

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Ukrainski narodni prykrasy z biseru* (Ukrainian Folk Beaded Adornments).

**Olena Fedorchuk.** Svichado Publishers, P.O. Box 808, Vynnychenko St. 22, Lviv 79008, Ukraine. 2007. 120 pp., 111 color figs., 70 sepia and B&W figs., 45 diagrams. ISBN: 978-966-395-016-7. US \$79.00 (hard cover).

Written in Ukrainian, this book initially explores the origins and growth of artistic beadwork in the territory of the Ukraine. Most of the book is dedicated to folk adornments and ornamentation made of beads, a unique phenomenon of Ukrainian culture of the 19th-20th centuries which is little known in the world even, unfortunately, in the Ukraine. The methodology of production and artistic composition of these once very popular additions to Ukrainian folk costumes is described in this book for a wide audience.

The preface introduces the subject and informs the reader that the production and use of beaded objects is a long-standing tradition in the Ukraine. In the 19th century, or perhaps earlier, Ukrainian villagers became fascinated with beads. Women used them to embellish their clothing with additional layers of accessories. In time, beaded adornments became an integral part of the costume for holidays and special occasions. They were used in everyday wear in certain regions of western Ukraine; i.e., today's Ternopil, Chernivets, Ivano-Frankivsk, Transcarpathian (Zakarpattia), and Lviv oblasts. Beaded adornments also originated in certain villages of the Volyn, Rivno, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, and Cherkasy oblasts. The tradition of beading kept on in the west well into the 20th century. For some reason it stopped in the east, though some isolated pieces can still be found. Beaded adornments, as well as other folk art, are part of the culture of a certain land, and more narrowly, certain villages, so the unique use, form, design, motifs, and colors of the decoration were the carriers of important information about their owners/wearers.

The chapters that follow provide more details about the material mentioned in the preface. The first chapter, "Through the Pages of History," starts off with the "Earliest news about adornments made of glass." It is followed by a section about "Glass objects of ancient (Kyivan) Rus Times" which were heavily influenced by the Byzantine

Empire. There are illustrations of the different beads and glass bracelets. Next comes the "Artistic Production" of the 14th-19th centuries. Here we see examples of icons, church vestments, and sacred artwork. There follows "Adornments from Glass and Beads in Ukrainian Folk Dress." The characteristic elements of Ukrainian national dress evolved during the 14th-17th centuries in the heart of the village and during "kozak" times. From this time to the mid-20th century, the development of national cultures was centered in the village. Thereafter, beadwork lost its popularity. As villages became industrialized in the late 20th century, their national character was ruined.

The chapter on "Technique Fundamentals" reveals that beadwork techniques and designs were passed down from generation to generation and beaders were constantly working out new ideas and innovations. The beads used are discussed followed by a description of stringing materials and their uses. Techniques are introduced and described step-by-step in the text. Diagrams illustrate the start of each technique and a few additional steps if necessary. Occasionally beads are numbered in sequence to help readers bead on their own. Stringing is the most basic technique followed by "stringing on two threads" to create "chains" and "ladders." This is where the diagrams begin to illustrate the different variations possible within each technique. They clearly show the difference in designs by color placement, amount of beads on each needle, and how the size and shape of the beads can affect the look. Other techniques discussed include multi-needle beadweaving, stringing on one thread, preparing chains, netting, creating wider beadweaving, preparing netted collars, preparing trims, and loomed beadweaving. In the section on "Bead Embroidery Technique," the author explains that bead embroidery goes back to ancient Rus times when it was done with gold and pearls. In the 19th-20th centuries bead embroidery was used primarily on headdresses and on sashes.

The chapter on "Typology of Adornments" outlines the different kinds of Ukrainian beaded folk adornments of the 19th to mid-20th centuries. There are 18 styles of beadwork starting with *monysto*, strings of beads from ancient times and continuing through history. The styles differ in construction method and ornamentation. The author describes each in

detail. Sepia-toned photographs illustrate each point.

“Ornamentation of Adornments” reveals that beaded Ukrainian adornments were a part of the artistic-pictorial structure of the ensemble of folk costume. Therefore their ornamentation was closely related to the ornamentation of the fabric and embroidered components of the costume. In this lies its uniqueness. The style of design possibilities was greatly dependent on the technique with which the beadwork was created. Therefore, in the early 19th century, the most popular designs on the multi-needle or straight bands were geometric ornamentation with steps and straight-edged motifs. More fluid designs became possible only with bead embroidery. Thus, most beadwork of the 19th to early 20th centuries is geometric in form. The author discusses the most commonly used ornaments and their meaning.

The chapter “Illustrated Addition” consists of 110 full-color photographs of beadwork from archives, museums, and private collections. Each piece is thoroughly identified. Most examples are multi-needle or netted, and sometimes loomworked or uniquely beadwoven. There are many styles of necklaces, collars, and medallions, and items trimmed with coins.

There is also a glossary of beadwork terminology, ornamentation, and adornment styles, a bibliography, and a poorly written, one-page English “Summary” (p. 68), none

of which are mentioned in the table of contents.

This is the first Ukrainian-language book which combines so much material about beaded adornments into one volume. The author has a good grasp of the history and categories of beadwork and ornamentation. The descriptions of every beadworking technique are concise and there are plenty of photos on each page to illustrate the text. The book’s liners with the ethnographic map of the Ukraine in the front and the typology tree of the four beadwork categories in the back are graphic and easy to understand.

Although in Ukrainian, this book is worthwhile for non-Ukrainian readers because of the wealth of information that is presented in a visual way. Between the sepia photos, diagrams, and color photos of beadwork in museum collections, one can really get a good understanding of the significance of beaded adornments of the 19th to mid-20th centuries in the Ukraine.

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