

GREECE through the eyes of a CRAFTSWOMAN

Charlotte Patera is the author of THE APPLIQUE BOOK and has designed many pieces for BETTER HOMES GARDENS, WOMAN'S DAY and FAMILY CIRCLE. She is available for slide/lecture on "Greece through the eyes of a Crafts-woman."

One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the old village of Metsovo. Here old costumes are still worn. The village is famous for its very fine precise weaving. We had the good luck to run into a dowry procession. Several musicians marched through the town to announce the procession. The bride's dowry possessions were paraded through the village carried by friends and relatives. The bride was not in sight though the groom and his cronies marched along swigging away at ouzo. This was a reminder to our women's group of how the country honors men more than women.

Our next visit was to Yannena, the capitol of Epirus in northern Greece. We visited a village where all of the citizens came out to greet us. After a welcome speech by the mayor, we interviewed the village women about their hard lives and how they hope for change. The men stayed together in a group, fingering their worry beads. The women reminded me of our early quilters who cooked, cleaned, worked the fields, mended and made do.

Another visit to the isolated village, Monodendri allowed us to meet old women and learn about their heroic activities during World War II. I photographed women doing needlework in our hotel lobby. I also bought some embroidery from one of the women which I plan to use on a dress.

A visit to Corinth gave us a very short time to choose between ruins or shopping. I opted for shopping and more crafts photography.

Our trip wound up on the coast South of Athens for several days of rest, beach lazing and seminars. Lectures were offered on subjects such as women in government, abortion issues, folk customs and costumes.

This wonderful tour ended with a pot luck dinner in the home of the Papandreou family in a suburb of Athens. The food was unbelievable. The climax was a visit from Melina Mecouri! After interviews on serious subjects concerning her place in parliament, she then ignited the atmosphere with her vivacious and wild dancing. We all got to dance with her and our Greek hostesses.

After attending the Kansas Quilting Symposium and the West Coast Quilting Conference, I found myself on a very different kind of a trip. Seven Greek dance friends from the Bay Area and I joined a tour sponsored by the Woman's Union of Greece, a group struggling for woman's liberation in the midst of a very macho land.

The purpose of the tour was to call attention to the strength and determination of Greek women who suffer from extreme domination by men. The tour highlighted places where Greek women in the past have persevered under severe oppression. It also emphasized women's crafts and arts.

I was hoping to find quilts but have to report that I found nothing resembling a quilt. I did find lavish embroidery, weaving, macrame, and needlepoint. I especially loved the old costumes which were in profusion in the shops and markets.

The tour began in Athens. After visiting the Acropolis, we went to the Benaki museum, I returned there later alone so I could photograph the folk costumes and embroidery.

The next day on a visit to the island of Hydra I found my first needlepoint shop and was fascinated with the rugs, wall hangings, and shoulder bags. The third day I walked for hours in Athens photographing needlework and fabric shops, weaving, folk costumes.

The next morning we headed for Delphi to visit the ruins high in the mountains. The village offered ceramics as well as the textile crafts.

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Edmund Evans, an excellent engraver and printer, was an old acquaintance of Kate's father. At their insistence Kate went to Witley to visit him one day in 1877 with a collection of about 50 drawings illustrating some quaint verses she had written with children in mind. They immediately appealed to Evans and he purchased them with the idea of having them ready for the 1878 Christmas season. He went to the time and expense of making fourcolor wood cuts and printed 20,000 copies, which his competition considered a ridiculously large number. The first edition was sold out before another could be printed, and the demand continues. The book is UNDER THE WINDOW. More than 100,000 copies were sold all over the world, and greatly influenced children's fashions for the rest of the 19th century. Other books followed, the best known of which are MARIGOLD GARDEN, THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS, and LITTLE ANN. She also illustrated THE QUEEN OF THE PIRATE ISLE by Bret Harte and a version of THE PIED PIPER OF HAMLIN. Holme, on page 7, quotes Kate Greenaway as saying, "People laugh at me, I am so delighted and pleased with things, and they say I see with rose-coloured spectacles. What do you think - is it not a beautiful world? Sometimes have I got a defective art faculty, that few things are ugly to me?" in a letter to Frederick Locker after UNDER THE WINDOW had made publishing history.

Kate Greenaway was never outside England. Her books were imported to the U.S. in ever increasing numbers, and in 1893 a group of her original drawings and water colors were shown at Chicago's Columbian Exhibition. LADIES HOME JOURNAL (circulation 700,000) invited her to illustrate some verses by Laura E. Richards, and these appeared in the magazine between 1894 and 1896. She died November 6, 1901. Some Greenaway designs have been reprinted recently (1975) by Dorothy G. Cook from HARPER'S BAZAR issues of July 23, 1881 and January 28, 1882. They were reproduced by HARPER'S (with permission) but not drawn expressly for their magazine.

1 Maxene Harris, MUSEUM QUILTS, Missouri Ruralist, April 22, 1967.

2 *ibid.*

3 A postcard of the room with the quilt on the bed is available for 100 and a stamped self addressed envelope to Washington's Birthplace, VA 22575.

4 Photo of quilt on bed in McCALLS, Feb. 1972, Treasured Recipes from Washington's Day.

5 Washington's Birthplace is located 40 miles SE from Fredericksburg, just off route 3.

6 Barbara Bannister's personal correspondence to Mary Schafer.

7 Emma Lee Kurts, BUNSTON WOMAN CREATES HISTORIC BED REPRODUCTION, source unknown, August 1, 1970.

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Our next visit was to the Meteora to see monasteries on top of the pinnacles. I photographed many icons as well as needlework.

I did find one boutique in Mykonos that carried several interesting and appliqued dresses but the work was not as sophisticated as our quilters are used to. I did buy a dress trimmed with a piece of the old embroidery.

The tour will be held again next year and I would recommend it to anyone interested in crafts, women's rights, or Greek culture. Write: THE WOMEN'S UNION OF GREECE, 34 Panepistimious St., Athens 143, Greece.

--Charlotte Patera



Two more typical Greenaway designs from the Cook book, pp.5 and 10. From these it is evident that the Corbet designs are not copies, but they could have been influenced by this very popular