Turkish *Oya*

By

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V. 2
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THESIS

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SOURCES

The only limit to shape and form, to subject matter, must be in the creator's imagination and in what one's community finds acceptable.

In Turkey, people's passion for flowers, their close observation of nature, has been a rich source to draw from in creating oya forms. There is the story of an Ottoman sultan, Ahmet III, whose grand vizir, Ibrahim Pasha, a

> bulbomaniac, devised new inventions to set off tulip's beauties--he illuminated (them) with thousands of small wax tapers, attached to the stems of the flowers or fixed with wires in the ground, whilst others were fastened to the backs of small tortoises, that moved constantly about among the moss and leaves, astonished at the novel purposes to which they were applied.
>
> --Charles White
> Three Years in Constantinople
> Vol. I, p. 46

It is from a long tradition that Turks have cared so enthusiastically about flowers. Sultans have been painted sniffing a flower. Young men walk down the street with a posy at their nose. Today it does not seem unnatural that street sellers of flowers and plastic flowers have a ready market. (Plate 52)

One feels a sensitive response to nature and beauty in the act of trying to create, in creating oya. Needlelace is most commonly that of familiar flowers, hundreds of species--of growth patterns closely observed--plum flowers, daisies, mimosa, even fleeting wild flowers. Needlelace flowers developed from looking at a flower, not from sketches of flowers or from diagrams in pattern books. Flowers in nature have

Plate 52. Street seller of plastic flowers.

Istanbul.

been watched, lived with, openly imitated, their life celebrated. Oya-makers have simply converted something from nature into another medium. The lack of sweet fragrance, the feel, the texture are the only clues that the "imitation" is a step removed from the real. But oya flowers, which in shape are their natural forms, cause one to wonder if the needlelace petals are growing or if life has just gone out of them. One doesn't think of these as artificial flowers. They are not crude, simple flowers but detailed and elaborate ones; nonperishable flowers--not like cut flowers put into a vase without water or wild flowers gathered on a windy day, clutched and wilted before the hand stops gathering. But the materials are not alive; the life quality comes when they are worn and when in movement--beating against a woman's cheeks, her shoulders, or her back. One comes to feel that flowers can grow so like oya; that oya is only a paraphrase of a flower.

In addition to ideas for oya, nature has frequently suggested appropriate scale. Neatly done needlelace flowers are sometimes exactly the same size they had in nature, in dimensions, close to their appearance in the photographs. I've seen nothing in oya giant size, really out of scale, of heavy excess weight, though Prof. Kenan Özbel refers to such a piece once seen, years ago, in a house in Amasya, near the Black Sea coast. Most often, there is a more or less standard size which doesn't vary according to the proportions of a person who would wear oya.

Trees too, not just flowers, are found in oya, especially the cypress tree, so graceful as it sways in the wind over tombstones in cemeteries. Birds and butterflies, caught in flight, appear. Objects such as brushes (Plate 53) or mustaches made recently, seem an amusing

Plate 53. Needlelace of brushes.

Collection of Nimet Özmutaf, Istanbul.

surprise in needlelace. An imaginary delicate palace broom is a cinderella-like yearning when viewed in a simple home. (Plate 54) When a village woman daily makes bread, she uses a metal scraper, a kazıyacak, to remove sticky dough from fingers. (Plate 55) That kitchen device, in shape fanning outward, is a natural oya form. (Plate 56) An especially playful idea is expressed in tiny stairs for a cat, called kedi merdiven, of dyed wool. (Plate 57) Women would wear such oya in southwestern Turkey where men would wear wool oya modeled after a saw, testere. (Plate 58)

Endless other names, examples of oya, suggest but a few additional sources, familiar, recognizable shapes: teeth of a mouse, sıçan dişi; a swallow's tail, kırlangıç kuyruğu; (other tails are of the turkey or the lion). There is oya for tiny living creatures: snails, salyangoz, and crabs, yengeç. (Plate 59) Parts of the body are found: eyelashes, kirpik, and women's fingers and fingernails, hanım tırnağı. And fruit: pomegranate, nar; mulberry, dut (Plate 60); orange, portakal; even parsley, maydanoz. Other shapes of objects, too, are found: earrings, küpe; sword, kılıç; sugar cubes, kesme şeker; and nightingale's nest, bülbül yuvası. Scenes are depicted, most commonly mountains, hills, buildings, and bridges.

Several of these names come from examples I saw at the Kütahya Museum in western Anatolia. Sometimes in museums, individual oya flowers are shown, most often silk needlelace flowers. Museum personnel have decided which ones are special, certainly not the everyday village type. A few have been chosen and cut out of context, formally mounted, labeled, categorized, devoid of the constant motion which they knew when worn on the edge of a scarf. As one walks, oya edging--no

Plate 54. Oya of palace brooms.

Umurbey village near Gemlik.

Plate 55. Bread dough and metal scraper for removing sticky dough from fingers.

Göllüce village near Iznik.

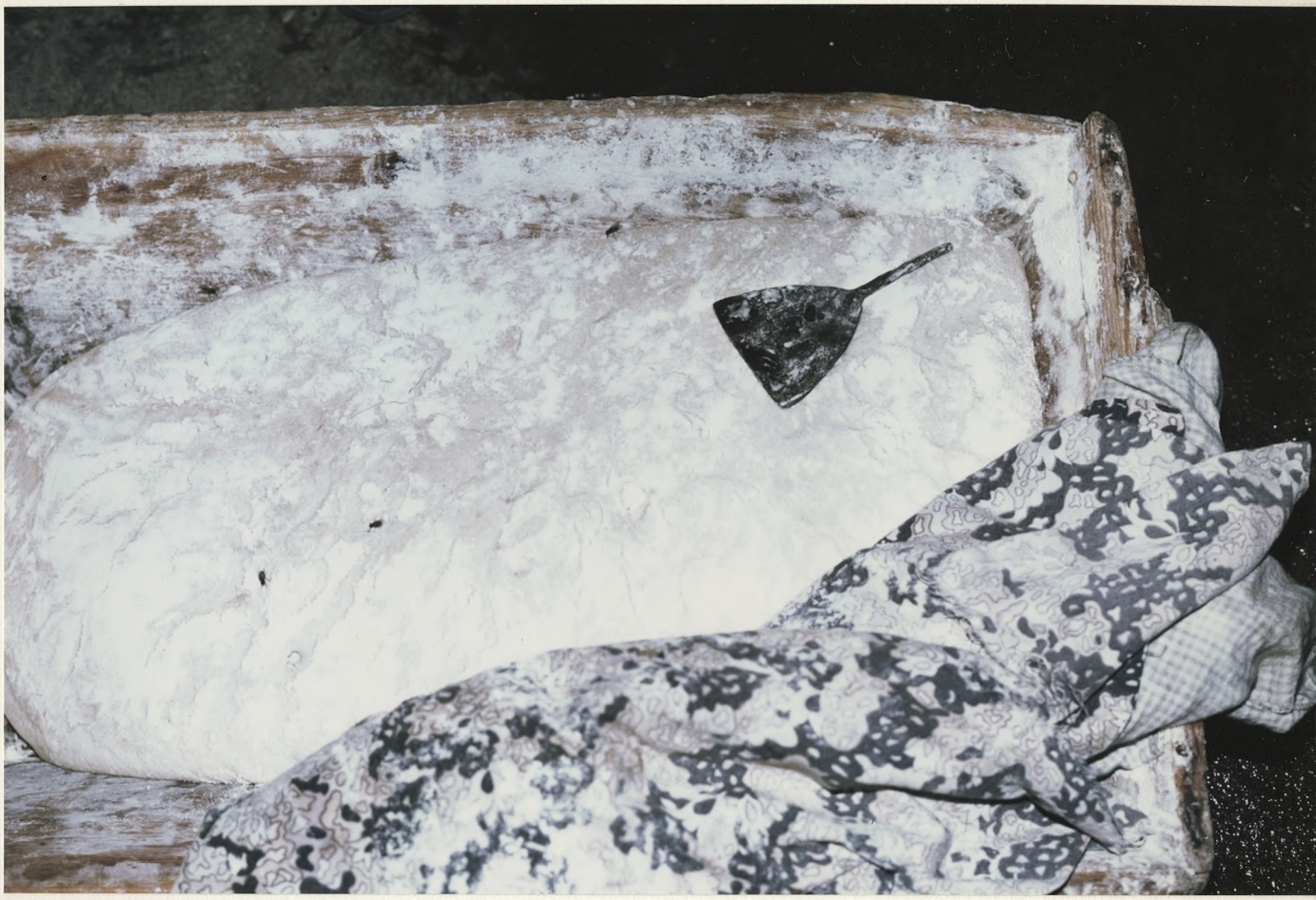


Plate 56. Oya in the shape of the metal scraper, Plate 55.

Collection of Muhsin Bilge, Iznik.

Plate 57. Kedi merdiven, "cat's stairs," substitute oya of dyed wool yarn twined to become tiny tassles.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Plate 58. Testere, "saw" oya.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Plate 59. Crab, yengeç, needlelace.

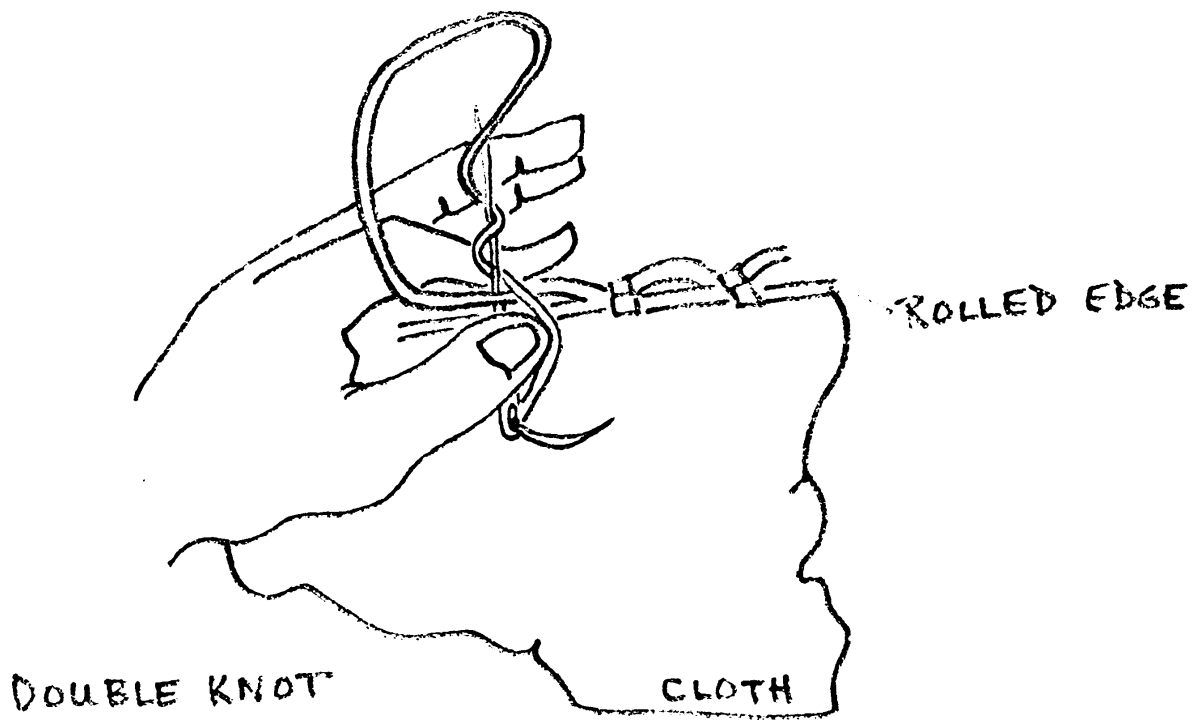
Collection of Muhsin Bilge, Iznik.

Plate 60. Mulberry, dut, needlelace.

Collection of Nimet Özmutaf, Istanbul.

matter what the material--with its own weightlessness, its movement in the wind, its private, almost silent sound make it seem especially a preserved specimen behind glass. If a scarf is worn folded over, the upper layer acts as a veil for the shifting oya beneath. There must be a sensuous delight in wearing oya, a pleasure in feeling more beautiful merely because of it. A toss of the head would instantly mean an exciting flutter of little flower volumes. But in museums, just one of many has been saved and presented separate from life. Seen this way, oya appears to be an isolated flower. However, when used, it is not a single but a multiple presentation, orchestrated single handedly, as one long unit.

THE NEEDLELACE STITCH



(After Rossbach's FRIVOLITÉ sheet distributed in class, included on p. 194)

Fig. 1

A single diagram shows that work usually moves in one direction, that a needle goes under the rolled hem or edge of the cloth, tacking it into place. Immediately over the needle passes the thread of the continuing row of stitches in progress. The thread coming from the eye of the needle is wrapped behind the needle, once for a single knot, twice for a fatter, double knot. An oyamaker pulls the thread straight out, away from her as she tightens the knot. If the thread, as it is

being pulled to form a knot is mistakenly pulled towards the oyamaker instead of away from her, then a knot--before it's wanted--is likely to occur. If not working on cloth, a base line is formed with a crocheted chain or a wire--anything which will act as a foundation for the initial row of stitches.

If dense needlelace is desired, double knots are made, always locking into place the horizontal thread (see following diagram) which has been carried to the top of the far side of the previous row of stitches. If more open work is wanted, the horizontal element is not carried across. A second row of stitches begins with the first stitch being knotted in the middle of the last stitch done on the previous row.

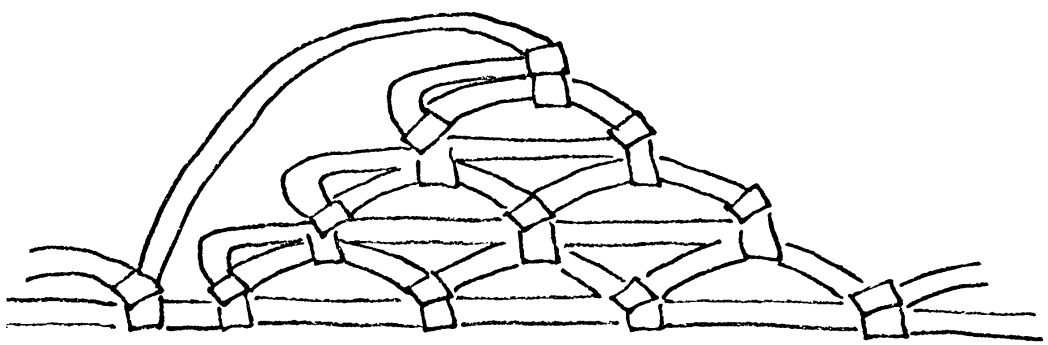


Fig. 2

Increasing is done by two stitches being made in the last stitch of the previous row, and decreasing by catching two loops of the previous row in one stitch of the row in progress. The process involves one needle, the simplest tool, and long thread, a single element becoming short and running out, a new one started, being manipulated. Old ends are simply locked in with the next thread. This single element moves around, never static, the entire finite thread being pulled through with the making of each stitch as in knotless netting.

Flowers are built stitch by stitch, as if measured, row upon row, new stitches taking their places in relation to those already established. Openings are left between stitches. With each stitch the textile expands, until finally the chain exists, flower by flower. The oyamaker builds these flower configurations, repeated sequences of units, measured units representing time, spacing them regularly, symmetrically in place, in precise arrangement. Between each flower shape, whether in needlelace, tatting, or crochet, are alternating smaller shapes--leaves, tiny flowers, pyramid shaped flower roots or rocks, a row of hills or mountains, a long bridge, or other geometric shapes. (Plates 61, 62, 63) Sometimes this space filler seems solid from one flower to the next; other times only a single leaf or two, widely spaced between the flowers is found. This "in between" arrangement and the flower represented can tell where the oya was made. In Konya, for example, the filler often seems to be as important and elaborate as the flower.

The way in which the needlelace stitch grows is very related to knotless netting or simple looping, except in oya a knot is formed where threads intersect. In Lila O'Neale, Textiles of Highland Guatemala, fig. 80g, a reconstruction of an edging is illustrated. Shown is a small triangle in elemental loop stitch, used as a conventional finish for pointed ends of headbands. It seems so related in shape to oya, in the way the stitches grow. In the openwork meshes found most often in tiny oya money bags or in the cylindrical bases of flowers, needlelace is very close in appearance to knotted netting, fisherman's netting--diagonal elements intersecting at right angles. Tiny loops may be locked in with each knot, making looped pile, on a knotted net surface. (Plate 64) Loops, picots, may be made just on the edge stitches.

Figs. 3, 4, 5. Layers of *oya* as worn on a scarf.

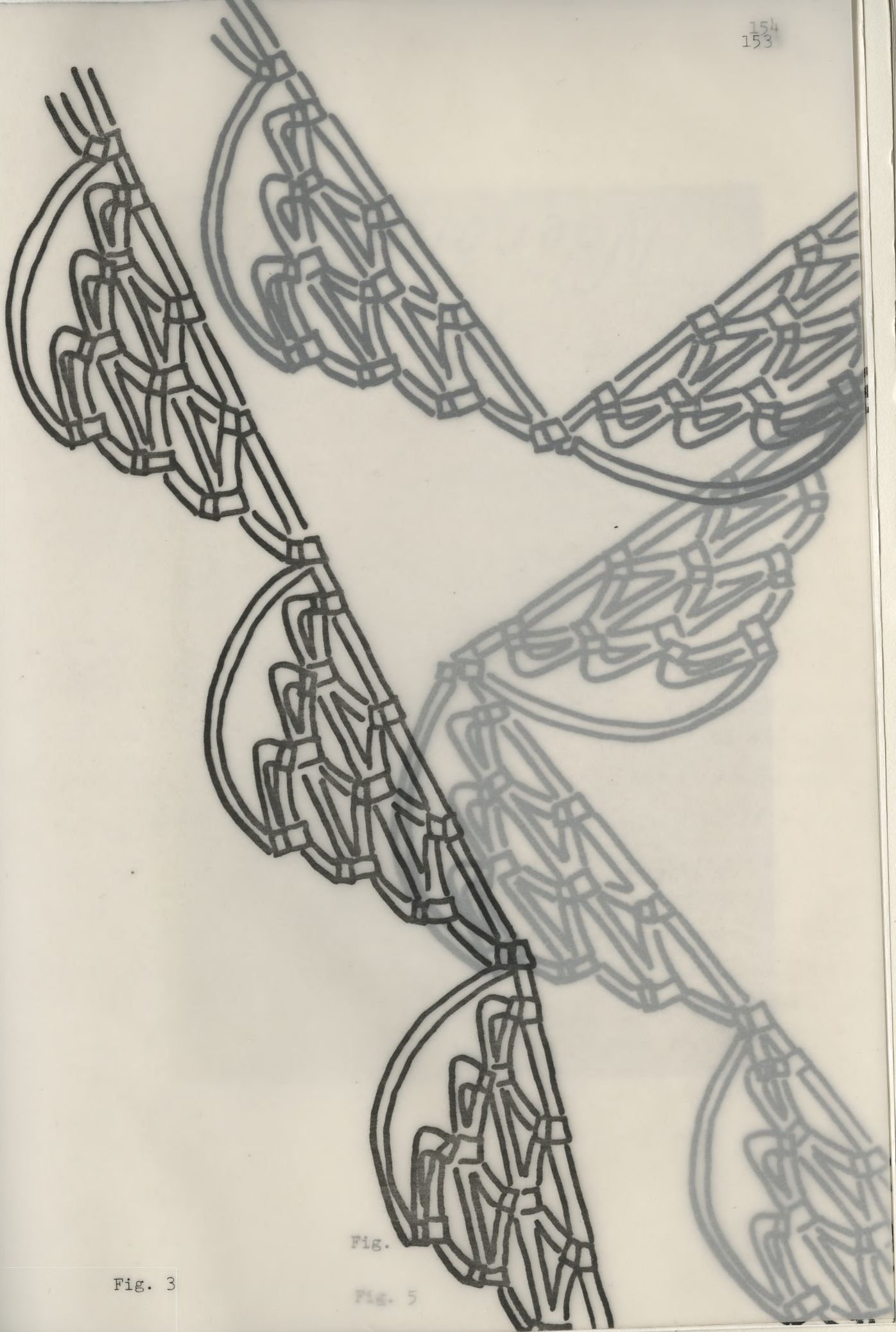


Fig.

Fig. 3

Fig. 5

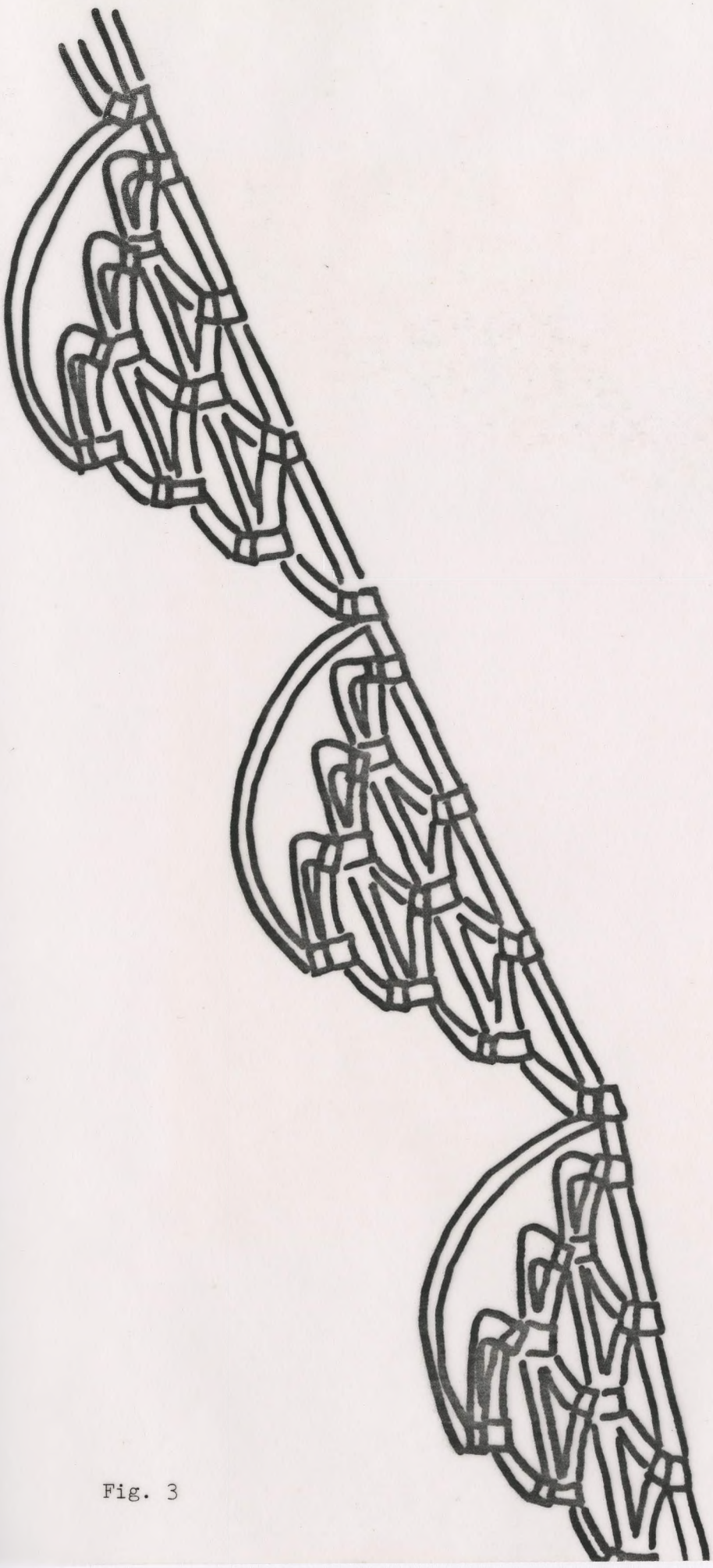


Fig. 3

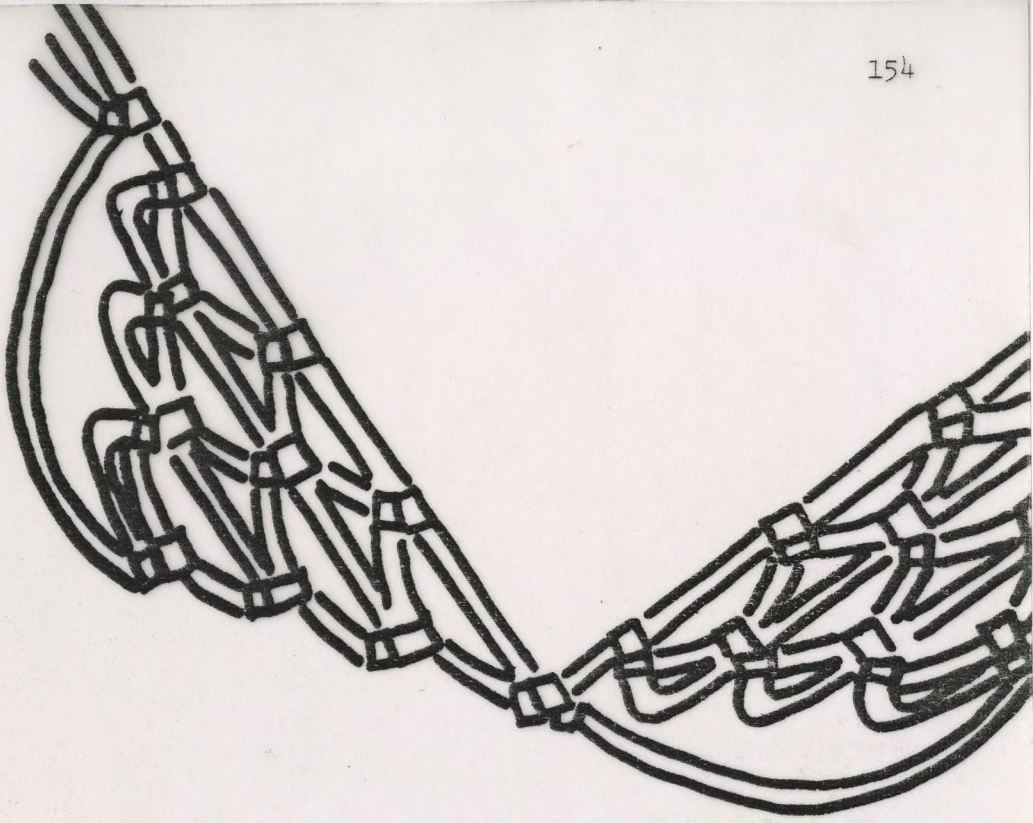


Fig. 4

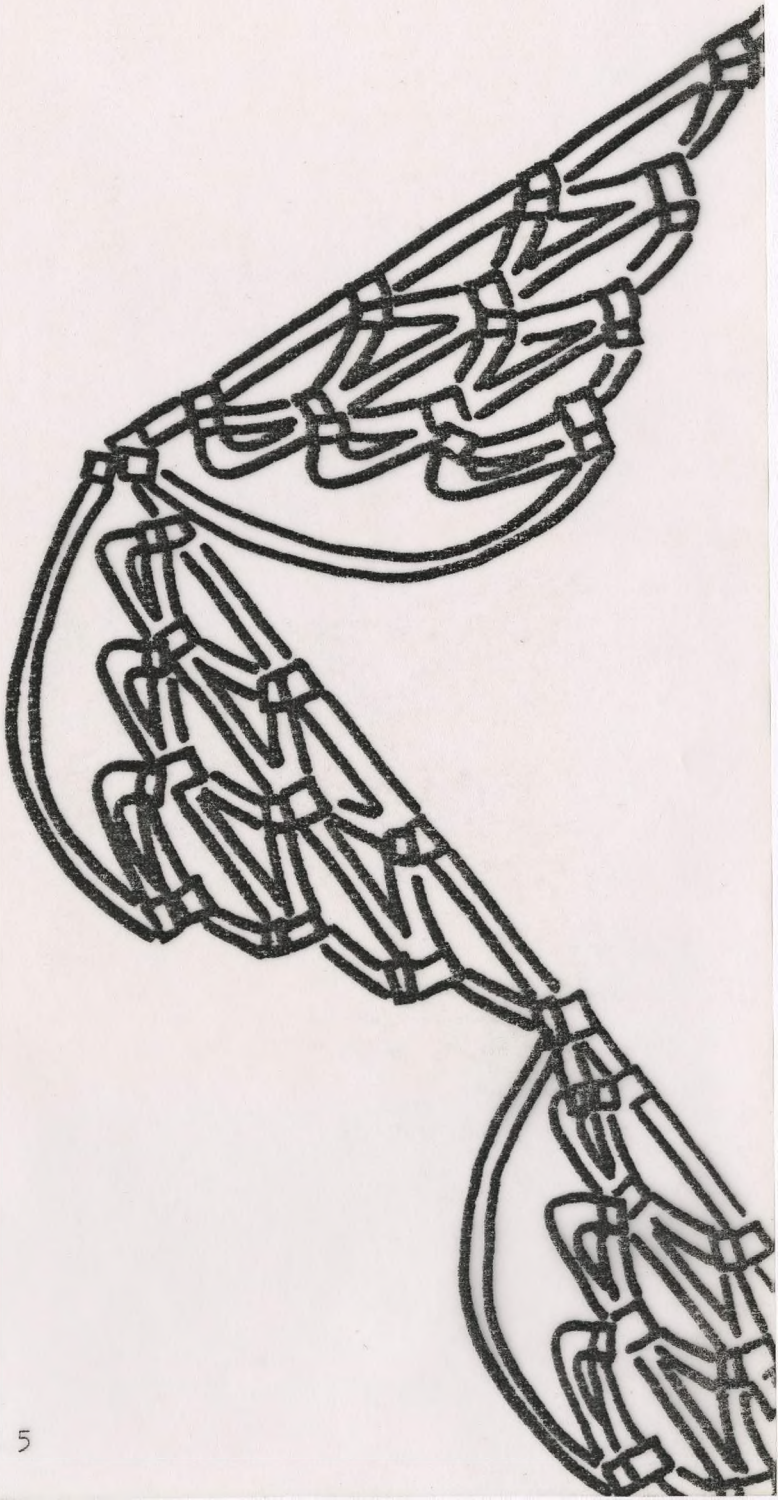


Fig. 5

Plate 61. Long, sloping shape in between flowers.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Plate 62. Elaborate shapes alternate with flowers.

Collection of Suna Koç, Istanbul.

Plate 63. Geometric shapes in between flowers.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Fig. 6. Building an oya shape.

Fig. 7. Oya resembling netting with open spaces not intersected by horizontal elements.

Fig. 8. Oya with loops, picots, on one side.

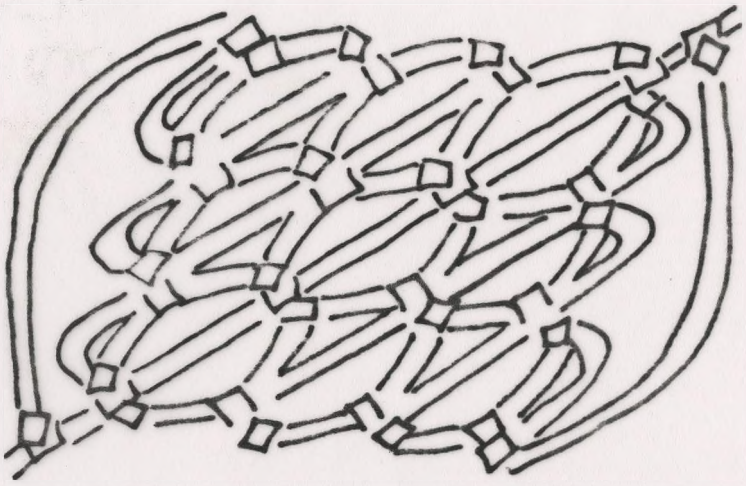


Fig. 6

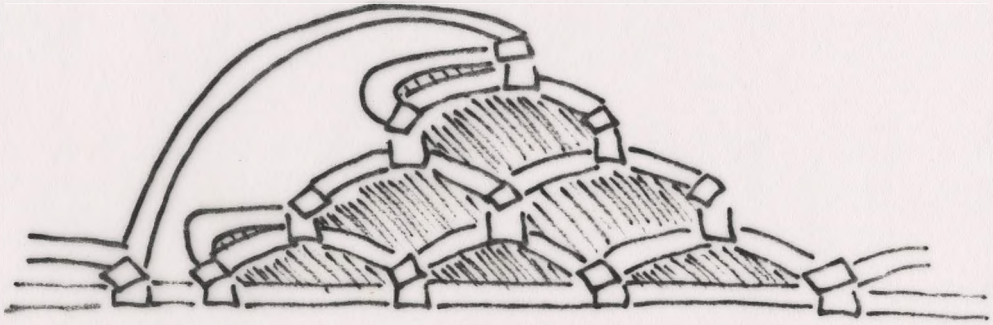


Fig. 7

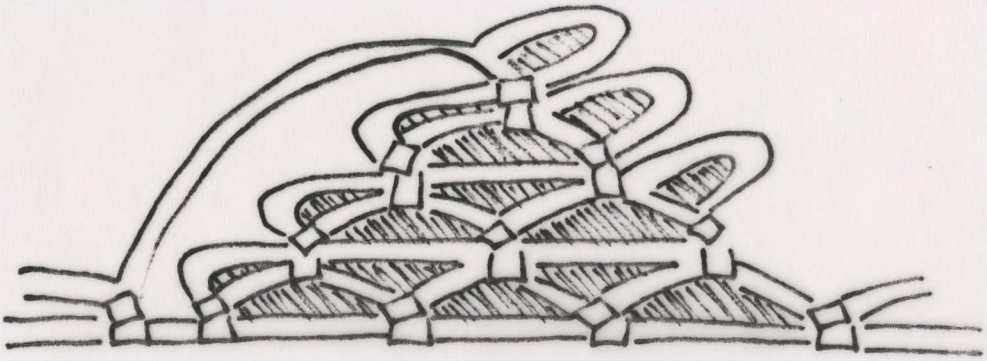


Fig. 8

Plate 64. Orange, portakal, needlelace with loops locked in, like Turkish toweling.

Collection of Suna Koç, Istanbul.

There is a possibility too, of curves with threads acting as lines, each time thread is carried from the tip of one triangle, as in the diagram, to the base of the next. The oyamaker can move in any direction she wants.

Sometimes oya is content to be a flat textile plane (Plates 65, 66) built in the "air," into the emptiness or void, without a space well defined to be filled in. It is not done on a background as in needlepoint, but held by hand, sometimes done just on the edge of a piece of cloth. One flower is begun and finished, then another started, half finished and finished, each part done is completely done, until the whole strand is done, except for the final finishing process--the attaching to a scarf and the stiffening of the flowers. (Plate 67) The oyamaker must continue to build shapes consistently, to conform with what was done yesterday or a week or a month before.

When, as in the relatively "huge" disklike flat flower oya in the Manisa Museum (Plate 38), there is a foundation element, such as horsehair used, we are reminded of coiling in basketry. (Plate 68) The foundation is continuously spiraling from the center to the rim of the oya shape, locked in, stitch by stitch as the shape grows. There is a sense of movement outward, even when the spiraling element is almost invisible horsehair. Flat petal areas frequently build up, layer upon layer. (Plate 69)

Some of the three dimensional oya flower shapes stiffened, appear to be almost like miniature baskets turned over, connected together, each holding, defining an airy volume, a netted membrane around air--nets stretched over tiny, briefly captured spaces. (Plate 70) Such seamless, cylindrical bases of miniscule flowers with thin walls, are

Plate 65. Flat oya, from southwestern Turkey, seen as if in motion.

Manisa Museum Collection.

Plate 66. Oya as a flat textile plane.

Manisa Museum Collection.

Plate 67. Stiffened oya flowers.

Collection of Selma Sabuncuoğlu, San Francisco.

Plate 68. Foundation element of horsehair coils outward as in basketry. From Iznik.

Archeology Museum Collection in Bursa.

Plate 69. Flat petals, layered.

Collection of Suna Koç, Istanbul.

Plate 70. Oya, defining an airy volume.

Collection of Suna Koç, Istanbul.

often filled with textile pistils and stamens. (Plate 71)

If a flower is not one color, other colors used are placed sparingly as accents, or create a new pattern with an abrupt change in color. (Plates 72, 73, 74) There are almost never color gradations or blended colors, but often single, pure color strands. Occasionally, there is variation on a theme--each flower is related to another, such as in yedi dağ çiçeği, seven mountain flowers in seven colors, each of the seven different. (Plates 75, 76)

However the flowers are constructed, they are made with no straggly ends or loose threads. They are flowers--neat and acceptable. This edging, meant to finish, looks very finished.

If oya were seen greatly magnified, there might be an overwhelming feeling of movement in the diagonal march of the knots. Or one might have a strong dislike of the horizontal as it cuts through--interrupting, trespassing across the open space of the lozenge. One imagines the chance to project an enormous silhouette of an oya shape, to play with the shadow, the air penetrating and flowing freely among the threads and layers, to experience the interior and exterior volume, the brilliant sheen of the silk, to see the stitches large enough to be perceived individually, and feel the perforated, lacelike openwork meshes instead of the tight density of the textile. Sometimes the stitches in minute oya appear to be so tight they can't breathe. One feels they need air. Perhaps it's wanting oya, for a brief moment or longer, to be a shout instead of a whisper.

The needlelace stitch has been described differently by others. One can refer to Thérèse de Dillmont in Encyclopedia of Needlework; R. B. Kay-Shuttleworth in "Lace VI, Needle Made Laces, England, Arab

Plate 71. Textile pistils and stamens in flower centers.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Plate 72. Women's needlelace from the Aegean region of Turkey. Careful decisions have determined the color change.

Collection of Kenan Özbel, Istanbul.

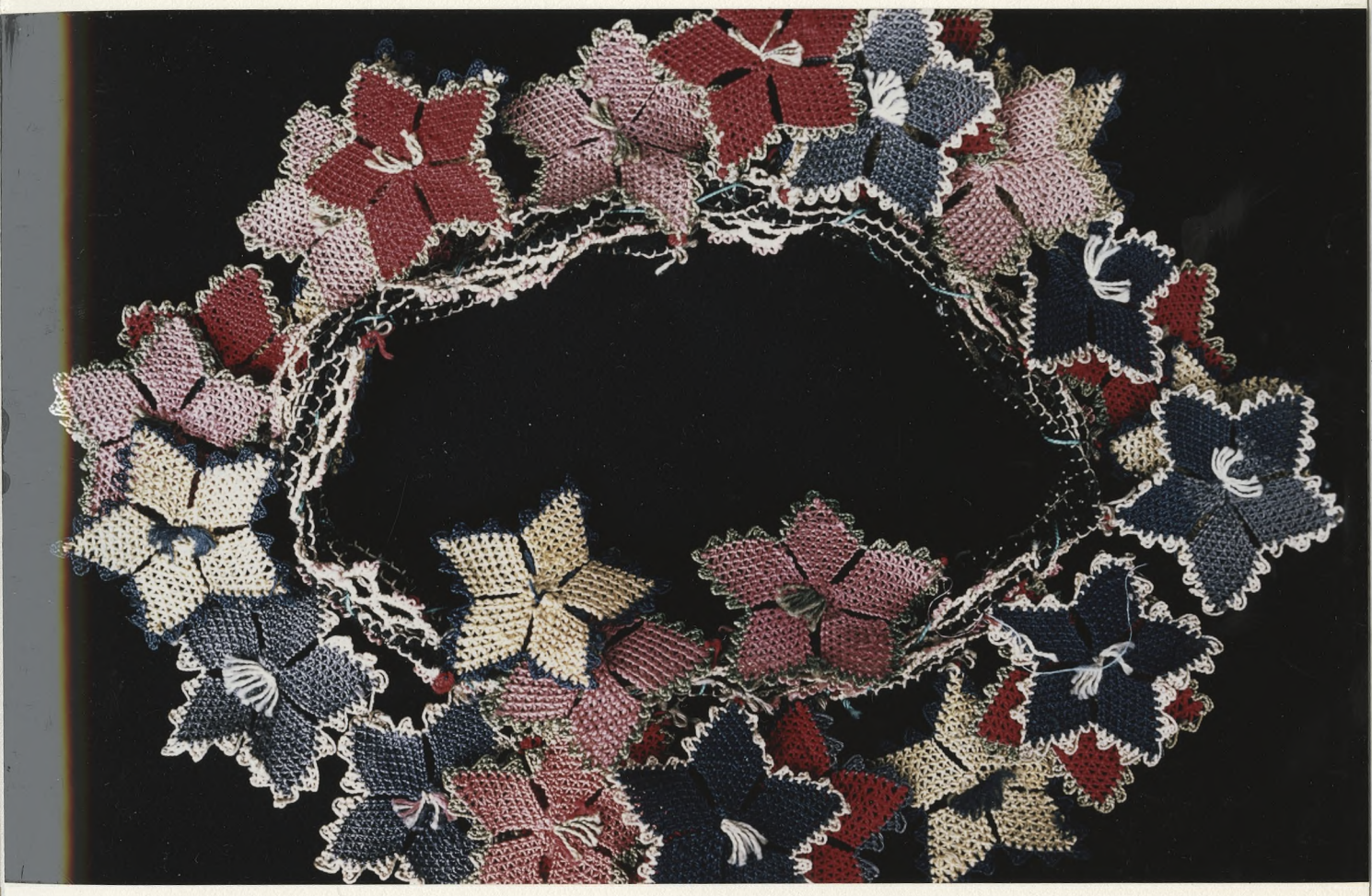


Plate 73. Detail of Plate 72.

Collection of Kenan Özbel, Istanbul.

Plate 74. Oya which seems to delight in its color patterning, from southwestern Turkey.

Collection of Kenan Özbel, Istanbul.

Plate 75. A young girl's oya of seven mountain flowers, yedi dağ çiçeği.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Plate 76. Flowers of many colors on a single strand of oya.
Collection of Suna Koç, Istanbul.

Lace, Palestine and Cyprus," Helen Ionides in "Lace VII, A Greek Needlepoint Lace, Bebilla," B. W. Maynard in "Armenian Needlepoint" (these are three separate articles in Embroidery, the Journal of the Embroiderers' Guild); and to Kenan Özbel in "Oya ve Oya Çeşitleri," in Türk El Sanatları. This last reference, in Turkish, is ambitious and authoritative with several pages of flat diagrammatic sketches of oya shapes. Irene Emery, though she doesn't deal with this stitch specifically, discusses accessory stitches and clarifies categories of lace.

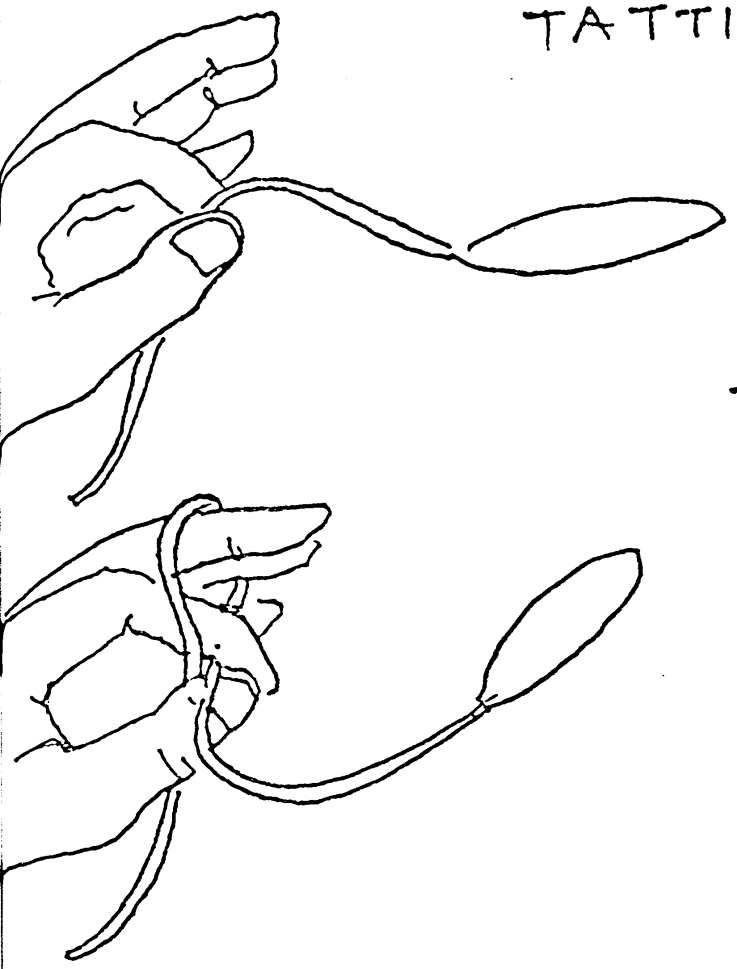
SUBSTITUTE TECHNIQUES

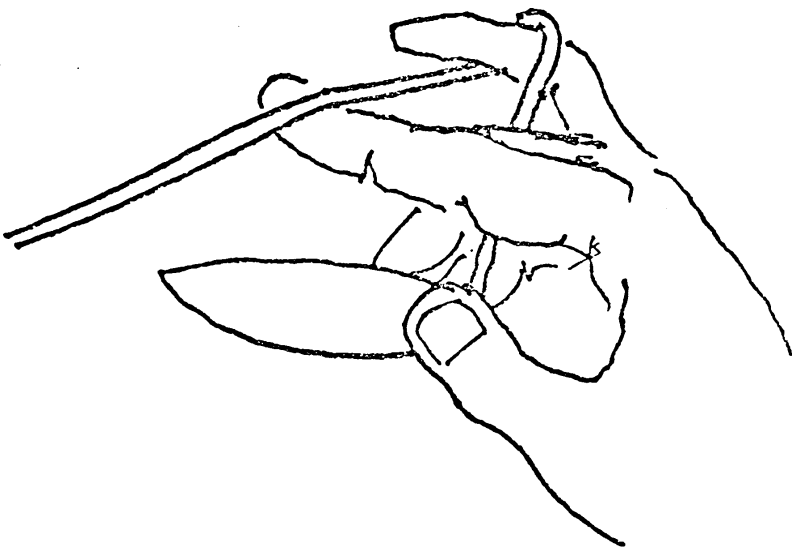
Oya today is not just the single stitch of needlelace, a certain size, repeated identically. Another variety, a substitute technique for oya construction is called in French, frivolité, in Arabic, makouk, in Turkish, mekik, meaning shuttle, and what we know as plain old tatting. Frivolité certainly conveys a judgmental attitude of nonserious work or work not to be taken seriously. There are those who would call tatting mindless and boring, "the smallest expression of a society," dismissing it or treating it with indifference. It is this attitude and the fact that oya can almost pass unseen, which has probably been responsible for the lack of attention paid to it. To oyamakers, tatting offers a relatively fast alternative to the needlelace stitch. (Plate 77)

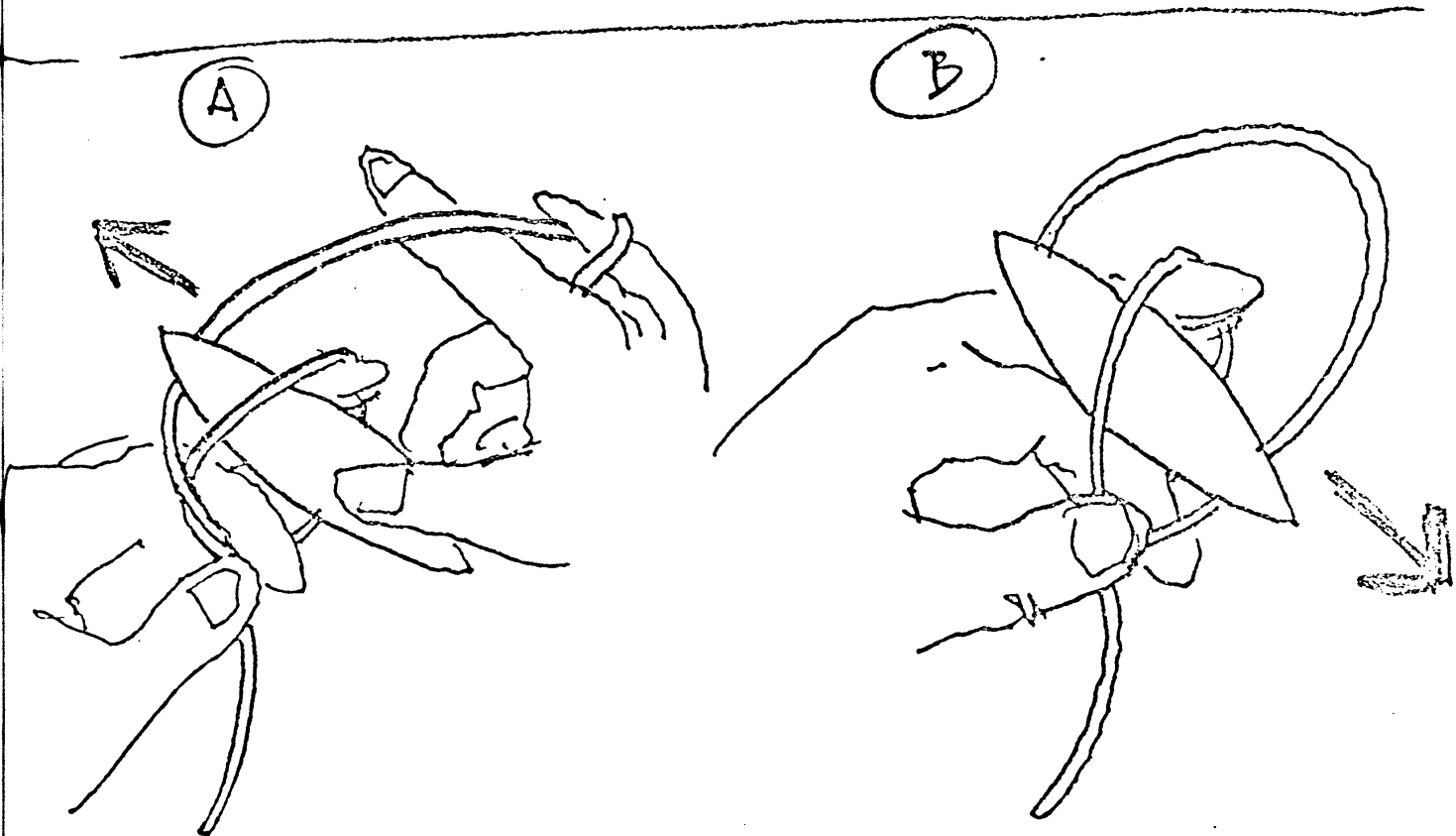
In mekik oyası, the individual thread is held on a shuttle, the weight of which holds the thread taut and keeps it from getting tangled. (See diagram.) "Mechanical" steps, stitches around a foundation thread, repeated over and over by hand build up and give the appearance of having been done over a wire. Tatting can be easily worked on over a long time, when work is done in the midst of interruptions, when it must be constantly laid aside or done without full concentration. The oyamaker laughs and talks and is concerned with life about her, not counting, while her fingers create the construction.

Crocheted oya, tığ oyası, is constructed of simple crocheted chains, making flower or leaf shapes. If beads are added to become

FRIVOLITÉ MAKOUK TATTING







A = SINGLE KNOT
A+B = DOUBLE KNOT

ROSSBACH-

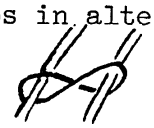
Plate 77. Tatted oya from southwestern Turkey.

Department of Design Textile Study Collection,
University of California, Berkeley.

Photograph by Ann Palmer.

boncuk oyası, the tiny bead is slipped onto the thread, overpowering and concealing the crocheted chain, which locks it into place with the next chain stitch. The beads are carefully placed and arranged to be fruit or flowers. Needlelace flowers have been copied in crochet, a technique even faster than tatting.

Another substitute for the traditional needlelace oya stitch may be found in hairpin lace, firkete oyası, made with a hairpin by winding threads in a figure eight around the legs of the pin and catching the threads together at the center with a crochet hook. Giant-sized crochet forks, much larger than hairpins but trying for the same effect, are sold with instructions available in local Berkeley department and 5 and 10¢ variety stores.

Passementerie, or woven dokuma oyası edging is made not on a loom, but with coarse core elements, usually two strands of cord-like material. These are not removed. They are completely covered by finer elements, perhaps in alternate colors, which, as in hairpin lace, make a figure eight  but in passementerie, around the cords. This edging, worn by older women, runs evenly along the four sides of a scarf, not free to dangle.

In Turkish, the word oya is tacked onto each of the various names describing other substitute materials or techniques. In grammatical combination, they refer to another kind of oya edging, despite how far removed some of the substitutes seem from traditional oya as earlier defined.

USES

Light, sheer scarves with oya are considered special, each a single, solid color. Sometimes several such scarves are worn together, at the same time, as by a Türkmen bride. (Plate 78) The wedding flag, so related to a bride's headdress, is put up on the roof of the couple's new home. It consists most often of a hand mirror, decorated with flowers, attached to a pole, the mirror being surrounded by many brightly colored scarves, at least some with oya edging. (Plate 79)

An oya edged scarf is also important in a woman's funeral ceremony.

> The head of the coffin of a girl or young woman who dies in Ödemiş, a city in southwestern Turkey, is draped with a silk scarf which has needlelace edging. At burial this scarf is torn in two, and used to tie myrtle to the wooden headpiece and footpiece of the grave.
>
> --Notes from a lecture by M. Başoğlu

Traditional textiles visible now in Turkey are so few. When other pieces of a Turkish woman's costume have been discarded, an oya edged scarf has persistently lingered, has solely survived. The yazma yemeni, the woodblock printed muslin scarf, is becoming the polyester silkscreened scarf, as the older technique is abandoned for speed in production. It is hard, while focusing on oya, not to devote equal attention to the earlier printed scarves. They deserve more careful looking, separate from their edging. Screen designs are woodblock flower designs. Printed scarves, with oya are considered ordinary,

Plate 78. Costume of a nomadic bride from near Izmir; headdress of many scarves.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

Plate 79. Bridal flag.

Collection of Sabiha Tansuğ, Istanbul.

everyday.

Oya surrounds a face like a refreshing garnish, appearing fragile and fascinating--vegetation largely as it appeared in nature. The oya edged scarf can be thought of as a wrapping which is a protection, a hiding, a making beautiful. A face in being surrounded can seem more precious or charming, more appealing, or it can appear more encircled, bound, not at all free, with a minimal edge (almost none at all) adhering, as if glued on, drawing lines across the folds.

The way in which scarves with oya are actually worn differs in different parts of the country. Women in Turkey travel much less than men. If they travel, it is probably to the nearest provincial center, very seldom beyond that, which tends to keep women's costuming more regional.

For example in Konya, in central Turkey, young women wear a printed scarf folded in a triangle, the undecorated fold worn across the back. The central point of the triangle with its oya flowers is placed on top of a tall headpiece, the edging falling in diagonal lines to either side.

A middle aged woman there wears a scarf not folded but left completely open, with one side draped across the head, the flower edging framing the forehead down to the shoulders, the other edges falling over the shoulders, down, and across the back. The scarf is not tied under the chin.

Older women in Konya wear the scarf as middle aged women do, but the back part of the scarf is brought forward around the shoulders and wrapped loosely under the chin.

Elsewhere if a scarf is folded and worn with the folded edge

tightly tucked in to cover hair which might show above the forehead, the ends of that scarf may be crossed in back with those same two ends brought again forward and up to tie on top of the head. A young girl would wear a scarf further back so more of her hair would show. The scarf would most often be worn behind the ears, leaving them to show. An older woman would wear yet another headcovering, usually a plain, white muslin scarf just open, draped over the printed headscarf underneath. In Kütahya, another city, only printed scarves with oya, no light, sheer synthetic ones are worn.

Not only has oya survived, it's become very fashionable. This new impulse may be seen as part of a world-wide recognition of ethnic costume, a regard for it but not a revival. There is a search for identity, a nationalistic assertion, in the face of spreading standardization. Turkish models wearing layers of densely wrapped oya were recently a sensation in Paris, according to newspaper accounts. (Plate 80) When Miss Turkey, 1977, competed internationally, she wore fashionably designed oya, by a prominent fashion designer, Vural Gökçaylı, in Istanbul.

In an Istanbul exhibit of traditional Turkish designs for use on contemporary scarves and neckties, one designer, Atillah Ergür, took the image of oya, its flat shape, and placed it, printed it, permanently froze it into place, within a headscarf--visually recognizable without the characteristics of earlier, freer oya but with its strong, clear message of today and transition. (Plate 81)

As recently as fifteen years ago, it was usual for the more fashion conscious Istanbul woman to buy and wear a newly printed, exclusively marked and labeled headscarf, if possible from outside Turkey,

Plate 80. Fashion models.

From a photograph in the collection of Vural Gökçaylı.

Plate 81. Traditional Turkish design by Atillah Ergür for use on a contemporary scarf.

with no oya. Now such a person, often quite well educated, would want sheer scarves and printed cotton scarves, Turkish made, with oya, to wear. Bold, daring oya is worn now turbanlike, giving each lace edge on a scarf maximum advantage, or as a neckerchief, or individual oya chains are worn together, as necklaces. Tourists in the past few years have bought such scarves and worn them in non-Turkish, unexpected ways, not covering all their hair. This has been observed in Turkey, sometimes imitated. One mother felt that it was inappropriate that she herself be seen in a scarf with oya worn in an especially flattering way, drawing attention to her appearance, but she willingly allowed her young daughter to be photographed after she'd carefully arranged the oya to best advantage. (Plate 82)

Plate 82. Young girl from Konya wearing oya in the shape of a baby, bebek.

CONCLUSION

By comparison with dense Peruvian needleknitted edging, often of three dimensional animal and human figures, both real and mythological, and of flowers, as seen in the important Paracas mantle on exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum, oya needlelace seems sparse, widely spaced, different in feeling, certainly not telling the same kind of legendary story. Both are decorative, not functional. Though tiny, both have an unexpected sense of persisting and remaining, a peculiar tenacity and spirit.

"Lace as an art form is strangely enough purely European; the successful efforts of other countries are few," according to Christa Mayer from the Art Institute of Chicago. When considering the wonder of lace outside of her boundaries, that comment seems singularly and peculiarly Western.

In the forties, as recorded in the Kütahya Museum Library, in western Turkey, an attempt was made to gather together a few old women who could separate a stack of oya into piles labeled "very old," "old," and "new." Memories responding to museum preserved objects. If another group of women were gathered together representing a broader ethnic and religious diversity--Turks, Greeks, Cypriots, Armenians, Arabs, Albanians, and Yugoslavs, there would be even more separate piles made. Oya, called by different names elsewhere, was certainly constructed by women beyond Turkey's present boundaries. The Ottoman empire which spread outward represented a time of giving and absorbing traditions, of trade. This study is not historical, focusing on accurate dating or geographical

precision. It is not anthropological with comparative data. Though the thesis is entitled "Turkish Oya," it is a personal, visual response to more than a specific textile technique or achievement. What seems important is that oya speaks of time, of all time rather than of its present moment or an earlier moment of existence. That oya has been expressive of a culture seems significant, especially as we wonder who the audience was. We know there has been a culture which valued oya. As oyamakers make oya today, they must be sadly aware that their lace related edging is the last bit of handwork being commonly worn. We, too, are left with a vague sense of sadness.

Oya as more common, useful, and everyday, has lost its former symbolic meaning which was associated with Turkish life patterns, with religion, and social behavior. In a village near Iznik, only one older woman could identify by specific name, varieties of oya shown her by a private collector, who took his collection and went with me to see her, in order to learn more. The other women who came to enjoy the experience as we sat looking at scarves with oya edging remembered two gypsies who'd come to their village in the last two years, encouraging villagers to sell now; they bought any old oya they could, later presumably to market it in Istanbul. That village and others around the lake in the same area had no more old textiles. Women there, who marveled at the beauty of the old scarves with oya, consistently said they wore oya because it was the style, not for its message.

When meaning which was once part of oya, as an expression of a culture, is gone, then the tradition of wearing oya must change or die.

Our present world makes it easily possible to experience products from another society. In our struggle for an individual identity, we

can take on the outer trappings, the costuming from elsewhere and feel personally what that experience is. But the value and meaning is someone else's; we are denied that experience. When traditional meaning is lost to pure fashion, and few are left who can receive the message, then the object has lost much of its original essence. Perhaps in trying to understand some of this essence, by feeling its "time," its appropriateness to the total life, its unpretentiousness, our own awareness of the human experience is expanded. A brief moment has connected with another culture, another tradition, with its textile art, with Turkish oya.

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