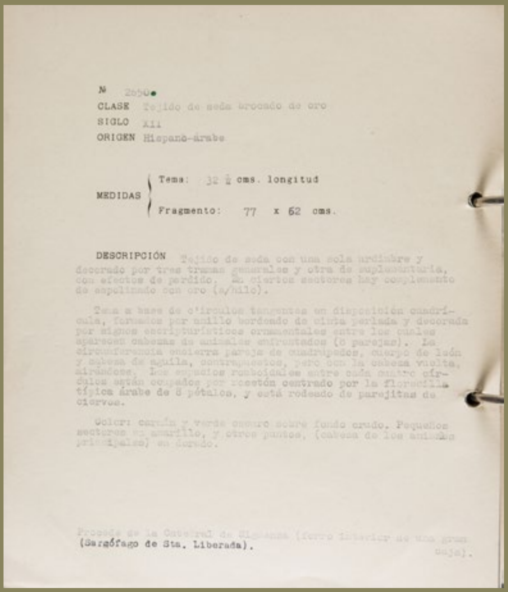
19 This is how Pilar Tomàs describes it in a typed document which traces the history of the textile collections of Barcelona, now preserved in the archives of the Design Museum.

20 La Vanguardia, 28 June 1958: (…) *Sr Clapés, to request a short period of time to allow the city of Terrassa to present an offer to house the Provincial Textile Museum. The president replied that the Provincial Council was delighted to see the interest of Terrassa*. Josep Clapés i Targarona was Mayor of Terrassa between 1955 and1964.

21 Torrella Niubó, Francesc. *El col·leccionisme tèxtil a Catalunya*. Inaugural speech at the Catalan Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Sant Jordi. Barcelona, 1987.

22 Torrella Niubó, F. *El col·leccionisme tèxtil a Catalunya*.

Fragment of the fabric known as the "cloth of eagles", from the reliquary of Santa Liberada, Sigüenza, after restoration. Lampas, silk and metallic thread. Twelfth century. CDMT 6469.



Nº 2650

CLASE Tejido de seda brocado de oro

SIGLO XII

ORIGEN Hispano-árabe

MEDIDAS { Tema: 32 ½ cms. longitud / Fragmento: 77 x 62 cms.

DESCRIPCIÓN Tejido de seda con una sola urdimbre y decorado por tres tramas generales y otra de suplementaria, con efectos de perdido. En ciertos sectores hay complemento de espolinado con oro (s/hilo).

Tema a base de círculos tangentes en disposición cuadrícula, formados por anillo bordeado de cinta perlada y decorada por signos escripturísticos ornamentales entre los cuales aparecen cabezas de animales enfrentados (8 parejas). La circunferencia encierra pareja de cuadrúpedos, cuerpo de león y cabeza de águila, contrapuestos, pero con la cabeza vuelta, mirándose. Los espacios romboidales entre cada cuatro círculos están ocupados por rosetón centrado por la florecilla típica árabe de 8 pétalos, y está rodeado de parejitas de ciervos.

Color: carmín y verde oscuro sobre fondo crudo. Pequeños sectores en amarillo, y otros puntos, (cabeza de los animales principales) en dorado.

Procede de la Catedral de Sigüenza (forro interior de una gran caja).
(Sargófago de Sta. Liberada).

Filing card and photograph by Ricard Viñas and his team. CDMT archive.

Emili Brugalla[23]. In 1954, we know that he was already working on the books of the Textiles Library[24], and although we do not know how many copies it had, we know that he was putting the book collection in order[25]. The CDMT received almost 1200 publications specifically on textile themes, among them some legal and documentary texts from the sixteenth to the twentieth century which are considered among the most important collections of legislation in Spain. This collection, which was digitized between 2005 and 2007, includes the collection of documents from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries and bibliography (primarily legislation regarding clothing and artisanal and industrial textile practices)[26].

The importance of methodology in cataloguing

This is how the Viñas collection of ancient fabrics became the property of the Provincial Council in 1957 and was later housed at the Terrassa Textile Museum, fully labelled with records, photographs and bibliography. In 1936, Balaguer stressed the importance of establishing a method for inventorying and cataloguing museum objects with labels, written descriptions and photographs: *one of the most important tasks in the organization of museums is the inventory and cataloguing of the stocks*[27] and warned against the use of adhesive labels in the numbering system[28].

Despite the clear indications of Balaguer and Folch, many museums like the Terrassa Textile Museum did not systematically catalogue or label their pieces. Perhaps they were overwhelmed by the accumulation of thousands of purchases. This situation complicates the identification of collections today. For example, the collection that Josep Biosca bought from Ignasi Abadal – containing more than five thousand pieces, and which became the cornerstone of the Biosca Textile Museum – reached the museum bearing adhesive labels which over the years had become detached. Thanks to the efforts of Ricard Viñas and his co-workers over a ten-year period, his collection is far ahead of the others that have come to us in terms of cataloguing and documentation. ●

To find out more about the Viñas fabrics collection, visit **http://imatex.cdmt.es**, "Viñas Geis, Ricard"

23 Aguerri Martínez, Ascensión. *La colección Lope de Vega en Madrid. Homenaje a una amistad: Emilio Brugalla y Ricard Viñas*. Municipal History Library of Madrid. Encuadernación de Arte. Boletín de la Asociación para el Fomento de la Encuadernación. Nº 18, Madrid 2001.

24 Typed summary of the years 1953-1954. Archive of the Design Museum of Barcelona.

25 Typed document, Archive of the Design Museum of Barcelona.

26 Soler, Joan. Saladrigas, Sílvia. *L'art reial d'empaitar barrets*. Textile Museum and Documentation Centre, Terrassa, 2008

27 Balaguer, M. "Com s'efectua l'inventari d'objectes dels museus". Butlletí Museus d'Art, nº 56, January 1936, vol. VI, p. 13

28 Folch i Torres, J. "Conversa sobre la vida privada dels museus d'art de Barcelona I". Butlletí Museus d'Art, nº 64, September 1936, vol. VI, p. 265

Card puncher by trade:
Antoni Bargalló i Pi and Francesc Pineda i Fortuny

by Montserrat Bargalló i Sánchez

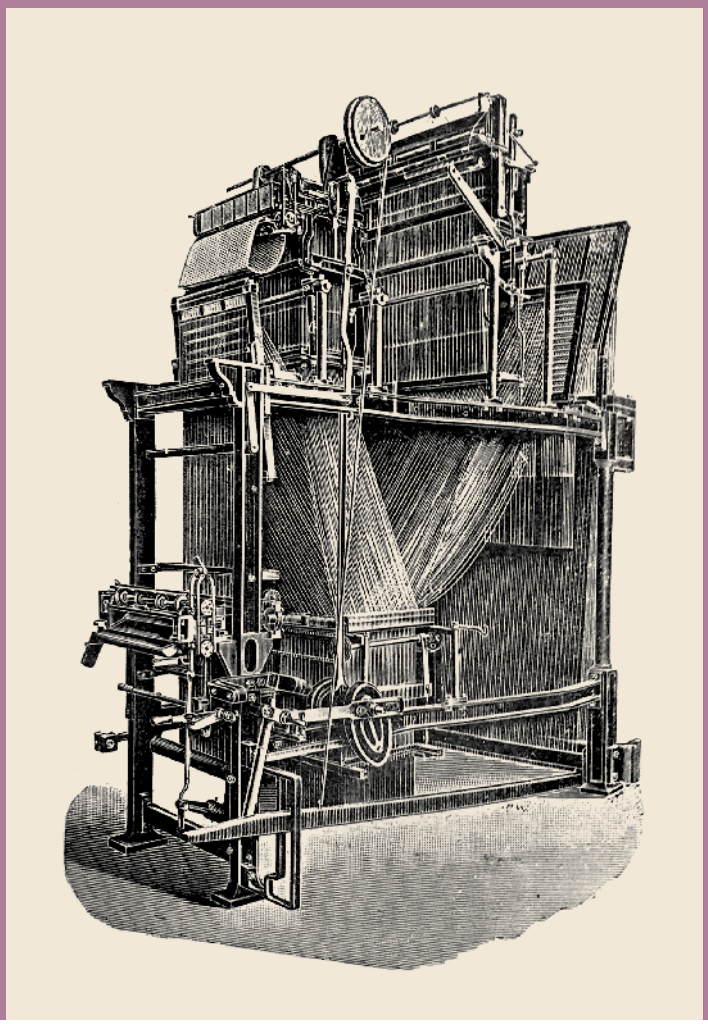
Since the birth of history as a discipline in the eighteenth century, iconographic and written materials have tended to be seen as the only historical sources. But today, research also considers oral testimonies, which are part of our intangible heritage. Materials of this kind might seem to be beyond the remit of the museum, but donors often have a great deal to say about their bequests, and many exhibitions are brought to life by the accounts of expert witnesses.
As in all areas of industry, technology in the textile sector has evolved relentlessly, rendering many trades obsolete. The memory of these trades is fading. Among the many examples are the "card punchers", whose testimony is recorded in the CDMT's new sound archive. Below is a sample of extracts from our first interview with Antoni Bargalló and Francesc Pineda, draughtsmen and card punchers of Jacquard fabrics.

Biographical notes

Antoni Bargalló i Pi was an only child and was born in Molins de Rei in October 1935. His father was a farmer and driver, and his mother had a dressmaking workshop at home and worked for several years for Santaeulàlia, a leading fashion company in Barcelona. Molins de Rei had a mixed economy: much of the labour force combined growing crops and working in the region's textile factories.

Antoni was no exception. In 1949, aged 14, he was taken on by the Samaranch textile firm and also worked in the fields growing fruit. But he found time to study at the Industrial School in Barcelona and to learn textile theory in the classes given by Josep Travaglia, considered one of the experts in the discipline at the time.

Francesc Pineda's beginnings were not very different; he was born in c/ Torrent de les Flors in Gràcia, Barcelona, in November 1934. His father was a baker and confectioner and his mother was a warper at a tie factory in c/ Banyoles. There were four brothers; Jordi, the eldest, also worked in textiles, for Paños Margarit in Olesa, and the third, Àlex, made career as a clothes manufacturer. Francesc studied to become a textile industry specialist at the Industrial School of Barcelona.



Automatic puncher with 1344 needles, Verdol system. BLANXART, Daniel (1959). *Tisaje mecánico*. Ed. Daniel Blanxart. Barcelona (page 300).

The trade of drawing and punching

Francesc entered the trade a little earlier than Antoni, and tells the story of how he started:

***Francesc*:** I was 17 years old. It was 1952, in March. Which textile course did I study? I joined Can Ferraté thanks to a neighbour of my uncle (who had a pastry shop in c/ Bonavista). Manel Sicilia, the neighbour, was a veteran draughtsman and card puncher.

***Antoni*:** The job had a number of names: card punching for patterned fabrics; card punching for Jacquard, Vincenzi and Verdol systems; card punching for Jacquard looms, and so on.
Card punching as a trade began with the invention of the Jacquard machine. But the use of perforated cards for particular functions began before this, and like most inventions that later become important it is difficult to establish who truly started it. The fact is that not everyone can punch cards – it has to be someone with a lot of technical training [...]
Around 1957 I went to work for the Almeda Cardpunching workshop for Vincenzi system machines. Why only the Vincenzi system? Very simple – at that time there were very few Jacquard machines, and Verdol machines hadn't yet arrived on the scene.

Jacquard loom in the machines room at the CDMT

This gives us an idea of the situation of the machines and buildings in the textile industry. The buildings dated from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many machines were outdated and production systems were based on "fixed prices" ...

The Jacquard machines had limitations [...] when the punched cards were sewn together, they were very heavy and difficult to handle. The system was very awkward and the Jacquard machine could have between 104 and 794 needles. Both the Jacquard and the Vincenzi cards were sewn ... The Vincenzi system used thinner and smaller cards and the smallest machine had 440 needles. The biggest had 1320. The Verdol system was the one that was most used because it offered technical advantages regarding capacity and volume, but it was impossible to make it work well in the weaving rooms of the time ... the paper was less than ideal and the machines were very sensitive; they had from 112 to 2688 needles and we didn't have to sew the cards.

The firms

Francesc: The workshop, as we called it, was in c/ Rec Comtal in Barcelona, the street that goes on from St Pere més baix towards the Arc de Triomf. Teixits Malvehy and Samaranch had their offices nearby. They were the main customers, after the defeat at the hands of our dear neighbours from the peninsula. Mas Lluch was another firm that did card punching.
Nearer Can Ferraté there was an older company, which also punched cards, can Tarascó. It had another trade name, which I can't quite recall, I think it was Ferrer ...

At Can Ferraté there were more than a dozen of us when I joined as an apprentice. Other apprentices who started after me were Joaquim Acero, Joan Serdà, Jaume Safont and later Mercè Sicilia.

Among the older employees, the supervisor was Cisco Dordal, a teacher at the Industrial School, who taught me a fair amount about the trade. The trade had an artistic part but the knowledge of the structure of fabrics is essential too. This is what we call the theory of fabrics.

Mr Dordal taught me specialities like leno weave, velvet, swivel weave and other less well-known techniques.

Antoni: When I became a card puncher, Mas Lluch was the only firm with all three systems. Its workshop was on the corner of Consell de Cent and Sardenya. The others: Ferrer Balaux, also known as Tarascó, in the Plaça de St Pere, had Jacquard and Vincenzi. Droguet, in the St Pere neighbourhood, only had Jacquard. Serramilans in Sabadell also had Jacquard and Vincenzi.

Crysa punching machine in the machines room at the CDMT.

At that time a large number of small punching machines appeared which we called “pianos”. The firm that made the Rüti looms made a lot of them and marketed them at a good price.

A Catalan company named Crysa, in c/ Alegre de Dalt, owned by a gentleman called Ramon Sala Melero, made copies, which soon mad their way into the small factories and workshops. Previously in the factories we had templates which we used to repeat the torn cards and sometimes we even dared to punch patterns from small sizes.

The Almeda workshop supplied a group of companies belonging to one family. The most important was Senmenat Textile SA, with offices on the corner of c/ Girona and Gran Via. All these factories used Vincenzi, so the Almeda workshop only had a punching machine for this system.

At that time it was very difficult to build one of these machines. They all came from Belgium, France, Germany and Italy. It was very difficult to import them, so we chose a machine from a workshop in Roubaix which had been destroyed in a bombing raid in World War II. Serravinyals gave it a new frame and the workshop began the punching.

Josep Almeda asked for help from Rafel Campdepadrós, a director at Mr. Samaranch’s firm, who had overseen the foundation of the Samaranch’s

factory in Argentina. For whatever reason, Campdepadrós had returned and was working as a consultant. He was a very practical person and a great connoisseur of special fabrics: tapestries, velvets, leno weaves, rugs, and so on. He was a real expert and my master of card punching. His son also became a successful draughtsman.

From the sketch to the card

Francesc: Almost all of our work used very primitive procedures which differed little from the original Jacquard technique. The artistic part corresponded to the *esquissaires*, the sketchers. The word comes from the French, like other terms we used like *posta en carta* and *llanternó* ...

The esquissaires had to adjust to the technical characteristics of the type of fabric being made in order to distribute the various possible effects appropriately. They also had to keep to the size limits, which were dictated by the frame and by the density of the fabric, especially of the warp fabric, which depended on the loom. Naturally, the loom could not be changed until the firm had recouped its investment.

In the first part of the point paper creation the card had to be attached, to ensure the pattern to be made would fit on a grid sheet. The proportion of the grid was dictated by the density of the warp and the weft. This ratio could vary when, due to the weave to be applied, or in order to save work, each square[1] in the point card was made to represent more than one thread or stitch.

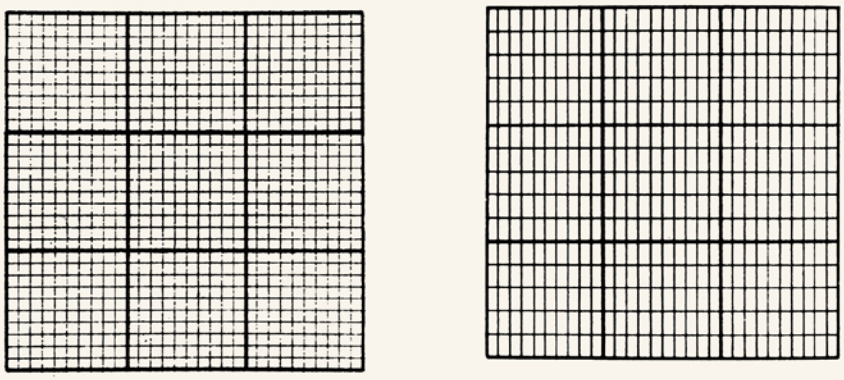
When we had obtained the grid sheets, the grid was covered with a thin layer of glue so that mistakes made by the brush could be corrected. This was done with a slightly damp piece of tracing paper which acted as a sponge and eliminated the error.

The pattern was made first with charcoal pencil and then with an ordinary pencil. When the pattern was drawn it was outlined in the corresponding colours. The colours were made there with a grindstone, mixing the dyestuff with gum arabic and ground until they were a fine powder. The brushes had also been previously been made at the same factory.

The outline was made in accordance with certain rules, especially if the pattern had geometric curves. In this case the numbers of the outline had to follow a geometric progression.

If it was necessary to copy parts of a pattern that were repeated or were also found in other places, a copier could be used. The copier was a glass table with a light beneath it that made it possibly to copy the part of the pattern

1 Squared paper is divided by thick lines usually into square blocks, each of which is subdivided into horizontal and vertical spaces. Each horizontal space corresponds to certain number of picks of weft and ends of wrap thread. It depends on the density.



Grids for point papers (10 x 10 and 10 x 5). ▲

Sketch on the card and subsequent outlining of the pattern. ▶

GALCERÁN, Vicente (1960). *Tecnología del tejido*. (Volume I). Terrassa (pages 200, 202).

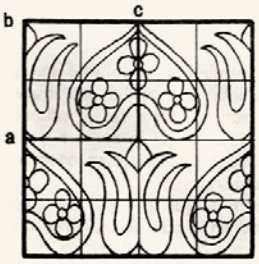


Fig. 569

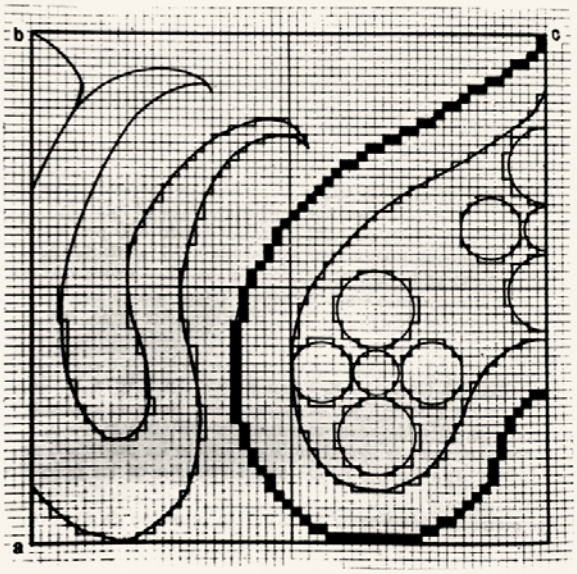


Fig. 570

Marked point paper with weaves represented in the areas of the pattern that they are to occupy.
Estudi Mas Lluch SA. 1956-1972. CDMT 14250.

2 Circular holes are punched in each card to correspond to the warp threads required.

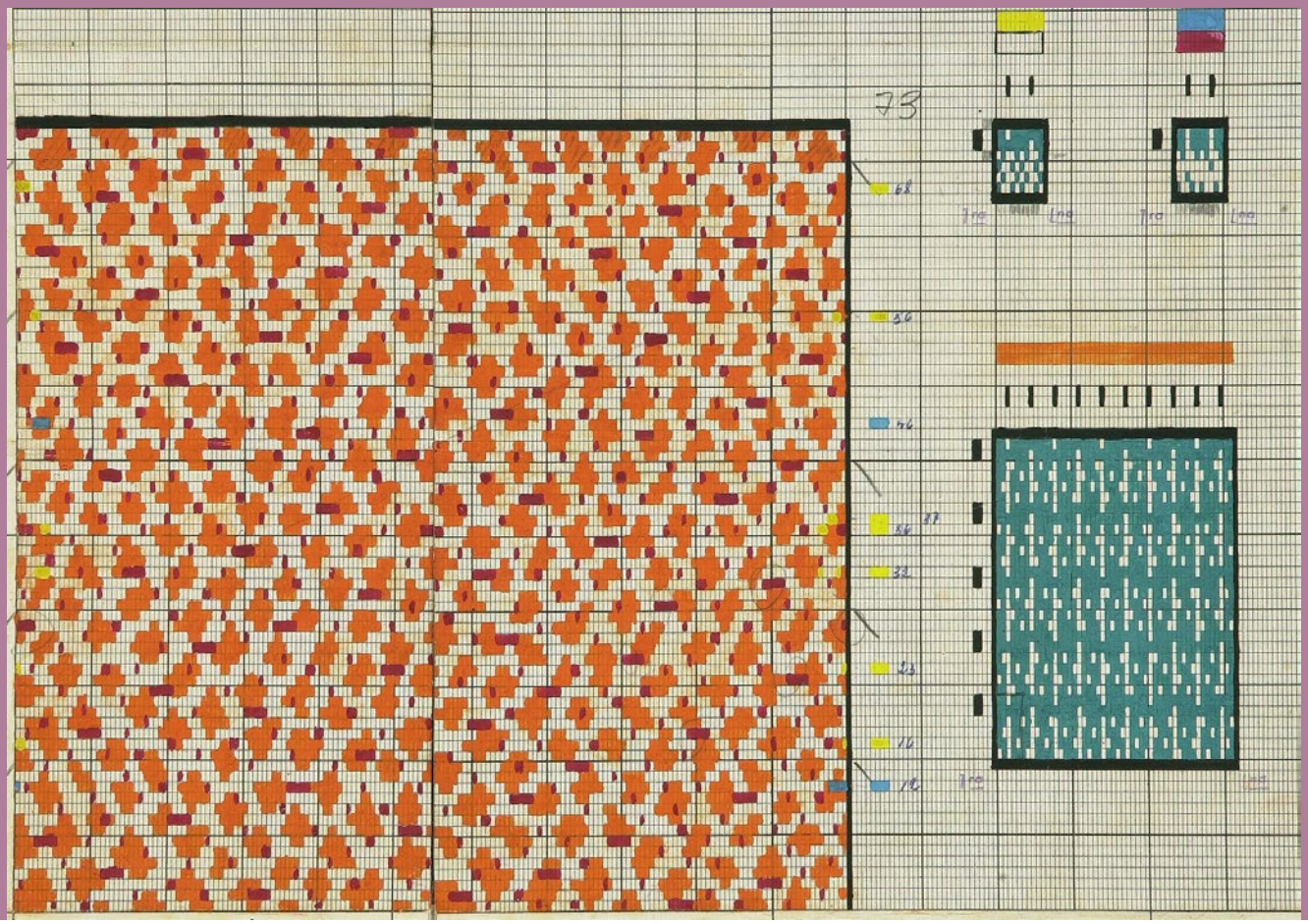
needed. As well as this (highly advanced!) procedure we had other curious ways of producing the same part of the pattern in another part of the card.

Before the punching machines had mechanisms for introducing weaves, cards had to marked with all the ligaments represented in the grid. Although the holes were still sometimes punched by hand, it was the punching machines that transformed the patterns into punched cards, one for each weft thread, making holes where the threads had to be lifted through in order make the shed[2], known in Catalan as a *pren*.

Once the punching machines were able to insert weaves, the point cards no longer had to be marked, or only partially, if the weaves so required. Even today there are parts of certain patterns that need to be marked. It doesn't seem that this can be mechanized, so there's no other choice.

Antoni: The card puncher was the link between the draughtsman and the weaver. The card puncher had to master the loom that the pattern was to be woven on, and also the process of creating the point paper. When I say the loom I mean the machine and everything else involved: accessories, types of warps, wefts, insertion and selection mechanisms, etc. The puncher is the last filter before a pattern is woven. A good puncher could avoid steps of reading and card punching. Remember that each weft thread is a card and each punched card was worth money, as much as 20 pesetas at that time.

Point paper simplified. The colours indicate the areas of the pattern to be occupied by the weaves represented on the right. Estudios Calabuig per a Sederías Jorge Fábregas. Mid-twentieth century. CDMT 13467.



3 In an ordinary machine a separate card is required for each pick of weft, and the cards which form the complete repeat of a design are laced together with twine at the sides and in the middle.

In a card punching workshop the most important staff, after the supervisor and the owner, were the readers. At that time the majority were women. Good readers took three or four years to learn the craft. In large workshops, they would sometimes specialize in reading different types of point cards, that is to say different types of fabrics. A reader who mastered several different types was highly valued, and the punchers fought over them. The punchers established a gentleman's agreement that kept the job market for these professionals under tight control.

The next most important employees were the ones who did the mechanical work, which required considerable dexterity. These were the people in charge of the punching machines and the ones who sewed the punched cards, until the introduction of the sewing machine. Even when the sewing machine appeared, many supervisors continued to prefer sewing by hand, because the controlled tension of the twine avoided damage and defects[3].

Most press operators were men, while the women did the stitching. Because the union rules of the Franco regime had placed the card punchers under the category of Graphic Arts, the punchers were associated with a press, and were therefore classed as press operators. The rest of the staff were considered as auxiliaries, and it was not clear where the readers should be classified. Eventually they were classed as typesetters.

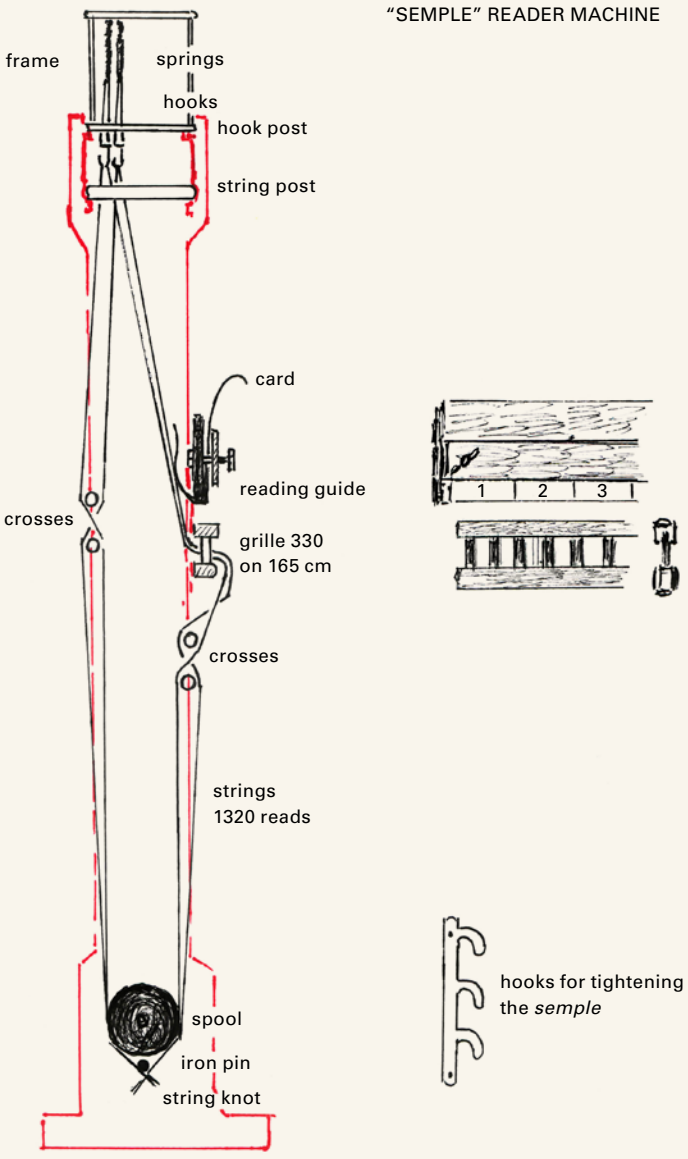


Diagram of the operation of the *semple* reader machine, Vincenzi system. Made by Antoni Bargalló.

When the puncher received a point card from the draughtsman, first he studied it. He had a file of templates for each client. The template was the arrangement of the needles in the jacquard machine and the loom frame. Each loom had its own template, as there were factories which did not have two looms that were the same. Looms could be right- or left-hand and machines could be placed on the loom in Lyonnaise or English style: in Lyonnaise style, the machine is placed perpendicular to the reed dent, and in English style, the machine was placed in the same direction as the reed dent. There was another issue as well: the needles and the distribution of the harness cords strings. The needles could be in French or Spanish style (the latter in fact being Catalan style). Unfamiliarity with any these different features could severely damage the pattern and the weaves.

The puncher now arranged the point card for reading. If it was very big, it was cut up into pieces. If the weaves were not in the course of all needles partial readings had to be made to match the course of the weave. He assessed whether readings could be saves by superimposing heavy and light weaves. His knowledge of the weaves also allowed him to change the order of steps to save readings. All this was recorded on a form that facilitated possible corrections.

The puncher prepared the punching press for each pattern. He placed the *semple* behind the machine and attached it to the punching frame. He connected to the frame of the chopper. He checked the ties with the squares of the point card and the readings it had. He numbered the punched cards according to the weft threads of the complete design and according to whether each square in the card represented several wefts in the loom. The numbers indicated the order of the weft threads. Then he placed behind the *semple* the men who were to pull the strings selected for each weft thread. If the reading was direct, the strings pulled corresponded to the weave: in the case of the marked cards most corresponded to damasks [...]

After the punched cards were made they were sewn. Seamstresses had the ability to sew with the same tension. They sewed with a large needle. They could sew in a different way, depending on the price.

Finally, in the1960s, the first electronic puncher appeared, made by Verdol and called the Dactyl·leseusse, shortened to *dactis*. These machines began to change the punching process; readers were no longer needed. The machines could read and punch very complicated patterns in a single operation. The punching was made on Verdol continuous paper and, if necessary, could be transformed into the cards used by the other systems.

Suddenly, then, mechanization put an end to four trades – the readers, the string pullers, the punchers and the women who sewed the cards – which are practically forgotten today[...] ●

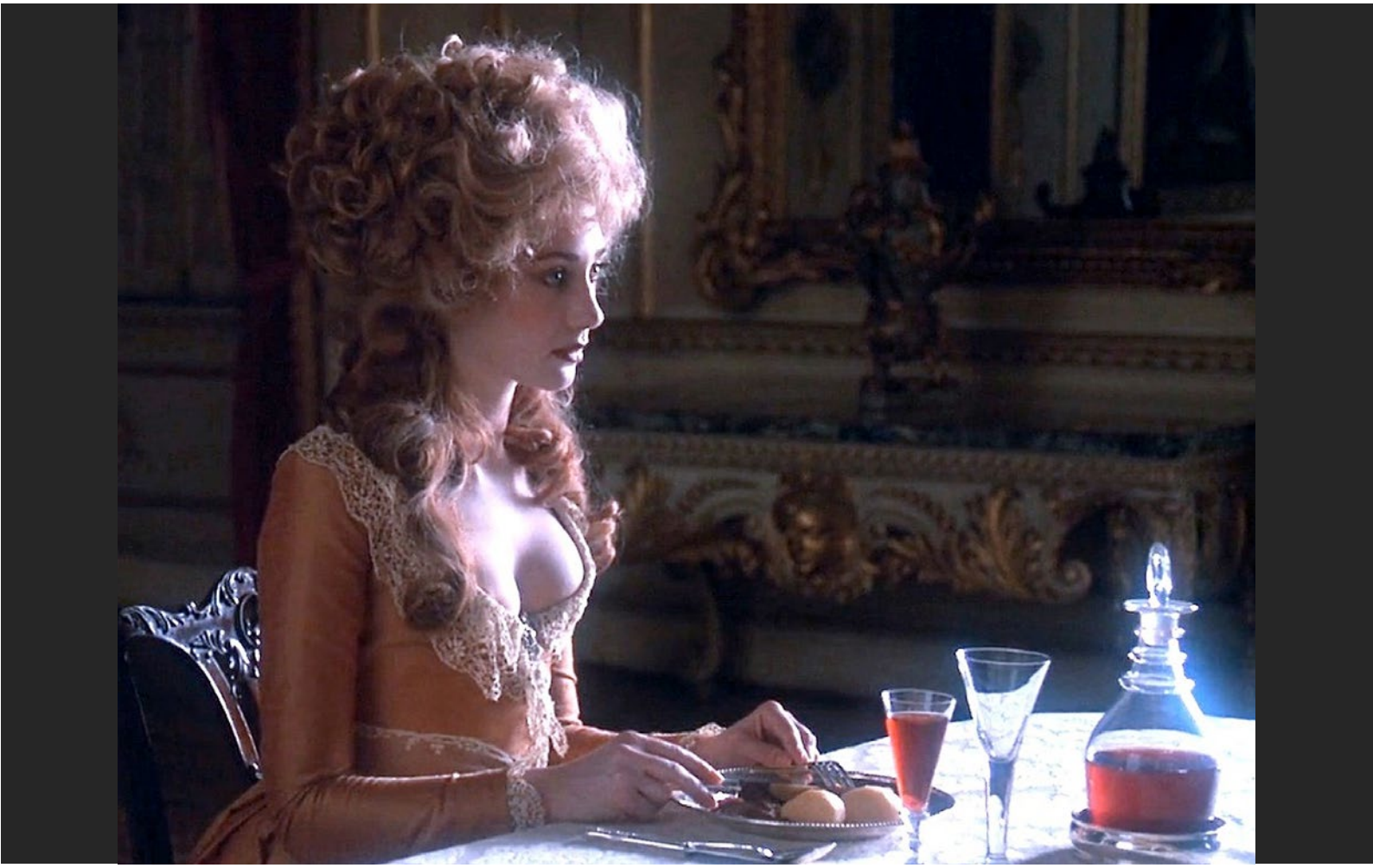
OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > ESPAÑOL

Fashion in film: Anglomania in *Barry Lyndon*. A style of transition

by Karin Wachtendorff
Art Historian. Specialist in historical dress
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com

Based on the novel by Thackeray, the film *Barry Lyndon* is probably one of the masterpieces of the history of cinema. Set in the late eighteenth century and expertly directed by Stanley Kubrick in 1975, the film has an impeccable aesthetic quality – not just thanks to its magnificent costumes, but to its lighting and photography and its excellent soundtrack as well. Kubrick was a perfectionist who left nothing to chance, and during the entire year devoted to the preparation of the film, he visited museums and devoured hundreds of books on English art of the eighteenth century, seeking aesthetic references to compose the scenes of the film.

In his zeal for thoroughness and detail, Kubrick entrusted the costume design to Oscar-winner Milena Canonero, who sought inspiration in the portraits of the period by Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds,



Lady Lyndon.
© Warner Bros / Hawk Films.

Angelika Kauffman, and William Hogarth. Canonero's work could not be a personal interpretation: it had to accurately reflect the fashion of that period, in terms of the fabrics, forms, colours, and patterns. Kubrick was looking for a realistic effect in models from all social classes; peasants, nobles, soldiers, clergy, and children.

The film recounts the adventures and misadventures of the Irishman Raymond Barry, with Ryan O'Neil in the starring role. Barry is a somewhat wayward character who, after various escapades, enlists first in the British army and then in the Prussian army, and travels through Europe fighting in the Seven Years' War. At the end of it, he moves to England, where he marries an English countess with a huge fortune.

This is the point that interests us most: the fashions and style of the main female character, Lady Lyndon. Lady Lyndon is played by Marisa Berenson, an actress whose serene beauty made her ideal for the role. Elegant and refined, always dressed with exquisite taste, Lady Lyndon follows the English fashions of the 1770s and 1780s, when King George III was on the throne.

At that time, the English upper classes (unlike their French counterparts, who adored being near the court) preferred the freedom of their country houses, surrounded by nature. This lifestyle required a type of simple, flexible clothing rather than the awkward and pompous rococo fashions hitherto predominant in the capitals of Europe. With their more functional approach to

Angelika Kauffman, *Lady Elizabeth Foster,* 1785. The Regency library

Lady Lyndon wearing a *Marlborough* hat. © Warner Bros / Hawk Films.

dress, the English aristocrats copied certain items of clothing worn by the lower orders. In doing so, they established a style with a distinct national character, which challenged the French supremacy in fashion.

Female attire in the English style in the mid-1770s was not particularly elaborate, although this is not to say that it bore no adornment at all. Extremely tight-fitting, it consisted of a whalebone bodice with lace fringing and *compères* at the front. The swirl of the skirt was achieved by pleats, eliminating the uncomfortable French style *paniers*, and replacing them with a simple filling that marked the back, called *cul de Paris*. This fashion and its many variants gave women greater freedom of movement. Moreover, the adoption of elements of menswear contributed a characteristic note, such as the female version of the *redingote*, or the colourful high-crowned hats called the *Marlborough*, which were decked out with plumes of ostrich feathers and satin ribbons to match the dress.

Thomas Gainsborough, *The three princesses*, 1784. The Royal Collection, London. Detail.

Detail of a silk dress with *Spitalfields* print, worn by Lady Lyndon. © Warner Bros / Hawk Films.

By 1780 the huge wigs of previous decades had been replaced by a more natural styling, lightly powdered with curly hair framing the face on both sides. The idyllic pastoral inspiration called *bergeries* was reflected in the enormous straw hats, aprons embroidered in white muslin and ruffled necklines. The great *fichus* were trimmed with lace from France and Flanders, called *point d'Angleterre* in order to ensure acceptance in the English market.

The rustic craze that characterized those years served as a stylistic bridge between the rococo and neoclassical fashion, which was beginning to impose itself by 1790.

As for the men, English aristocrats dispensed with the French-style garments they had worn before. They replaced the velvets, brocaded silks and embroidered suits of the French with other more simple garments, made with more discreet colours, manifesting a desire for comfort and simplicity that was almost puritanical. They simplified their shirts by eliminating lace ruffles and wore ties made of white muslin. They replaced stockings and shoes with metal buckles with sturdy riding boots that were much better suited to outdoor sports such as horse riding and fox hunting[1]. They rejected wigs[2] and showed off their own hair, knotted by a ponytail. The favourite headwear was the tricorn hat.

Such was the enthusiasm aroused by this aesthetic movement that Anglomania spread throughout Europe, even reaching the court of Marie Antoinette[3], and also made its way to the American colonies. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century England was seen as the land of freedom, with a growing reputation for quality and innovation[4] in the textile industry, and in the production and trade of cotton[5]. Cotton began to compete with silk, underlining again the interest in returning to simplicity and abandoning luxurious rococo styles.

1 This fashion was the forerunner of the style of the *dandies* of the nineteenth century.

2 Around 1790, male wigs and suits *à la française* became reserved for formal occasions requiring more ostentatious dress.

3 Rose Bertin, *couturière* to Marie Antoinette, designed garments for her which were inspired by English styles, like the *redingote* and simple white muslin dresses closed by a ribbon.

4 Gradually, the small traditional workshops were converted into factories thanks to inventions that improved the process of spinning cotton. One example is Samuel Crompton, who in 1779 patented a machine able to produce a very finely spun thread, ideal for making muslins.

A tender family scene in which the protagonist wears a white dress *à l'anglaise*, which reflects the transition style between Rococo and Neoclassicism. © Warner Bros / Hawk Films.

Nevertheless, silks remained an important part of the wardrobe of elegant ladies. Although in the eighteenth century France was at the head of European silk production with major centres in Tours and Lyon, England was also noted for its Spitalfields patterned silks with their delicate natural motifs. In addition, the English silk industry benefited from the introduction of Thomas Lombe's silk throwing machine[6].

Although the English women's fashions of those years were not without adornment, the fact is that the search for functionality and the profound desire to look towards nature gave rise to a new transitional style, with simple dresses of bucolic and pastoral inspiration. This phenomenon reflected an unprecedented interest among the upper classes in the world of the common people, while at the same time paving the way for revolutionary changes in the systems of production, trade, and consumption. Indeed, the consumer society would emerge some years later with the Industrial Revolution, which would ultimately pave the way for the future democratization of fashion.

The aesthetic, formal and conceptual components of the English dress styles of the late eighteenth century are faithfully represented in the costumes in the film Barry Lyndon. This is thanks to the magnificent research carried out by Milena Canonero and her team, under the direction of Stanley Kubrick.

5 To compete with the imports of printed calicoes from the East Indies.

6 The British government paid Thomas Lombe 18,000 pounds for the patent of his invention: Lombe set up his own textile factory using hydraulic energy in Derby.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AA VV, *La historia de los textiles*, Editorial LIBSA, Madrid, 1993.

BAUMGARTEN, Linda, *What Clothes Reveal*, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, 2011.

BLACKMAN, *Cally, Costume.* The Pitkin Guide, Jarrold Publishing, Norwich, 2003.

BOUCHER, François, Historia del traje en Occidente, Editorial Gustavo Gili, SA, Barcelona, 2009

BUTAZZI, Grazietta, *La Mode*, Livre de París, Biblio-Club de France, Paris, 1983.

COSGRAVE, Bronwyn, *Historia de la moda*, Editorial Gustavo Gili, SA, Barcelona, 2006.

DESLANDRES, Yvonne, El traje imagen del hombre, Tusquets Editores, Barcelona, 1987.

SUOH, Tamami, "18th Century", in *Fashion. The Collection of the Kyoto Costume Institute*, Vol.I, Taschen, Köln, 2006

VON BOHEN, Max, *Accesorios de la Moda*, Salvat Editores S.A., Barcelona-Buenos Aires, 1944.

RELATED LINKS

https://franciscobernalfernandez.files.wordpress.com
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2014/01/moda-en-el-cine-hamlet-el-honor-de-la.html
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2014/01/moda-en-el-cine-la-feria-de-las.html
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2014/03/moda-en-el-cine-orlando.html
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2014/04/moda-en-el-cine-mrs-henderson-presenta.html
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2013/01/moda-en-el-cine-katherine-hepburn-i.html
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2013/01/moda-en-el-cine-katherine-hepburn-ii.html
https://franciscobernalfernandez.files.wordpress.com
http://historiadelamodaylostejidos.blogspot.com.es/2011/10/las-chinelas-de-seda.html

Museums with collections of eighteenth-century English paintings

National Gallery of Art (Washington), www.nga.gov
National Galleries of Scotland, www.nationalgalleries.org
Museo del Hermitage (San Petersburgo), www.hermitagemuseum.org
Neue Pinakothek (Munich), www.pinakothek.de

Museums with collections of eighteenth-century English dress

V&A Museum (Londres), www.vam.ac.uk
MET Museum (Nueva York), www.metmuseum.org

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > ESPAÑOL

Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

by Igor Uria Zubizarreta
Director of Collections

'One day, he stopped her and asked if he could make an outfit for her. The boy was about thirteen; his hair was dark, his eyes still darker, and he had that smile that would stay with him for the rest of his life.

"Why do you want to make me an outfit?" she asked him.

"Because I think I can," he answered'[1].

1 DE ROTHSCHILD, Pauline, "Balenciaga", in El Mundo de Balenciaga. Palacio de Bibliotecas y Museos. Madrid 1974

With wonderful skill and tenacity, Cristóbal Balenciaga created his exquisite *haute couture* pieces at his various workshops right up until his retirement in 1968. Always considered masterpieces, today his works are on display in museums and coveted by collectors.

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum was opened in June 2011 in Getaria, the couturier's hometown, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Sofia (the Patron of Honour) and Hubert de Givenchy, Honorary President and Chairman of the Board of the Balenciaga Foundation, whose passion, dedication and perseverance helped to make the museum a reality. The museum began as a local project, devised to exhibit the work of the master of haute couture, but support was also obtained from the Spanish ministry of education and culture, the departments of culture of the Basque government and the provincial government of Gipuzkoa.

Balenciaga's meeting with the Marchioness of Casa Torres is acknowledged by all students of the architect of fashion as a truly decisive encounter. Now, the museum has been built as an annex to the Aldamar Palace, the summer residence of the Casa Torres family. The smooth, dark facade of the new building and its location behind the palace reflect the artist's modesty and discretion – as if the Marchioness, his mentor, were protecting his works from the elements and celebrating their aristocratic bearing.

The building was designed by architect Julian Argilagos, and the final formal definition of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum was conceived and executed by the architects AV62. The three large areas that house the exhibition halls express one of the ideas that underpinned Balenciaga's creativity: the difference

Eraikina Kanpotik: Façade

between the inner volume and the outer volume and the space between the two. The *tonneau* line of 1947 (contrasting with the silhouette of Christian Dior), the semi-fitted suit of 1951 and the baby-doll dress of 1957 become milestones in Western fashion and reflect the integrity of the artist's vision, as they all start from one and the same idea.

The architectural spaces of the building's interior, as a representation of the body and the importance of the shoulders and neck, house the six galleries on two different floors. The outer glass wall presents a different structure from the interior, allowing the air to circulate between them and allowing the visitor to see the ensemble as a whole.

The temporary exhibitions are located on the second floor, directing us towards the permanent exhibition on the first floor. Two chronologically arranged displays trace the career of the Getaria couturier from his beginnings in San Sebastian to his triumphant reign in Paris. Through a series of "absent" dummies, stage lighting to create atmosphere, and the absence of plinths to allow a closer and more genuine interplay between the public and the exhibits, visitors are invited to appreciate the delicacy and beauty of the creations. Between the 1940s and the 1960s one of Balenciaga's major concerns and lines of research was the silhouette, and this dedication resulted in his innovative creations which earned him a loyal clientele and the recognition

Blue pleated lace (Mellon). Photo: Manuel Outumuro. See details.

Inside the exhibition room.

and endorsement of the editors of fashion media such as Carmel Snow, Bettina Ballard and Diana Vreeland. The study of the silhouette, along with his innovations in the patterns and fabrics, complete the exhibition. In the third and last room, the aim is to explain why Balenciaga is considered as the great architect of fashion, with an analysis of each of the exhibits and presenting them from all angles.

Since its creation as the Association for the Promotion of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation, the Costume and Documentation collection has grown over the years thanks to donations which have allowed us to study, preserve and exhibit Balenciaga's works. The collection has been enriched by loans from private sources and from national and international institutions. Hubert de Givenchy's commitment to the project dedicated to his spiritual father and teacher have been decisive. In acknowledgement of his debt to Balenciaga, in 2000 Hubert de Givenchy donated a large collection of dresses, in 2002 papers and documents, and in 2003 furniture from his Paris salons. He also asked former customers of his master (many of whom later became customers of his own) to contribute to the collection. His friend Sonsoles Diez de Rivera Icaza donated an entire collection belonging to her and her mother, the Marchioness de Llanzol, in 1998. In 1992 the Basque government acquired the collection of

Inside the exhibition room.

Ramon Esparza, a close associate of Cristóbal Balenciaga, to be displayed in the museum. This collection is particularly valuable because it contain prototypes of models from the last collections, like the ones displayed at the first exhibitions at The Costume Institute in New York in 1973 and the National Library of Spain in 1974. With the opening of the Museum in June 2011, the collection, which currently includes more than 2200 items, received donations from the López-Ibor Aliño family, the Donato sisters and Mrs. Rachel Lambert Mellon, one of Balenciaga's best customers between 1957 and his retirement in 1968, among others. The papers and documents are divided into two archives of great importance: the Marquis and Marchioness of Casa Torres archive, which bears witness to the importance of the family and their passion for art and fashion, and the Balenciaga archive. The Balenciaga archive is currently expanding thanks to research and donations; for example, Pedro Esteban, a couturier who worked for several years at the EISA workshops in Barcelona, donated an important collection of 1950s magazines from Spain and abroad in 2014.

The building also houses the museum's technical and administrative offices. Here, under the supervision of Miren Vives Almandoz, the technical team preserves and promotes the work of the "architect for shape, musician for harmony, and philosopher for temperance" through exhibitions, research,

Wedding dress in multi-coloured floral print silk gauze. 1933. CBM 2005.28 ad. Photo: Manuel Outumuro. See details.

and educational activities. The presentation of the mysterious universe of a designer who shunned interviews and the media invites visitors to understand the nature of an artist who, with great simplicity and with a mastery of fabrics, created minimalist dresses of great volume, maintaining proportion and harmony at all times.

Like his compatriot Juan Sebastian Elcano, the first sailor to conquer the wild waters of the oceans, Cristóbal Balenciaga won the hearts of his numerous clients all over the world thanks to the elegance and simplicity of his haute couture creations. Deeply respected by his peers, his timeless style continues to delight all those who appreciate art and beauty. ●

Tot plegat, a travelling exhibition of Catalonia's textile heritage

by Neus Ribas San Emeterio, director of the Museum of Arenys de Mar
Eulàlia Morral Romeu, Managing Director of the Textile Museum and Documentation Centre

The Circuit: objectives and areas of co-operation

On 9 December, the *La Pedrera* Foundation held a development day to discuss the work of cooperation networks of museums and heritage. Among the networks represented was the Circuit of Textile and Fashion Museums in Catalonia. In his introductory speech, Francesc Xavier Menéndez of the Barcelona Museums Board described the circuit as a voluntary thematic network comprising the following museums: the CDMT, the Premià del Mar Print Museum, and the Arenys de Mar Museum. This definition reflects clearly the objective the three museums have set themselves from the beginning: the desire to work together to promote textile heritage, based on a common approach to heritage management. The three museums bring together an impressive collection of fabrics, prints and lace work of great historical and artistic value.

The origins of the Circuit date back to 2005, when, along with the Textile and Clothing Museum of Barcelona, these three centres decided to coordinate their activities more closely. In January 2011 the Circuit officially came into being with the signing of an agreement between Arenys, Premià and Terrassa. Since 2007, we have worked together on joint projects and the Circuit has served to standardize criteria and management policies on textile heritage. To date, the following co-operation projects have been successfully completed:

1. A guide for a coordinated policy on acquisitions
2. The production of a common brand image and publicity material in various languages
3. The creation of the Circuit's website http://www.circuitmuseustextils.cat/
4. The organization of a travelling exhibition "A life in batik. From the Sultan's palace to the villages of Java"
5. The incorporation of the Premià del Mar Print Museum and the Arenys de Mar Museum into the editorial board of the journal *Datatèxtil*.

Wool sample. José Bertran, S.A. Barcelona, 1925/1990. CDMT 22.826-016 (077-4696).

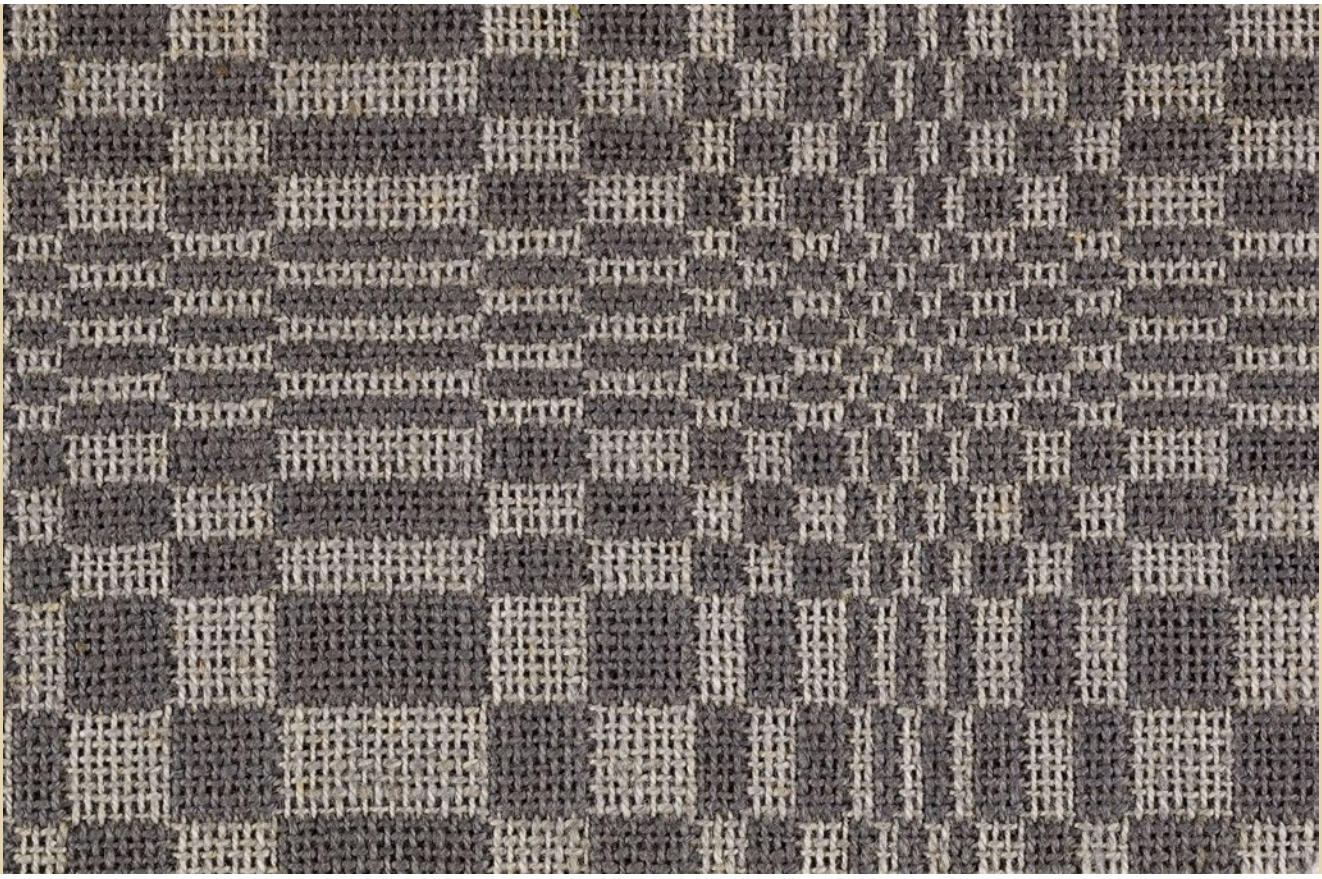
The Project: *The Documentation and Dissemination of Catalonia's Textile Industrial Heritage*

In 2008, thanks to a grant from the Catalan government, the CDMT and Arenys de Mar Museum decided to initiate a long-term project to document, study and disseminate textile heritage through the sample-books preserved in the two museums. The aim was to make these books available to experts, scholars, textile professionals, designers and the general public. This goal was accomplished with the creation of the web platform, where we have continued to provide detailed, high quality images of the samples preserved by textile companies in our country.

Bringing this heritage to a wider public through the creation of a joint website has allowed us to standardize our criteria for documentation and to provide a more comprehensive history of the textile industry in Catalonia. The website furthers our aim of preserving this heritage, studying its characteristics and assessing its role in the European context.

At the time of its launch, the site displayed a total of 605 pieces of sample books from 30 companies. It now offers users information on 1,063 pieces from 35 Catalan companies and some from Europe, and has incorporated part of the collection of the Premià de Mar Print Museum.

The work, however, is still ongoing, and we now want to pursue our policy of disseminating this textile heritage in the form of an exhibition and a subsequent publication which celebrates the textile history of Catalonia through its materials. These sample-books and other technical documents have often been ignored but their historical value is immense. By drawing attention to their importance, we aim to raise the profile of a sector that has played such a crucial role in the economic history of our country.



Cotton sample. Algodonera Canals, Sant Adrià del Besòs, 1901/1959. CDMT 11.228-04 (002-332).

Textiles – still the industrial engine of Catalonia

Relatively recently, in some regions of Catalonia almost everyone had links with the textile industry, either professionally or through their families. Many businesses were located inside the city, and in the streets one could hear the noise of the looms and smell the characteristic odours. There was no need to look at the label on the clothes (if in fact there was one) – a simple glance allowed us to appreciate the quality of any piece of fabric.

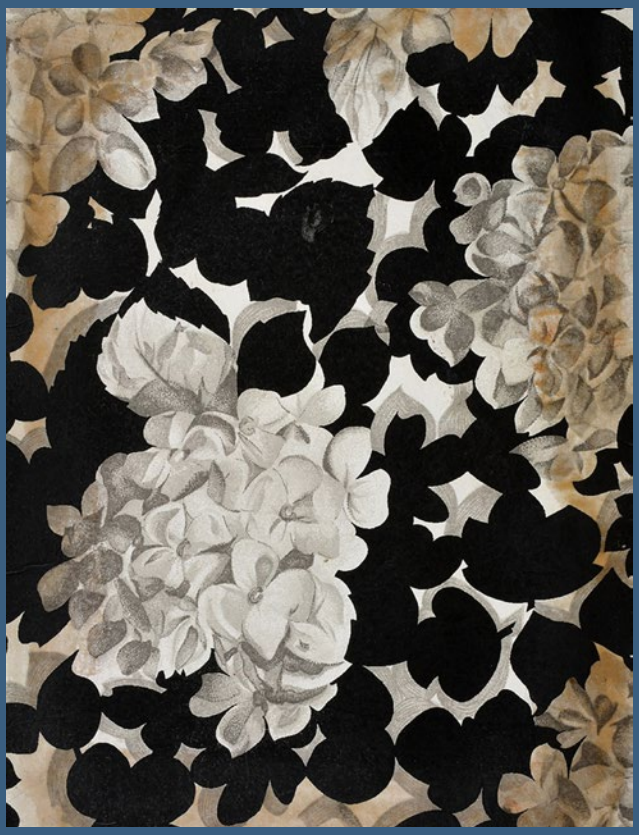
This presence began to fade with the successive crises of the 1970s and 1980s (which led to plans with terms like "Restructuring" and "Reconversion" in their titles). The local authorities insisted that factories should move to the outskirts of the cities, and at the same time technological changes have made the machines both more efficient and much quieter. This lack of visibility has generated a collective feeling that the textile industry in our country has been lost, and that everything is imported from elsewhere in the world. But this is far from being true.

Some say that "crisis" and "textiles" have always gone together, and there is some justification for this: the permanence of the sector over the years has been due precisely to its ability to adapt and transform itself continually in order to find new productive strategies, new ideas and new markets. Inevitably in this adaptation those who cannot keep up are left behind, but it has always provided firms with an incentive to take on new challenges.

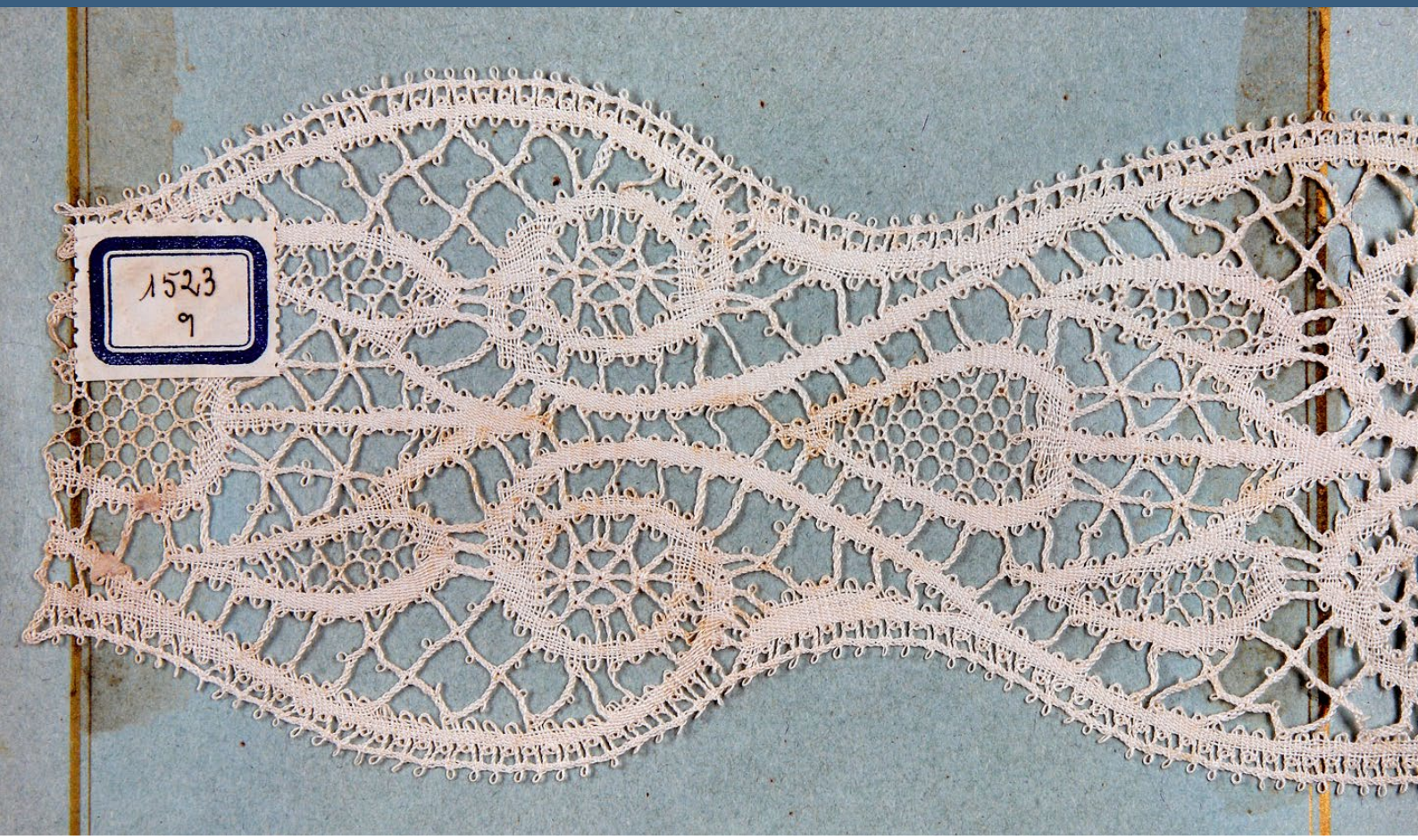
Thanks to this experience, the firms which began more than a century ago as drapers are now world leaders in technical textiles. And thanks to investments in machinery and design, the textile-fashion sector employs

Print samples. Lyon Barcelona S.A., Premià de Mar, 1931/1979. MEPM 11239-086 ▲ i 11246-121. ▶

See more.



Lace sample. Fábrica de Blondas y Encajes de Joaquín y Mariano Castells, Arenys de Mar 1911/1941. MAM 2989.



129,000 people in Spain (not counting distribution), representing 6% of total industrial employment, 3% of GDP and 7% of exports.[1] There are a total of 8,471 companies, mostly small and medium-sized, which in 2013 had a turnover of more than 9.3 bn euros, exporting mainly to European countries (70%).

In Catalonia[2] there are 2,500 textile firms (1.49% of the EU total), employing nearly 40,000 people (2.40% of the EU total), with a turnover of 4.13 bn euros (2.48% of the EU total); they account for 38% of total Spanish exports in the sector. The clothing market represents 50% of the production, followed by textiles for the home (30%) and for technical use (20%).

The last of these subsectors has evolved notably in recent decades, and Catalonia now has a hundred firms which had a turnover of 800 million euros in 2013. These are manufacturers of high value-added textile products for the automotive industry, sports, agriculture, personal protection, medical and health care, and construction. These uses probably go unnoticed bymany people but which mean that fabrics are almost omnipresent in our lives, much more so than in previous eras.

All this has been made possible by the knowledge accumulated over the last century, either in the form of intangible assets and documentation, or services and educational entities which have managed to evolve in line with the times. Today, universities and technological centres carry out cutting edge research in the development of new raw materials, finishes, functions and applications, process improvement and environmental sustainability.[3]

1 CITYC: Spanish textile-clothing sector 2013 (www.cityc.es).
2 Detrell, Ariadna: "The competitiveness of SMEs through clusters", paper given at the *Terrassa international textile conference*, 2/10/2014.
3 Walter, Lutz: "Conclusions", at the *Terrassa international textile conference*, 2/10/2014.

Cotton sample . La España Industrial, S.A., Barcelona, 1847/1981. MEPM 9810.

Sample of yarns for knitting. Hilabor, S.A, Terrassa, 1946/1992. CDMT 14.240-148 (20).

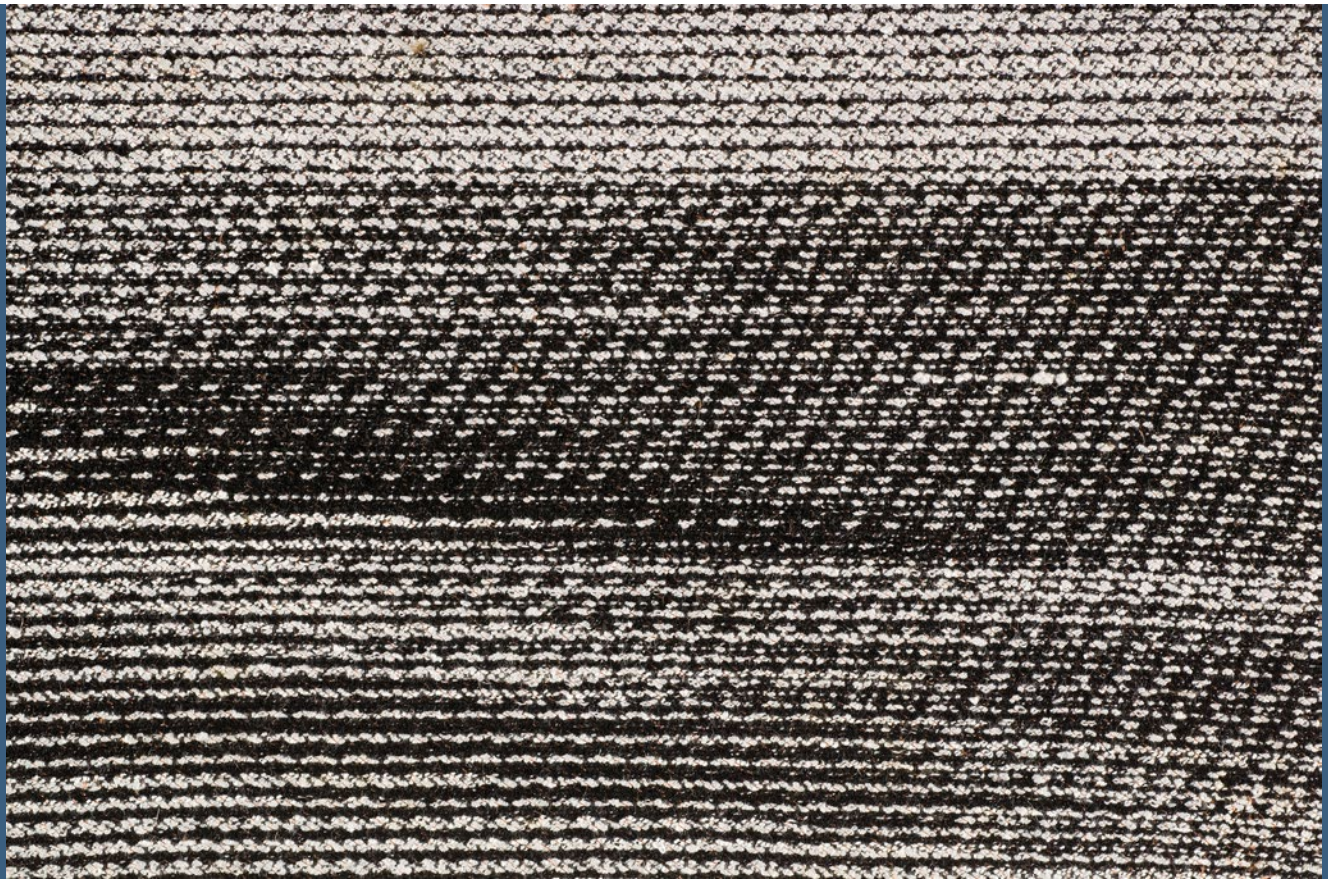
Tot plegat

Members of the Circuit were aware of the need to bring this legacy to a wider audience and to demonstrate its true worth. And to show to everyone that an important part of the heritage generated by the textile industry over the years are the designs on paper, technical notes, sample-books ... which are sometimes thrown away out of ignorance.

Tot plegat offers a portrait of the Catalan textile heritage of the last century. A portrait assembled based on the tangible items in the possession of the three members of the museum circuit, and which provide an accurate picture of our industrial history.

Tot plegat is in four interrelated parts, which allow several complementary readings:

- A history of textile work with a selection of iconic objects of handmade and industrial production; their sources of inspiration, design, manufacture and sale.
- A history of textile design, marked by the key dates in the collective memory (the Universal Exhibition of 1888, modernism, the Second Republic, the post-war period, May 68, the new millennium, the present, and trends for the coming years).
- The history of certain companies which serve as reference points, with documents from a dozen firms in all subsectors – some of which remain pioneers in their field today.
- The landscapes created by textiles in our territory.



Mostra de cotó. Felio Comadran y Cia. Sabadell, 1904/1954. CDMT 11.72-12 (03).

The show ends with a reference to the subsectors which are the most dynamic today and present the most room for growth: children's and bridal fashion, and technical textiles.

The script and texts of *Tot plegat* were produced by James Douet, and the museum project is by Santi Artigas. Both have worked together with the signatories of this article. The exhibition will be presented at the Marès Museum in Arenys de Mar from spring until late 2015, then at the CDMT in Terrassa and the Premià del Mar Print Museum, and will then be available for display at member centres of the Local Museums Network of the province of Barcelona. The show represents an ideal opportunity to explain to the general public how the textile industry has developed and the role it has played in our culture, our landscape, our heritage, and our economy. We feel sure that *Tot plegat* will help to generate a greater sensitivity towards textile heritage. ●

Library novelties and news

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > ESPAÑOL

MAROC, COULEURS DÉSERT. Tissages contemporains des Aït Khebbach/ MOROCCO, DESERT COLOURS. Contemporary weaving of the Aït Khebbach

Arnaud Maurières, Éric Ossart, Marie-Bénédicte Kermogant
Photographs by Serge Anton

Ed. Mediafix, Clermont Ferrand, 2014. ISBN: 978-2-9538445-3-5

■ **Eulàlia Morral**

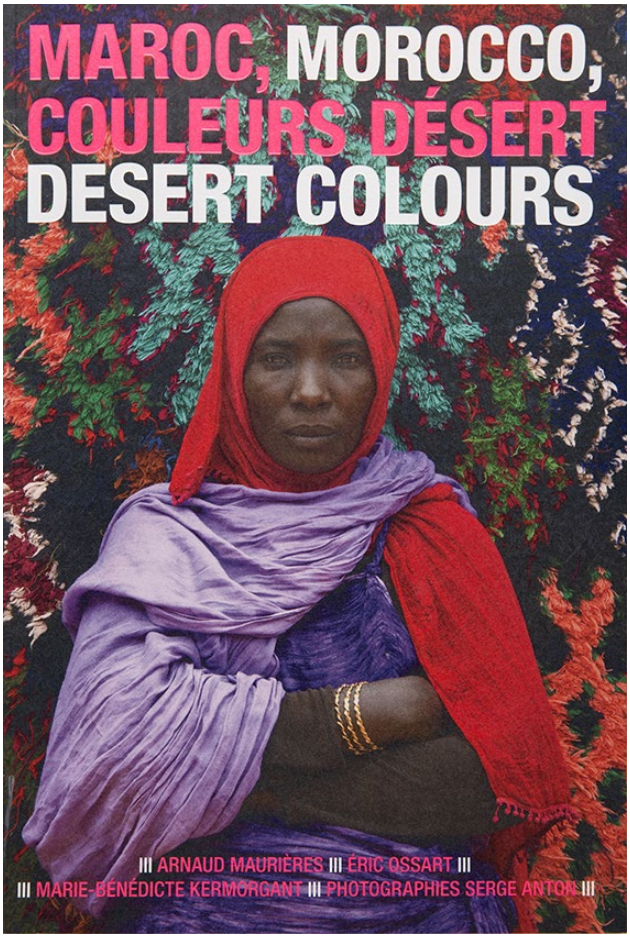
Once you open the cover of this book, there is no turning back.

For the beauty of its images, for the story it tells, but above all, for the warmth it conveys. When you reach the end, Fatima Oukharbouch, Touda Boumrour or any of the women featured in this story will seem as close as if they were part of your own family.

It is difficult to write a review of a work that primarily evokes feelings. The images define with incredible accuracy what words cannot convey, and the accompanying texts respect them noting down names, geographical references, technical details, small anecdotes ... the balance is perfect.

The Aït Khebbach are a Berber tribe formed in the sixteenth century in the southeast of the High Atlas. They lived in the desert plain between what is now Algeria and Morocco; when the border lines were drawn in 1956, they were grouped together in a much smaller territory in the southeast of Morocco, and adopted a sedentary lifestyle which they have followed ever since. They live off their cattle and the low level of agriculture that their water supply allows; the construction of a road between Rissani and Merzouga in 2000 has opened up some contact with tourism.

This is the background to the unexpected encounter between the authors and the art of Aït Khebbach women. These women no longer need to weave cloth to make their tents, and they began to use their looms to weave carpets – the floors of the houses are harder than the sand they had under the tents – and they discovered that by unravelling old sweaters they could incorporate coloured threads.



One by one, the book presents fourteen weavers from three generations. The pioneers are the most daring in terms of the use of colour; their daughters and daughters-in-law are more technically refined; and the granddaughters combine these two capacities. Weavers from five villages (Lahfira, Tafraout, Ighfnighir, Tazoulaït and Merzouga) express themselves in a language

that is personal and decorative but is tremendously consistent at the same time. Described by the authors as *Aït Khebbach style*, it was initially inspired by old Algerian carpets and bead necklaces worn at weddings but then developed in countless designs with checks and lozenges. A recent addition is the sign of the alphabet, a proud symbol of a distinct Berber identity.

From a chance meeting in Merzouga in April 2011, when Arnaud Maurières and Éric Ossart discovered the first woven carpets, a campaign of in situ researchers from the Musée Bargoin in Clermont-Ferrand, specialists in non-European textiles, and with the complicity of the weavers themselves and their families. This has made it possible to build up a collection of representative works which the Musée Bargoin acquired. The collection is currently on display in a travelling exhibition which was housed at the CDMT until March 2015. But above all, it has brought to light the capacity of a group of women living with almost nothing, in an unforgiving environment, who create true works of art from reused materials. A fitting tribute. ■

Library novelties and news

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > CATALÀ

(Im)perfezione

Museo del Ricamo e del Tessile

Valtopina 2014. Il merletto: tradizione e creativitá

■ **Neus Ribas**

The city of Valtopina is home to the Ricamo textile museum, devoted to embroidery and textiles. Each year it hosts a meeting of textile crafts including all varieties of textile techniques, with the support of the city council.

The meeting held in September 2014 included the exhibition entitled *(Im)perfezione,* a dialogue between ancient and contemporary creations. The exhibition presents the most important types of lace loaned by traditional antique dealers and private collectors, along with pieces produced by contemporary lace makers that combine with the traditional ones to reinvent old forms and uses. The precision and creativity of the works break the moulds of the past to explain how this "perfect" ancient art is felt and interpreted today.

The exhibition catalogue *(Im)perfezione* contains graphic information on all the exhibits. In this dialogue between the ancient and contemporary pieces, the book starts with an interesting introductory article on the lace used in male and female attire from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, when lace was a basic element of the wardrobe. Scholars believe that lace has its origins in the needlework performed in Venice in the late fifteenth century. Venetian merchants made lace a luxury item. Coveted by many, it became a matter of state when Colbert, minister of the French king Louis XIV, persuaded some Venetian lace makers to train French workers in the technique; soon afterwards, in 1665, the Royal Manufactures were founded in Paris.

The second half of the catalogue presents the creative and innovative work of lace makers who break down the rigidity of the traditional techniques and the "perfection" of the pieces of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that appear in the first part of the catalogue. Practitioners from various European countries – Italy, the UK, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Spain – create their lace work on the basis of their own experiences, reinterpreting traditional techniques or just experimenting with colour and other textures. These pieces are complemented by texts written by mathematicians, sociologists, musicians, and architects ... who may not seem to be directly connected to the craft, but who bring a new vision of a tradition with such profound roots in Europe. All in all, the catalogue provides a fascinating formula for the study of the value of traditional lace and the changes it is undergoing today. ■

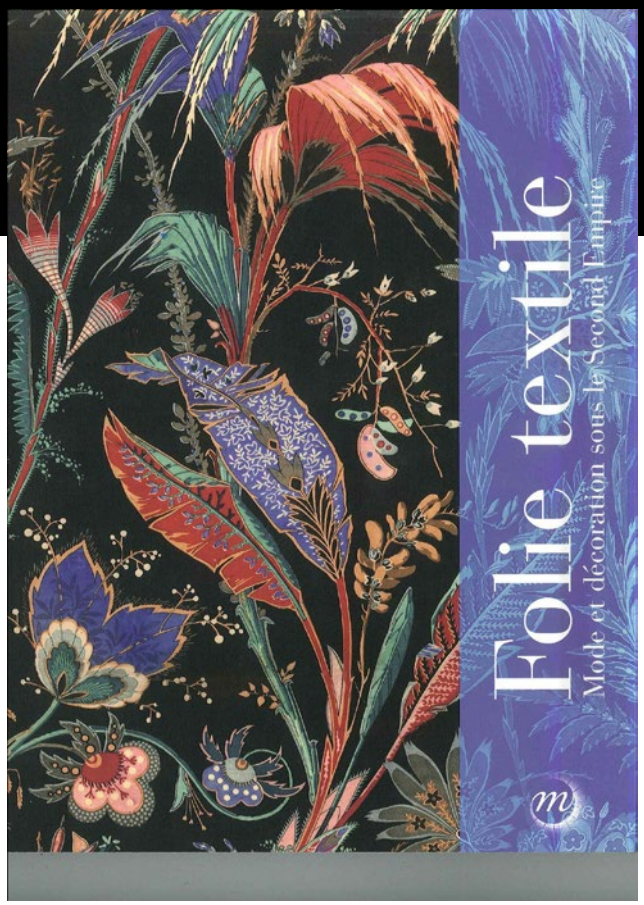
Library novelties and news

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > CATALÀ

Folie Textile. *Mode et décoration sous le Second Empire*

Catalogue of the exhibition at the Château de Compiège and the Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes de Mulhouse.

ISBN 978-2-7118-6087-6



Assumpta Dangla

Textile art developed at an unprecedented pace during the Second Empire (1852-1870), a period marked by constant technical innovations. The innovations introduced in the arts and industry sparked a true *folie textile*. The aim of this exhibition was to display the richness of these fabrics and their technological advances, and also to serve as inspiration for our contemporaries.

The catalogue features contributions from museum directors and curators, textile historians, and restorers from three institutions that preserve collections of great value: the Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes of Mulhouse, the Musée national du Palais de Compiègne and the Musée des Tissus and Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Lyon. The exhibits come from the collections of Mulhouse and Compiège, although the more fragile pieces in the Mulhouse collection are only on display in their place of origin.

The text of the catalogue is divided into four main parts. It starts with an "ABC" of textiles, with pieces from Dubois-Brinkmann, Maximilien Durand, and Anne-Rose Bringel on issues as varied as the iconography of fabrics, new synthetic dyes, and industrial developments of the mid to late nineteenth century. These contributions give an overview of a period marked by constant change.

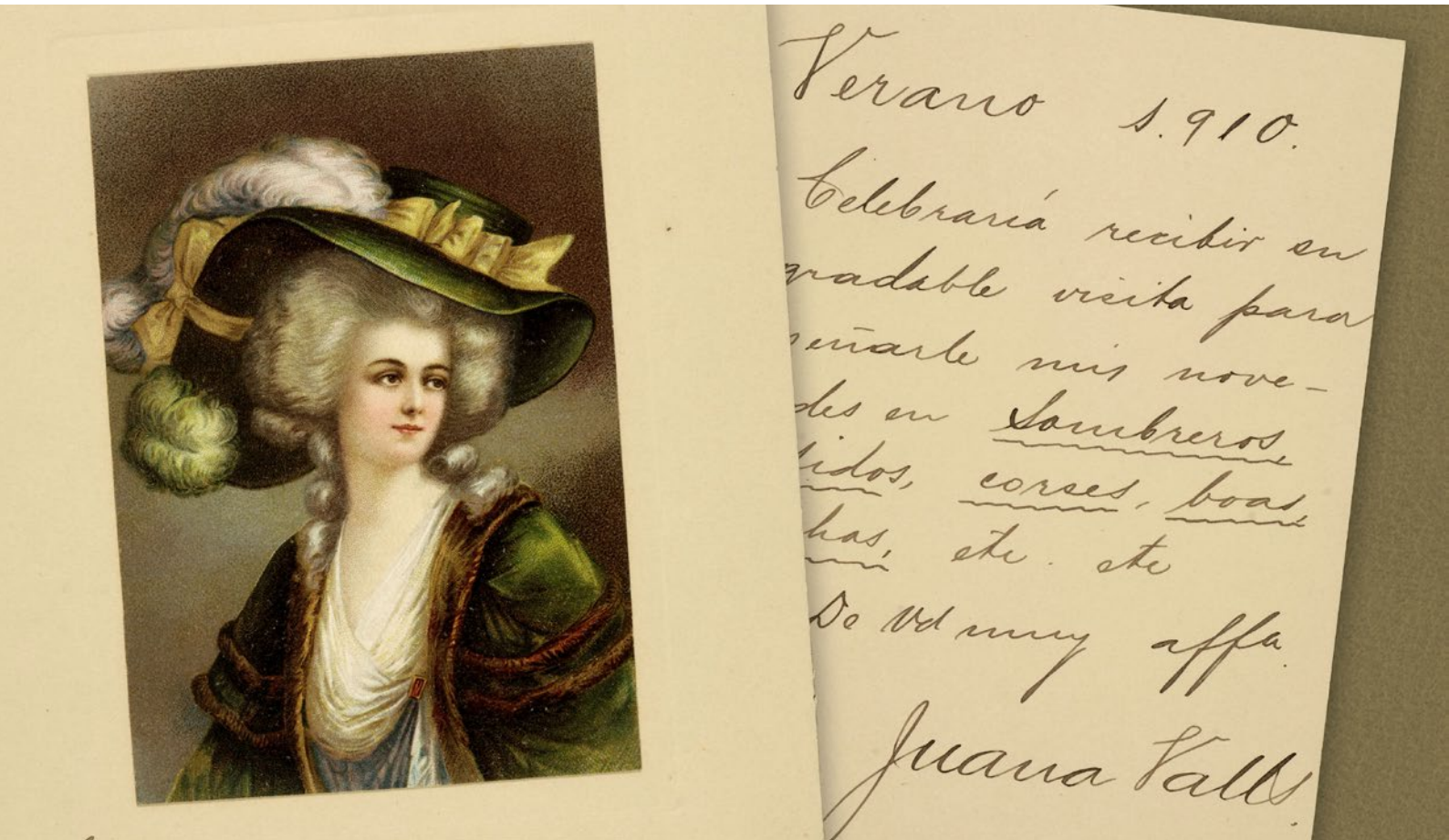
The section "Du textile à l'objet" explores the use of fabrics for both clothing and interior decoration. The third part, "Le textile à la cour impériale", offers an in-depth study of some of the outstanding pieces on display, their luxurious materials and technical perfection.

The catalogue concludes with a selection of exhibits, a total of 150 works collected in the volume: clothing, accessories, and fabrics for interior decoration and upholstered furniture. Another section shows the iconography of the works, and finally a selection of items related to the manufacture of fabrics.

At the end there is a technical glossary and a comprehensive bibliography, the result of the co-operation between the two museums and of a long tradition in the study of the history of textiles. ■

November 2015

Summary Datatèxtil 33



Circuit de Museus Tèxtils i de Moda a Catalunya

Twice-yearly magazine published by
the Circuit of Textile and Fashion Museums of Catalonia.

Coordination
Sílvia Carbonell Basté

Management committee
Eulàlia Morral, Neus Ribas

Translation
International House

Subscription and advertising
Centre de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil, Salmerón, 25. 08222 Terrassa (Spain).
Tel. 34 93 731 52 02 - 34 93 731 49 80
E-mail: scarbonell@cdmt.es

Design adaptation, layout and digital edition
TxeniGil.com

Date of publication
Mai 2015

Dep. Leg. B 26.083/1998
ISSN 1139-028X

www.circuitmuseustextils.cat

biblioteca

Centre de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil · Terrassa

www.cdmt.es