

A Study on the Embroidery of Palestinian Costume

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Abstract

Today's advanced transport and mass media enables people to access easily and frequently to traditional costumes from different countries in the world. Consequently, fashion designers who are fascinated by the variety and beauty of traditional costumes, tend to adapt them to modern fashion design.

The continuous study of traditional costumes at such time contains a meaning as a source of inspiration for the creation of a new fashion design. Therefore, among various costumes of the world, this study will focus on the costume of Palestine, that is situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa and has exchanged various historical cultures with other cultural regions. It, especially, expects to provide a unique idea in the material modification field of today's fashion design by examining mainly the embroidery ornament which is the most distinctive feature of Palestinian costume.

The conclusion was revealed that Palestinian women's costume largely consists of embroidered silk and cotton garments with a V-slitted square panel (gabeh) attached to the chest part. And a variety of luxurious embroidery was employed to emphasize different parts of the dress.

These embroideries differ from area to area. Especially the embroidery from Bethlehem was well-known in many places and influenced those of other regions.

Key Words : traditional costumes, Palestinian costume, embroidery, material modification.

I. Introduction

Costumes feature ups and downs as they occur, grow, flow and change helping the existence of the human body, expressing the human individuality, and making efficient life for individuals and groups. During a certain stage of such process, some costumes extinct for good, while others reach to a point where the development of the phenomena gradually slows down and eventually comes to a standstill. A costume formed at the standstill might settle

down in certain place for a long period of time to become the very native costume of the place, which contains the manners and customs of native people¹⁾.

The unique costume that has survived for a long time, may be transmitted to other races in different places through cultural exchanges and employed in a changed form according to their preference and use. Especially, today's advanced transport and mass media enables people to access easily and frequently to traditional costumes from different countries in the world. Consequently, fashion designers who are fas-

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¹⁾ Hwang, C. 1995. *Traditional Costumes of the World*, Suhak-Sa. p.23.

cinated by the variety and beauty of traditional costumes, tend to adapt them to modern fashion design. A national costume no longer stays in one place, rather it is accepted as an exotic style by other nations creating a popular global fashion trend that everyone enjoys.

The continuous study of traditional costumes at such time contains a meaning as a source of inspiration for the creation of a new fashion design. Therefore, among various costumes of the world, this study will focus on the costume of Palestine, that is situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa and has exchanged various historical cultures with other cultural regions. It, especially, expects to provide a unique idea in the material modification field of today's fashion design by examining mainly the embroidery ornament which is the most distinctive feature of Palestinian costume.

The first part of the thesis will examine the Palestinian costume as a whole. And embroidery, the main fashion ornament of the region will be summarized by subregion based on Rajab's book "Palestinian Costumes", and finally the embroidery techniques frequently employed in the region will be discussed. For the purpose, previous studies related to the literatures of the region's traditional culture were referred to, and photographs as a visual data were provided to help readers' understanding.

I must make clear that the study relies heavily on Rajab's writing since it is the only work which comprehensively includes rare data on Palestinian costume.

II. Palestinian Costume

I. General Perspectives

In the Bible, Palestine is recorded as Canaan, a name originated from Canaanites who first inhabited here about 2000 BC. The current name of Palestine stemmed from the Philistines who migrated to the region in 1175BC. Pale-

stine refers to the whole eastern district of the Mediterranean with Israel as a central point, which includes the area from the western Mediterranean to the eastern Jordan River, and from the northern Israel and Lebanese border to the southern Gaza district.

Palestinians comprise city-dwellers, villagers (Fellahin) and nomadic Beduins in the desert. They are mainly Muslims with some Jews. In spite of different religions, their traditional life styles are very similar, and the Beduins, especially, are found to maintain a great deal of their own tradition. The Beduins lived wondering around the vast desert and grazing cattle in the fields, while city-dwellers made a living by agriculture or commercial activities².

Historical facts, remains, or information of Palestine are hard to obtain, since Palestine no longer exists on the planet with the Israeli independence, and the long-lasting conflict between Israel and Palestine still remains. Thus, we will refer to the life style and costume of the nomadic Beduins who still have a great deal of traditional elements³.

2. The Features of Costume

Palestinian women's costume consists of a great deal of embroidered silk or cotton dresses. The embroidery works found in traditional costumes of the regions of Palestine, Syria, and Jordan were produced by both the Fellahin and Beduins. Among them, the oldest works remained today are from the mid-19th century, since embroidery is difficult to preserve for a great length of time.

Common people, though with financial shortage, had a rich spiritual world, so that they produced fine woodwork, weaving, and embroidery. The Beduins expressed their creativity in weaving and embroidery while adapting themselves well to their nomadic life and severe environment. Clothes were made of natural material that were obtained in the surroundings

² K. Bak, "A Study of Palestinian Women's Costume", *Costume*, 19. (1992): 126.

³ C. Oh, "Costume Study of the Near East (I)", *Costume*, 19(1992): 176.

to fit their living environment as a functional item.

The foundation fabrics for embroidery in Palestinian area vary including cotton, jute and silk that are either dyed with indigo or black, or plain. Generally, embroidery are used to emphasize the square-shaped chest panel (slitted in V-shape), sleeves, the hem of various length, and the back of the dress⁴.

Palestinian embroidery is classified according to the geographic regions. Weir (1989) points out that continuous transition followed by changing environment is observed even in the seemingly static Middle East, and that such transition is reflected on the costume. The people, however, try to maintain their tradition in regard to the position and part of embroidery motifs on wedding robes which differ from area to area. The quality of embroidery depends on the finish of stitches and the number of repeated motifs in a certain part⁵.

III. The Embroidery of Palestinian Costume

I. Characteristics of Embroidery by Area

1) Nablus-Jenin area

Embroidery is hardly found in this area's costume. The reason is that the women did not have time to embroider as they had to look after their children and do housework as well as help their husband in the fields in this agricultural society. The lack of embroidered ornament in the costume does not mean they were indifferent to clothing, but instead, they enhanced the design using unusual material and luxurious striped patterns.

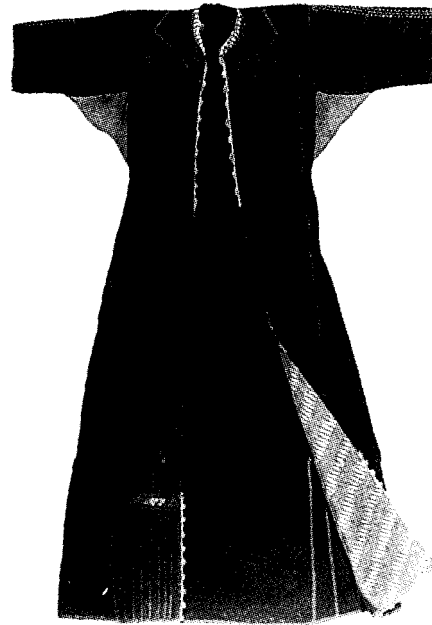
The women in the city of Nablus wore a blue or black long-sleeved dress with a cashmere sash around their waist. In summer, a white linen dress having big wing sleeves with red,

light yellow or green striped bands around them, and sometimes the chest part was decorated in a few patchwork and running-stitch. This shows simple but rather fresh look of the costume when compared with those from other parts of Palestine.

2) Galilee Area

Embroidered garments which had been worn both in the south and north of Galilee at the same time, however, mostly disappeared at the early 20th century. According to Canon Mansour's records in 1908, embroidered coats or garments were worn until the mid-19th century, and afterwards, baggy trousers and Turkish style long coats without embroidery were accepted by most people.

The costumes preserved in museums reveal that Galilean women employed more embroidery



<Fig. 1> Galilee Coat:jillayeh
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.34)

⁴ Sheila Paine, *Embroidered Textile*, (Thames and Hudson, 1995), 28.

⁵ Patricia L. Baker, *Islamic Textiles*, (British Museum Press, 1995), 169.

methods than those of other areas, including cross-stitch, satin-stitch, hem-stitch and stem-stitch as well as applique. These techniques display geometrical patterns in various colors and effects.

The Galilean wedding coat (Fig. 1), called jillayeh, is one of the most beautiful garments with a great deal of applique and embroidery. The women wore a white chemise as undergarment, and when working, tied the dress upwards using a belt or sash, thus revealing tight embroidered trousers underneath. Everyday coats were embroidered either very little or a little, and sometimes a few applique in a contrasting color was done at the front slit.

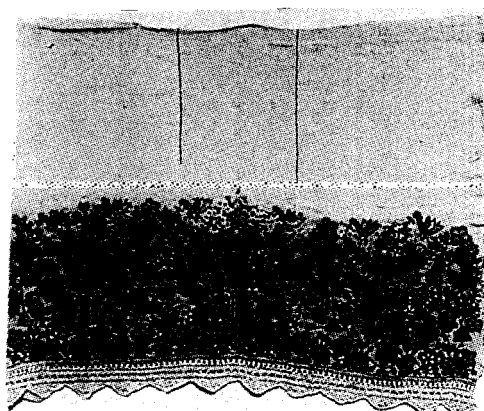
Especially in Palestine, beautiful and impressive hats decorated with silver and gold coins, beads, and small pieces of silver were worn, but only before wedding as a symbol of the bride's wealth.

3) Bethlehem Area

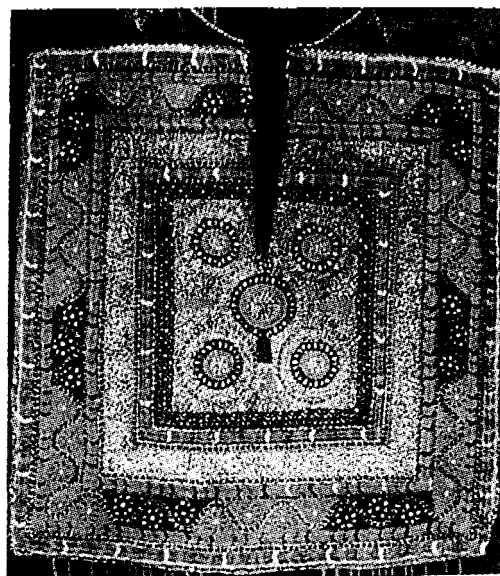
The embroideries of Bethlehem and its neighboring villages (Bayt Jala and Bayt Sahour) not only are very unique in their style, but they also were provided in the market by women who professionally produced customized embroidery works. The embroidery of Bethlehem characteristically shows the form of couching work in gold or silver threads. Curved-line designs were satin-stitched in glossy silk thread of light red, yellow, green, or purple colors, and patterns of leaves or circles were mainly used. The Tareq Rajab museum possesses a head veil whose end part is decorated in a great deal of floral satin-stitch (Fig. 2). The hat shows a little bird and sequins (Gold coins used in ancient Venice ; small round metal pieces used for garment ornament) attached on the design.

Full-blown flowers and leaves growing creepers were embroidered on the chest panels (gabbeh) of the works of Bethlehem embroiderers (Fig. 3).

Red and yellow pieces of Syrian heremsi silk were added to the sides and sleeves of Bethlehem dresses and beautifully embroidered.



<Fig. 2> Bethlehem Headveil
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.43)



<Fig. 3> Bethlehem Gabbeh
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.39)

The embroiderers used such technique freely without drawing a pattern on the foundation.

Both long and short jackets, affected by Turkish military, were worn frequently. Bethlehem women wore a jacket made of fabrics woven in the city daily, and in special occasions, a taqsireh (short jacket) decorated with couch-work in gold and silver threads.

In the mid-19th century, the wedding gown



<Fig. 4> Bethlehem Bride
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.42)

(Fig. 4) of Bethlehem were produced with its sleeves woven in red and green striped silk, and yellow striped silk by turns, and its seams connected in cretan-stitch. And the taqsireh, worn on the gown, was decorated in luxurious gold thread. On the wedding day, the bride wore a gold, silver or copper hat, a symbol of her wealth, which was fixed by the zenaq (chin-chain).

4) Jerusalem Area

The popular dress of Bethlehem area is called tobe abu qutbeli (Fig. 5). It was made of big patches of red or light green silk or velvet. The gabeh (chest panel), embroidery ornament used here is assumed to be originated from Bethlehem.

In villages like Lifta and Malha, a dress called tobe ghabani (Fig. 6) was especially popular. The dress was made of cotton woven in Aleppo, and was characteristically decorated with flowers in yellow or gold thread chain-stitch.

Jerusalem costume features a compromising



<Fig. 5> Jerusalem Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.53)

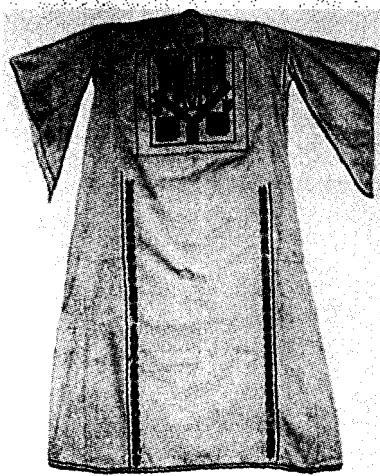


<Fig. 6> Jerusalem Thob : ghabani
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.39)

style with attractive embroidery and combination of various textile material, though it does not display a unique style as different styles from many surrounding areas were adapted.

5) Ramallah Area

Ramallah is another important area of embroidery that shows a very distinctive trend. Ramallah tobess feature simple and subdued patterns in cross-stitch worked on red silk.



<Fig. 7> Ramallah Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.57)

Ramallah people were originated from Shoubak in Jordan about 300 years ago, and therefore it is assumed that their own embroidery methods were brought from there as well.

Ramallah wedding dresses (jillayeh) of the late 19th century were luxuriously embroidered on dark indigo dyed linen. A few jillayeh remained in the 19th century were decorated



<Fig. 8> Ramallah Winter Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.60)

with cross-stitch and double-stitch in sheen red thread using a motif of tall palm tree on the whole part of back and the skirt front, and sometimes this pattern was used for sleeves too.

The white linen tobe (Fig. 7) is the typical example of Ramallah embroidery, with the chest panel directly embroidered not attached on the dress. The V-shaped pattern was called "kaus (arch)" in Ramallah and "gelayed (necklace)" in other regions. <Fig. 8> shows a winter tobe made of black linen whose sleeve line started to become straight in 1930. Its characteristic is the Bethlehem couching work on the sleeves.

6) Hebron Area

Traditionally Hebron is one of the oldest cities in Palestine. It is not in Hebron but in neighboring villages where most of costumes with delicate, beautiful and luxurious embroidery were produced.

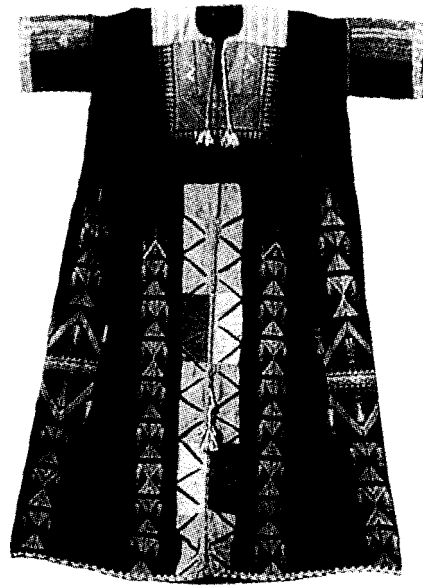
The garments of Hebron city are made of dark blue material, and a veil was lowered as in the same length as the whole dress with its both ends sewn together.

Hebron dresses, normally made of indigo dyed flax, were cut in a similar way to those of Ramallah, and had long sleeves. A far greater deal of cross-stitch embroidery were employed to completely cover the front as well as to vertically decorate the sides and the back of the dress. The wedding gown (Fig. 9) of Hebron area features a modified palm tree motif on the appliqued silk. The yoke of this area is larger than those of other areas, and was made of "atlas silk" (striped) produced in Syria, when no embroidery was laid. Wing sleeves also were made of Syrian silk with simple embroidery. Another feature of these garments is the hem which was decorated in fishbone-stitch at regular intervals on silk of various colors.

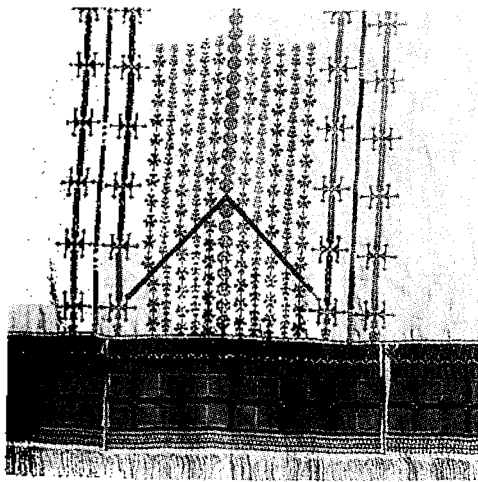
In Hebron, two kinds of unique head shawls were worn : shambar and ghudfeh. Of the two, ghudfeh (Fig. 10) was made of three long and narrow pieces of linen or pieces of cotton seamed up in cretan-stitch or fishbone-stitch, and heavily embroidered mostly with a rich



<Fig. 9> Hebron Jilayah
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.67)



<Fig. 11> Bayt Dajan Jilaych
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.78)



<Fig. 10> Hebron Ghudfeh
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.75)

tassel attached at the one end. This was embroidered by the woman who was to marry, and sometimes the tassel was made by the bridegroom.

7) Majdal-Isdud-Jaffa-Bayt Dajan Area

Coastal Majdal is known for weaving and dyeing. Especially its unique striped textile

fabrics were used in all parts of Palestine and were even more popular in seaside villages. The costume of this area is beautifully decorated but less embroidered when compared with other palces. It has a narrow V-shaped neck and long straight sleeves, and the embroidery is enhanced by the dark foundation material with lightly-shinning purple, magenta or green stripes. According to Jan MacDonald (1938), it is common for most garments from coastal areas to have very little embroidery.

Bayt Dajan was a village of weaving and embroidery. And neighboring Jaff, the only orange-producing village in the region, distinctively employed orange flower patterns among other embroidery motifs. In Bayt Dajan, a bride made clothes and laid embroidery by herself before her wedding. Among her works, the most important item was the blue linen dress (jilayah) embroidered in red silk with the short sleeves and skirt front closing decorated in red, yellow and green silk patchwork (Fig. 11).

8) Gaza Area

Gaza and Majdal were the prosperous center

of weaving in Palestine. Although fine Syrian silk was used in many countries, the two were very important places with a long history of weaving tradition.

The costume of Gaza district, situated on the coastal plain, was used as usual motifs in all parts of Palestine. Unlike Hebron costume, it was embroidered very little and the dress, made of striped Majdal material, was cut much narrower than those of other places. The neck was V-shaped and the sleeves were tight and straight.

Gaza district's embroidery features mostly motifs such as criss-cross, muqass, mushut and hijab, which appeared mainly in a group of 3, 5 or 7. When Bethlehem couching work was at the peak of its prosperity in the 1930s, the jllayeh was decorated with applique normally attached to the front panel in couching. And the applique was arranged in 3~5 mihrab stripes. Around the 19th century, trousers and jllayeh with a split skirt were embroidered far more than those of the 20th century. Although the embroidery is inferior in its delicacy, its beautiful style harmonizes well with green, purple and orange stripes.

The Gaza tobe shown in <Fig. 12> is made of cotton woven in Majdalis. It displays cypress



<Fig. 12> Gaza Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.87)

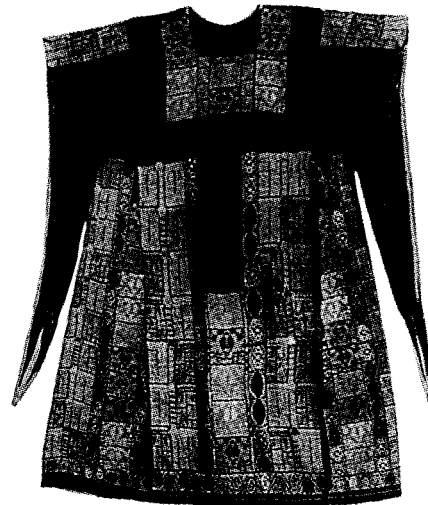
and arch patterns, and between the arches are cushion and comb patterns commonly used in the region.

9) Bir Seb'a and Sinai Area

Bir Seb'a is a desert area with few villages and Beduins populate in the area as in Tayaha and Terabin. The Bedu dress, called "abu redan (a dress with pointed sleeves)", has very long sleeves compared with those of others. The hem in <Fig. 13> is finished in slanting satin stitch that is also called Bedouin stitch.

Bedouin costume (abu erdan), preserved by the relaxing Muslim world, was very ample and loose in its style with long pointed wing sleeves to make the women tie them behind the shoulders when working. Black or dark blue material was used for the dress. The embroidery patterns of Beduins include palm trees, triangle motif of cypress, and nafnaf, a small desert flower that blossoms in spring. In addition, stars, the moon and scalloped quadrilaterals were very much prevailed. This area's garments were mostly embroidered in red and constructed with yellow, blue, green, violet, orange, and brown colors.

The cross-stitch and its colors of Tayaha



<Fig. 13> Bir Seb'a Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.90)



<Fig. 14> Bir Seb'a Costum
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.102)

symbolized women's status. Married women wore a dress with red embroidery while unmarried ones with blue. And when a widow or divorced woman was to marry again, she wore a dress with blue and red embroidery. The women of the Bir seb'a area were fond of personal ornaments. The burgo (face veil), mostly made of orange, black or white silk, was embroidered around its band, and was decorated with coins symbolizing the bride's wealth. Over this, the abayah (head-shawl) was draped, which was embroidered in red cross-stitch (Fig. 14).

2. Embroidery Techniques Employed

1) The Origin of Embroidery

It is assumed that the origin of embroidery was coincided with the creation of the needle prior to dyeing or pattern knitting. The reason is that a sewing pattern corresponds with the principle of embroidery, as the former always contains some spots of design. Beads embroidery

appears early as in the remains from the early Dynasty of the ancient Egypt in the 30th century BC, and upholstery or tent embroidery is found in those from the New Kingdom period in the 10th century BC.

In the meantime, a great deal of very delicately worked embroideries is found among the remains from Assyria. Such techniques gave birth to a unique form of embroidery in Asia Minor and furthermore were transmitted to Greece and Rome to become everyday craft of women there. The Copts from the end of ancient times left fine pieces of embroidery along with textile fabrics. Meanwhile, these techniques were transmitted to Byzantine and soon became the mother of medieval Europe's embroidery that was generated centering around monasteries, together with the Islamic techniques diffused from the Iberian peninsula.

From the end of the Middle Ages through modern times, embroidery has been considered as culture of a lady. The greatest period of embroidery was from the 16th to 18th centuries, when it became an essential art for ornaments that developed centering around courts. Although it suffered a temporary decline with modernization, it revived under the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement in the mid-18th century to come today. In modern times, embroidery is mass-produced by sewing machines⁶.

2) The Types of Embroidery

The types of embroidery can be classified by various criteria such as representation methods, foundation material, threads, origin countries, and place names. An embroidery may be classified differently depending on the way it is appreciated, and on the contrary, embroideries with the same technique may be called a totally different name based on production periods, origin countries, or used material.

(1) Classification by Representation Method

⁶ [http://my.nctian.com/~j\[1881\]/educal.html](http://my.nctian.com/~j[1881]/educal.html)

Embroidery can be divided into the free embroidery and fixed embroidery by representation method. Free embroidery is to express patterns in curved or straight lines without strand restriction, and this type includes Korean, Japanese, French, Russian embroideries. On the other hand, fixed embroidery produces a design by drawing threads through strand holes, therefore restricted by the strands. This type includes cross-stitch, Swedish embroidery, drawn thread work, hardanger work and Sudanese embroidery.

Most of embroidery types including free embroidery and fixed embroidery are flat embroidery, which is done on an evenly woven fabric. On the contrary, sokid embroidery is a method of expressing cubical designs by plaiting, gathering, or filling substance between two layers of fabric. This type includes smoking, pleating, shirring and quilting.

(2) Classification by Technique

This classification includes various stitch embroideries such as cross-stitch and outline-stitch ; cut embroidery such as cut work, eyelet work and open-work ; strand drawing embroidery such as drawn thread work and hardanger ; applique of fabric attaching ; smocking worked on pleats ; and machine embroidery.

(3) Classification by Weaving Method

It includes canvas embroidery, net embroidery, wheel embroidery, knitwork embroidery and velvet embroidery.

(4) Classification by Embroidery Thread

Embroidery threads are classified into silk, wool and gold groups by the quality of material. Also ribbon, cord, blade, and bead embroideries can be grouped. Or embroidery can be divided into color thread one and white one such as cut work, eyelet work and drawn thread work.

In addition, it can be called Byzantine, Renaissance, rococo or medieval embroidery

dependign on the origin country. Or a person's name can be used for a criterion as in Holbein work⁷⁾.

3) Techniques of Palestinian Embroidery

(1) Types of Employed Techniques

Cross-stitch is the most common type employed in almost every part of Palestine, by which a unique costume style of this area was generated(Fig. 15). Couching work in silk and gold thread cord was done in Bethlehem, while various techniques adapting from the similar motifs used in southern Palestine, were employed in Galilee area. The Beduin women of Negev desert also worked cross-stitch embroidery. Their works show a very similar style to that of southern Palestinians, as they adapted Palestinians' designs drawn based on their inspiration⁸⁾.

In addition, chain-stitch, cretan-stitch, corss-stitch, fishbone-stitch, hem-stitch, hem-stitch, satin-stich, stem-stitch and couching work were employed for various purposes.

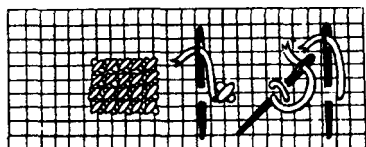
Couching work(Fig. 16) is the most simple technique executed in straight lines. The technique employes lines, outlines, borer lines and appliques. The work is done by fixing the thread tightly to prevent loosening or creasing.

Cretan-stitch(Fig. 17) is used to fill the face of foundation material or as a common line-stitch. The stitches are repeated from the right side to the left as being woven in the middle. Fishbone-stitch is very useful for decorating border margins. The stitches can be worked closely or at narrow intervals, or in a modified overlapping form.

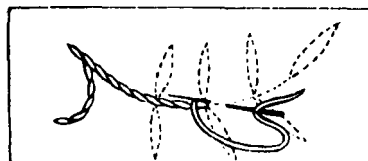
Hem-stitch(Fig. 18) is the most common technique to finish up the hem of embroidered material. stem-stitch(also known as crewel- or stalk stitch) is another simple but very useful method worked from the left side to the right. It makes a widely twisted stem shape, and to

⁷ <http://www.bcline.com/~ds2jec/kind.htm>

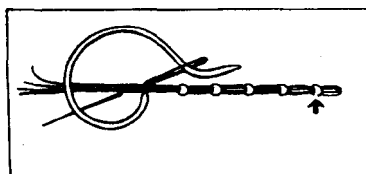
⁸ Shelagh Weir & Serene Shahid, *Palestinian Embroidery* (British Museum Publications Ltd., 1991), p.15.



<Fig. 15> Cross-stitch
(Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches, p.61)



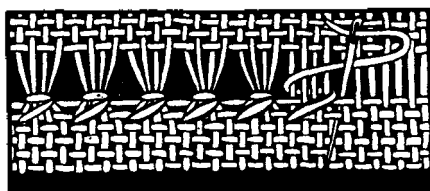
<Fig. 19> Stem Stitch
(Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches, p.190)



<Fig. 16> Couching
(Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches, p.54)



<Fig. 17> Cretan Stitch
(Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches, p.58)



<Fig. 18> Hem Stitch
(Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches, p.111)

narrow the shape, the needle must be drawn on the outline of embroidery pattern(Fig. 19)⁹.

(2) Embroidery Techniques Expressed in Costume

<Fig. 3> shows the Bethlehem gabeih that was worked in couching, the most characteristic technique of the region. It is decorated mainly in gold and silver thread couching with the satin-stitched floral patterns and fishbone-stitched border margin. The Jerusalem tobe in <Fig. 5>, which was sold in Jerusalem, has the cretan-stitched seam and a chest panel of Bethlehem embroidery style. The winter tobe of Ramallah in <Fig. 8> also shows the Bethlehem couching worked on the sleeves. The Hebron jillayeh of <Fig. 9> has the hem finished up in various colored fishbone-stitch. <Fig. 10> is another ghudfeh from Hebron which seamed up in satin-stitch.

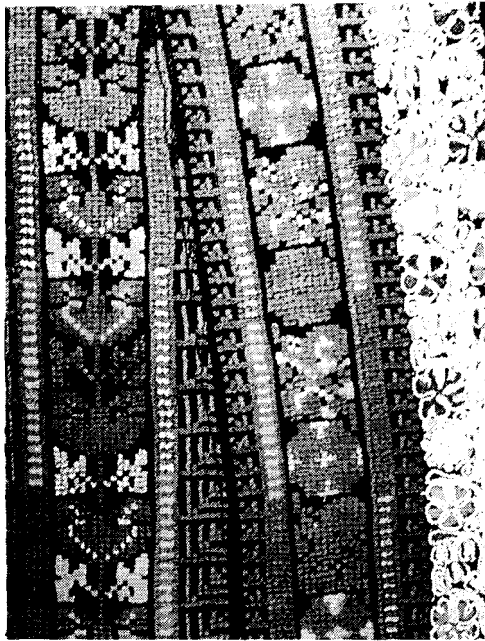
The ghudfeh of Bayt Dajan in <Fig. 11> displays an appliqued skirt and cross-stitched chest and back panels. As for the Bir Seb'a tobe of <Fig. 13>, the hem is worked in slanting satin stitch, commonly known as Bedouin stitch.

The dress chest panel in <Fig. 20> is assumed to be the product of Beit Ummar, situated between Bethlehem and Hebron, in the early 1920s. It shows gold thread couching for which Bethlehem was famous. And <Fig. 21> is the side detail of Beit Dajan dress, which was also worked in Bethlehem style couching and cross-stitch¹⁰.

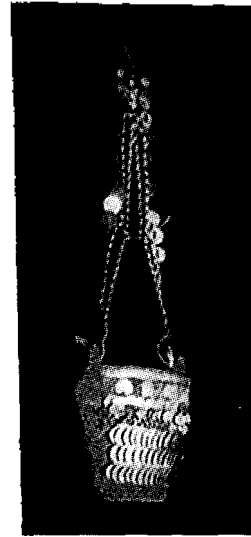
⁹ Mary Thomas, *Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches* (Gramercy Publishing Company: New York, Year), 54, 58, 97, 111, 189.



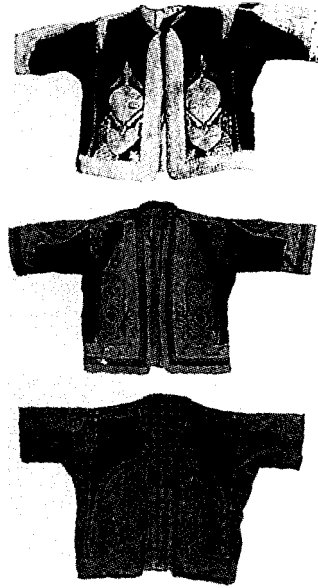
<Fig. 20> Beit Ummar Chest Panel : couching
(*Palestinian Embroidery*, p.8)



<Fig. 21> Beit Dajan Dress : couching & cross-stitch
(*Palestinian Embroidery*, p.8)



<Fig. 22> Bethlehem Shatweh
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.43)



<Fig. 23> Bethlehem Taqsireh
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.46)

In <Fig. 22>, a Bethlehem hat, called shatweh, is embroidered in various colored cross-stitch

¹⁰ Shelagh Weir & Serene Shahid, *op. cit.*, p.9, 12, 13.



<Fig. 24> Bayt Dajan Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.80)



<Fig. 25> Bir Seb'a Thob
(*Palestinian Costume*, p.95)

and couching work from the top to the flap with a hook for chin-chain fastening at both sides. The Bethlehem wedding jacket (taqsireh) in <Fig. 23> is lavishly decorated in gold and silver threads. A longer jacket without embroidery was worn at normal times. The tobe of Bayt Dajan area in <Fig. 24> reveals the great influence of Bethlehem embroidery. The velvet yoke, sleeve sides and skirt were embroidered in

couching. The Bir Seb'a tobe of <Fig. 25> has village type short sleeves, and is completely covered with embroidery at the front as well as the back. The embroidery was done mainly in red thread.

IV. Conclusion

Each nation and its unique long-surviving costume become known to different parts of the world as a result of today's advanced transport and mass media. Fashion designers throughout the world, who are inspired by the variety and beauty of traditional costumes, tend to adapt them for their creation of new fashion designs. The recreated traditional costumes no longer stay in one place, but rather, are worn as exotic styles by the public and thus become part of modern fashion.

This study, among various traditional costumes, focused on the costume of Palestine, situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, that has generated its own style by exchanging various cultures and influences with other cultural regions.

It was revealed that Palestinian women's costume largely consists of embroidered silk and cotton garments with a V-slitted square panel (gabeh) attached to the chest part. And a variety of luxurious embroidery was employed to emphasize different parts of the dress.

These embroideries differ from area to area. Especially the embroidery from Bethlehem was well-known in many places and influenced those of other regions. The greatest feature of Bethlehem embroidery is gold thread couching work, and the sheen gabeh with a motif of flower garden is very impressive. Ramallah, another important place of embroidery, produced cross-stitch works with simple and subdued patterns.

In addition, a great number of embroidery techniques was employed especially in Galilee area, while in Hebron, the dress was covered with cross-stitch embroidery at the front with its sides and back decorated vertically. The unique head shawls (shambar and ghudfeh) were also

richly embroidered in Hebron area.

The costumes of coastal areas were commonly lack of embroidery. Majdal, however, was famous for unique striped textile fabrics and dyeing, And in Bir Seb'a and Sinai, Beduin garments were found, which were mostly embroidered in red thread symbolizing the women's status with the color.

Various embroidery techniques with the basic cross-stitch, were used in garments being greatly harmonized with the foundation material in Palestine. Especially, the embroidery laid on wedding gowns were luxurious and beautiful as a result of a long preparation. They still make an effort to preserve their traditional methods.

Embroidery is a long historical ornament that has existed with the human costume from the time sewing started with the newly invented needle. It not only decorates a garment but perfects the design by enhancing the feature of the garments. New styles of embroidery will continue to emerge in future costume, as it gives great effects according to the position, amount and technique of employed embroidery.

As this thesis is limited only to the embroidery of Palestinian area, I expect further studies

will be executed to compare it with the embroideries of neighbouring Africa, Europe and Asia.

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