

Comparative Analysis of Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian Folk Towels

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Abstract

A comparative analysis of traditional western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels provides rich material for new creative inspirations, as well as diversification of individual and mass-produced interior textiles, and also visualizes historical ties between the two countries. Therefore, the objective of the article is to analyse the weaving techniques that prevail in the creation of towel decor, to determine the artistic and stylistic parameters of Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels and to establish the common and unique features of their decor. The techniques of plain and twill weaving, the latter of which could obtain simple textured patterns on the canvas, were widespread in both countries. Various weaving compositions were obtained by the pick-up techniques of weaving, the overshot, and the damask weaving technique, which was much more widespread in Lithuania than in the western part of Ukraine.

Keywords

traditional towels of the western part of Ukraine and Lithuania, weaving technique, ornamental motifs.

1. Introduction

Traditional western Ukrainian and Lithuanian woven towels are a valuable asset of material and spiritual culture. They are most expressive in their décor items for interior, ceremonial, and household functions. Therefore, researchers from various branches of traditional art have paid attention to them within the scope of their research. We can single out general works in which towels were considered part of the traditional ethnographic textiles of the entire nation: Sydorovych [1], Studenets [2], Nykorak [3], Balčikonis [4], Savoniakaitė [5], Nenartavičiūtė [6], and its separate ethnographic groups: Nykorak [7] - Hutsul ethnographic region (Ukraine), Oliinyk [8] - Pokuttia ethnographic region (Ukraine), Boriak [9] - Podillia ethnographic region (Ukraine), Nėnienė [10] - Zanavykai ethnographic region (Lithuania), Benedikienė [11] - Dzūkija ethnographic region (Lithuania). In a separate group, we see publications on the semantics and function of traditional towels in the context of ritual practices (Andrushko [12], Herus [13]). Some writings are about towel decoration questions (Kozakevych [14], Kutsyr [15]), as well as the analysis of materials

and techniques of traditional towels and the possibility of their use in modern life [16–18] (Kumpikaitė, Ragaišienė, Rukuižienė, Kot, Nenartavičiūtė). The author of the catalogue of folk towels from the National Museum of Lithuania, Bernotaitė-Beliauskienė [19], considers most of the mentioned issues with rich illustrative content.

The historiography of both countries lacks a comparative analysis of the woven decor of Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian traditional towels, apart from fragmentary mentions. Moreover, the research relevance is determined, on the one hand, by the growing interest in various aspects of Ukrainian life, including its folk art, connected with the Russo-Ukrainian war, and on the other hand, by Ukraine's desire to join the European Community, long-standing ties with which can be revealed by research on ethnographic textiles, in particular Lithuanian ones.

The article's practical importance is in the possibility of using the results obtained for the identification of museum items; the creation of reconstructions using ancient weaving techniques; as a source of creative inspiration for designers of

both countries not only in the field of interior textiles but also in the creation of new prints with ethnic images, ornaments, etc.

The purpose is to analyse the weaving techniques that prevail in the creation of towel decor, to identify common and less frequently used ones, to determine the artistic and stylistic parameters of Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels, and to establish the universal and unique features of their decor.

2. Materials and methods

The study of towels was conducted on two complementary levels: international (Ukrainian and Lithuanian context) and interdisciplinary (technological and artistic features). The research is based on materials of the Ukrainian-Lithuanian scientific project, during which museum items (in particular towels) in the leading museums of both countries were analysed. 384 exhibits from 6 Lithuanian museums and 256 exhibits from 9 Western Ukrainian museums were analysed seeking to investigate the ornamentation of folk towels from Lithuania and the western part of Ukraine.

The most typical western Ukrainian woven towels from western Ukrainian museums (Museum of Ethnography and Crafts of Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (MEC), Klementii Sheptytskyi Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life (MFARL), Andrey Sheptytskyi National Museum in Lviv (NML), National Museum of Hutsulshchyna & Pokuttia Folk Art (NMHP), Zakarpattia Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life (ZMFARL), Ivano-Frankivsk Regional History Museum (IFRHM), Private Collections from Kosmach village, Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk Museum (KPC), Ternopil Regional History Museum (TRHM), Volyn Regional History Museum (VRHM), and Lithuanian towels from Open Air Museum of Lithuania (OAML), Kretinga Museum (KM), History Museum of Lithuania Minor (HMLM), Šilutė Hugo Sheu Museum (SM), National Museum of Lithuania (NML), Lithuanian Museum of Art (LAM), and National M. K. Čiurlionis Museum of Art (NČMA) were investigated.

The results of ethnographic expeditions, conducted in Lithuania: 2008 in the Lithuanian Suvalkija region, in 2011 in the Lithuania Minor ethnographic region, in 2012 in the Žemaitija ethnographic region, in 2016 in the Dzūkija ethnographic region, and in the 2018 in the Aukštaitija ethnographic region by Lithuanian scientists, as well as in 2007 in the Bukovyna region, in 2007 and 2015 in the Hutsul ethnographic region, in 2010 in the Polissia ethnographic region, in 2011 in the western Podillia ethnographic region, in 2012 in the Volyn ethnographic region, in the 2012 and 2015–2017 in the Pokuttia ethnographic region, and in 2018–2019 in the Boiko ethnographic region by Ukrainian scientists, were used for comparison with the results obtained in the museums.

Empirical, theoretical, and graphical methods were used for the investigation. In the first stage, the main role was played by empirical methods. Exhibits were photographed, and fabric structure parameters, which were established by the organoleptic method or using a textile

lens and SMZ 800 Nikon stereoscopic microscope, were determined for warp and weft raw material, decoration or finishing techniques, and so on. The touch sensation of wool, flax, and cotton yarns is described in work [20]. A metric ruler, needle and textile lens were used for other fabric parameters: warp and weft settings, weave, colour repeats, etc. Other fabric parameters (weave, weaving technique) were determined from photos or observing the exhibits. The authors would like to highlight that the article is dedicated to weaving techniques of western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels, because of which we did not pay large attention to other structural parameters of towel fabrics.

Different weaves and weaving techniques were separated in the towels analysed. We would like to highlight the difference between these two fabric characteristics. Weave is the name of specific interweaving of warp and weft, while weaving technique is a wider term, which can join a few weaves. Elementary, derived, reinforced, fancy, diamond, ornamental etc. twill weaves depend on the twill technique, while plain and rib weaves depend on two-harness or beaten-up techniques. Combining Bedford cord with plain weave is characteristic for pick-up, overshot and overlaid weaving techniques. The overshot weaving technique is divided into four-, six- or eight-harness types. The more harnesses, the more of the compound pattern can be woven. The pattern in the overshot technique is made from long floats of pattern weft, which is under the fabric in places without a pattern. The pick-up weaving technique is carried out similarly to the overshot one; but the shed for the pattern weft is prepared by hand or special sticks. Because of that, the pattern of pick-up fabrics can be very large and compound. The same combination of weaves is used for the overlaid weaving technique. It is similar to the pick-up technique, but the pattern weft is different for each pattern element, each of which can be of different colour. Because of this, this weaving technique sometimes reminds us of embroidery. Checked twill or checked satin weaves are characteristic for the damask weaving technique. Weaves with predominating warp floats

are used for the pattern, and negative weaves with predominating weft floats for the background. Such a classification of weaving techniques and weaves are used in Lithuania and Ukraine [21,22]. We tried to use it in this article as well.

The second stage consisted of the analytical processing of the material obtained. Methods of system analysis and classification of weaving techniques from simpler to more complex became leading; methods of formal and structural analysis, as well as artistic features, used to study the woven ornament. Comparative analysis was the main method of identifying the universal and unique parameters of the décor of traditional towels of both countries.

The third stage consisted in the graphic processing of the collected and analysed samples. Plans of fabric weaves were made using specialized software “*Audiniai*” and “*Ornamentika*” for the analysis and design of fabrics and ornament, created at Kaunas University of Technology. In most cases, the weaving schemes created by the “*Ornamentika*” program do not present the final plans of the weave, only drawings of the ornaments [23]. As an illustration, we will analyse a fragment of the drawing of the ornament presented in Figure 1. Black checks mark the places where the pattern is made, i.e. the pattern weft is brought to the surface of the fabric. White checks represent places where the pattern weft has gone under the fabric and does not form the pattern, and blue checks represent places where the pattern and background threads are equally intertwined (so-called “*halftones*”).

One check in the ornament drawing (Figure 1) corresponds to two warp threads and four weft threads in the fabric plan of the weave (Figure 2). The black checks in the plan of the weave correspond to a weave with predominant weft floats, the white checks to a weave with predominant warp floats, and the blue checks are woven in a rib weave in which the number of warp and weft floats is equal.

A drawing of the ornament shown in Figure 1 is presented in Figure 2. In it,

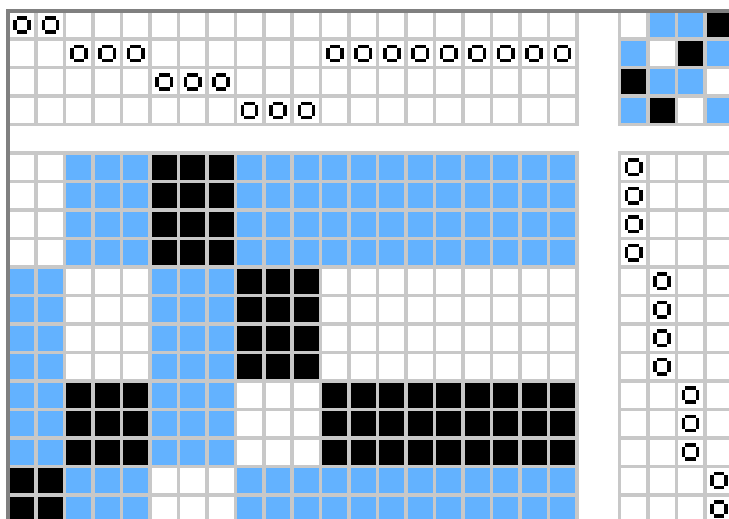


Fig. 1. Fragment of ornament drawing of the overshoot of four-harness fabric

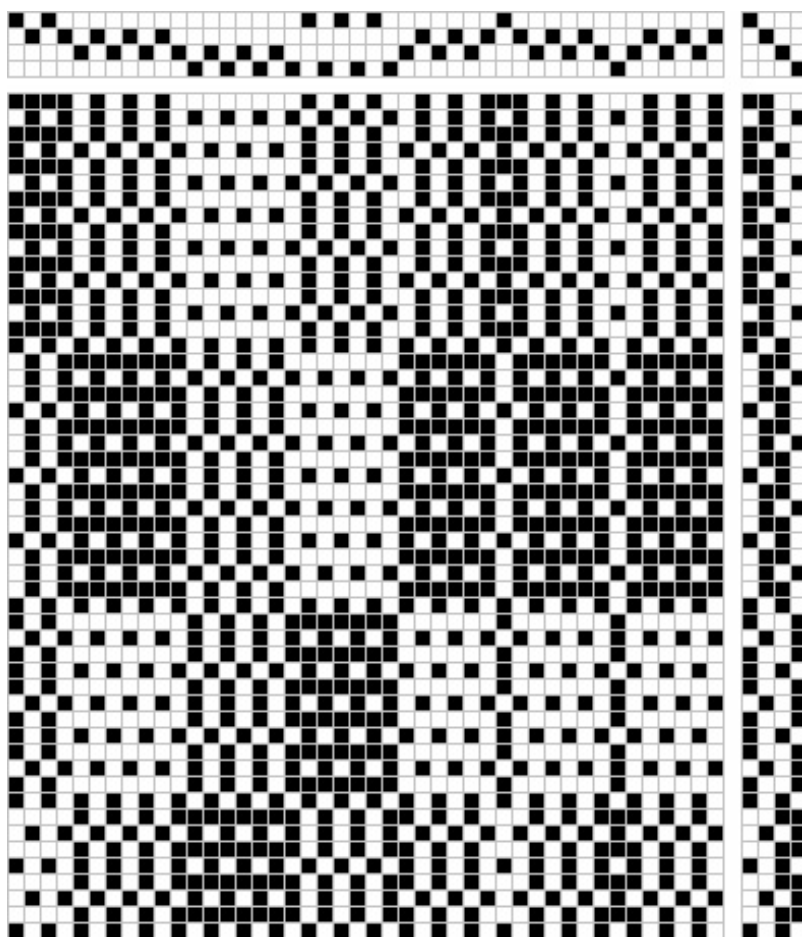


Fig. 2. Plan of weave of a fragment of the overshoot of four-harness fabric

black checks represent warp floats and white checks weft floats. The first group of warps (marked in the first horizontal row in the drawing of the ornament) is drawn-in into the first and second harnesses in the plan of weave (Figure 2), the second

group of warps into the third and second harnesses, the third group of warps into the third and fourth harnesses, and the fourth group of warps into the first and fourth harnesses. Lithuanian tying is used in places where very long pattern weft

floats are formed. These are warp threads used to divide the long weft floats. They are negative interweaving warps in parts of the pattern, which do not increase the total number of harnesses. In the case of the weft pattern analysed, the main warps forming the long weft floats are drawn-in into the third and second harnesses, and Lithuanian tying is introduced every six threads, drawn-in into the first or fourth harnesses at appropriate locations. As we can see, in the areas of the pattern (with predominant weft floats), Lithuanian tying forms negative floats with the main warps, while the number of harnesses remains the same.

The plan of weave (Figure 2) shows the order for tying the treadles in the upper right corner, and the order for pressing the treadles is shown in the lower right corner. The four harnesses are connected to the four treadles. When weaving each weft, you need to press two treadles, which are represented by black checks in the plan of weave, e.g. when the first weft is inserted (the bottom line of the weave), the first and third treadles should be pressed, for the second weft – the third and fourth treadles, etc.

In this way, drawings of the ornament and plans of weave of overshoot fabrics can be made and read.

For pick-up fabrics, only the pattern ornament is presented in the *Results and Discussion* part, without the interlacing of single background or pattern wefts. In the drawings of the ornament of overlaid fabrics, for better visualisation, the pattern of each element is shown in a colour used in the real fabric.

According to the method presented, the research results were illustrated by visual presentations of weaves and ornaments of Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels, which significantly supplemented the theoretical conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

To make towels in both countries, home-made linen, hemp, and woollen threads were used in the second half of the 19th

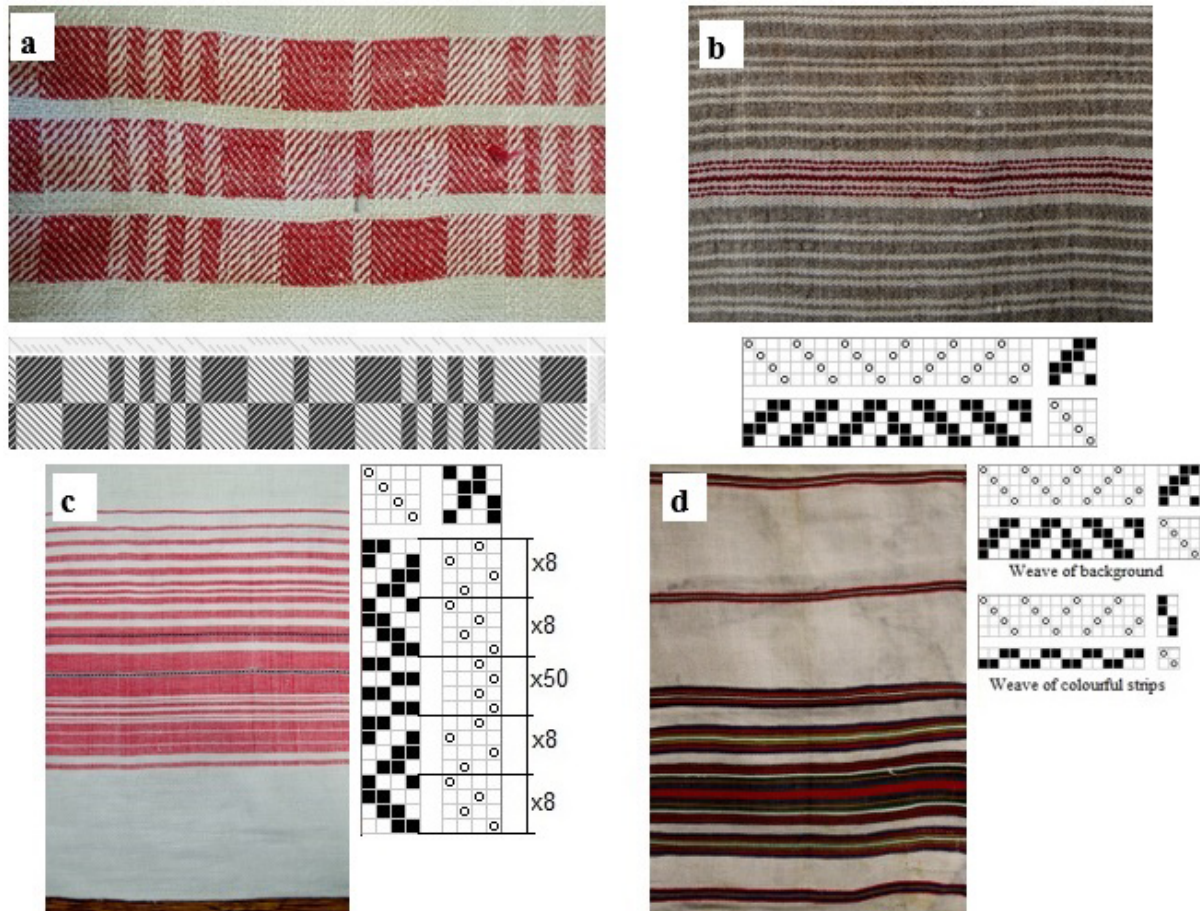


Fig. 3. Simple décor of Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels: a – Sakutėliai village, Šilutė district, Žemaitija, Lithuania, the end of the 19th c., linen, 0.96×0.36 m, OAML LBM-38739, AD-3875; b – Volyn region, Polissia, Ukraine, linen, 1.24×0.4 m, VRHM D-2197; c – Starosillia village, Lutsk district, Volyn region, Polissia, Ukraine, linen, 1.9×0.4 m, VRHM D-273; d – Nyino village, Kamin-Kashyrskiy district, Volyn region, Volyn, Ukraine, linen, 1.78×0.33 m, NML T-2004

and early 20th centuries. From the end of the 19th century, industrially produced cotton and woollen threads were also widely used.

There were weaving techniques: plain, twill, satin, overshot, pick-up, damask, overlaid, five-harnesses, etc. widespread in the western part of Ukrainian and Lithuania. Coloured threads were also very important in the decoration of the item. Coloured threads in the warp or weft were (sometimes in both directions) used to form various simple stripes on items.

Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels of different sizes have practical, ritual, and decorative functions. Transversely striped compositions with places without ornament, polychrome, or ornamental stripes were used on transverse edges (Figure 3 a). Striped or motley towels

with coloured warps, which gave longitudinally striped compositions of plain and twill weaves, were less widespread. Their narrower edges were sometimes accentuated with horizontal coloured stripes. Analogues of towels, where edges and ends are accentuated by coloured stripes, were found in Lithuania as well, but they were not often used in all Lithuanian ethnographic regions. Just a few of these towels were presented in reference [19] and in the collections of NČMA and LAM. Such a pattern of towels was also not found during the Lithuanian expeditions. Therefore, this kind of towel decoration was used in Lithuania but was not popular.

The towels were decorated with strips of red, black (dark blue), or other colours on the transverse edges. In the simplest compositions of towels, one or more coloured bands of different sizes along

the edges of the item were formed. This type of décor has many modifications in both countries: monochromatic bands could be located on the entire surface of the items or only on the narrow side; the bands could be one size or different ones or even with a gradation from small to large; in one colour (most of all red in both counties) or in two or many different ones (Figure 3 b, c, d).

The stripes could be also located on the perimeter of the towels. The background was unbleached linen yarn, sometimes crossed by white single or triple white stripes on a grey background, which repeat rhythmically in the Ukrainian Polissia ethnographic region (Figure 4 a). Analogues of this type of item exist in Lithuania. They were woven from linen, cotton, or linen/cotton yarns using plain or different kinds of twill weaves, as well as overshot and damask weaving

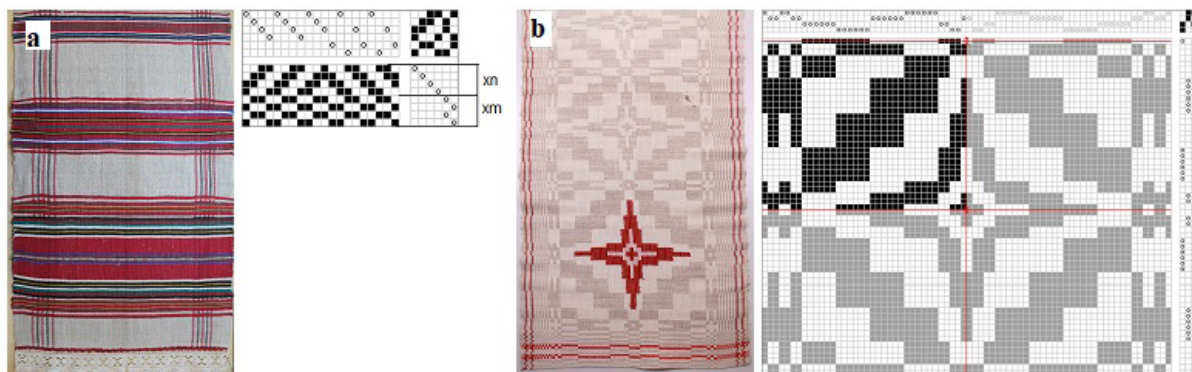


Fig. 4. Different types of stripe décor of western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels: a – Sudche village, Liubeshiv district, Rivne region, Polissia, Ukraine, linen, 1.08×0.33 m, NML T-2313; b – Kanrūkai village, Raseiniai district, Aukštaitija, Lithuania, 4th decade of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 0.38×1.96 m, NČDM E6461

techniques (Figure 4 b). Such towels were usually decorated with red, blue, more rarely red and blue combined, or other colours of cotton “*žičkai*” threads. Red cotton threads were used in Žemaitija and Suvalkija, a combination of red and blue cotton threads in Aukštaitija, multi-coloured interweavings in Dzūkija, and black cotton threads was often used in Lithuania Minor. These results were found during expeditions in different Lithuanian ethnographic regions. References [24-27] confirm that the combination of red and blue cotton threads was often used in the Aukštaitija region. The stripes of cotton threads were narrower in Aukštaitija than in Žemaitija, and the narrowest were in Dzūkija.

There were a lot of different types of Ukrainian ritual towels made by the pick-up technique. Some of them have a small size (about 1.2 by 0.2 m); they were used to cover a basket with Easter bread or fruits and were more decorated. These ornamented towels called “*pysani*” (“*painty*”) were decorated with symmetrically arranged plain or twill transverse coloured stripes, grouped into three to five bands, typical for Hutsul, Pokuttia, and the western part of Podillya Ukrainian ethnographic regions (Figure 5 c). They are characterized by a small pattern of sloping lines, horizontally or vertically directed zigzags “*ears*” (“*kolosok*”), or a grid of rhombuses, called “*eyes*”. Such horizontally striped towels were not found among the Lithuanian towels analysed, but „*skariniai*“ were used for such a purpose in the Lithuanian Dzūkija region. The

end of the fabric (usually up to 20 cm in length) has long braided tassels and sometimes a few red transverse stripes (Figure 5 d). Bread and food wrapped in “*skariniai*” were carried for the people who worked in the fields and were also used for the above-mentioned purpose in Lithuania. This purpose was described in expedition material from the Dzūkija region in references [11,19].

More complicated were “*pavuchok*” (“*small spider*”) towels from the Pokuttia and Hutsul Ukrainian ethnographic regions, which were formed to combine smooth coloured stripes and shallow patterns with “*pavuchok*” (an ornamental motive in the form of a square, or horizontally elongated rectangle, the upper and lower sides of which have three miniature quadrates, which resemble the legs of a spider), “*hrebinyk*” (“*comb*” – an ornamental motive in the form of rectangular teeth), “*shakhivochka*” (“*checkerboard*” – small squares laid out according to the scheme of a straight or diagonal grid) motifs made in the pick-up technique (Figure 6). This small pick-up pattern is not typical for the Lithuanian towels analysed. The analogue can be “*skariniai*”, used to cover baskets in Southeast Lithuania, as mentioned in data from expeditions in the Dzūkija region and in references [11, 24, 25]. They were about 70 cm wide and sometimes had one or a few horizontal red stripes near one end. Usually the tassels at the end of the fabric piece are formed from the loose ends of warp threads up to 50 cm in length and are often braided.

In the western part of Ukraine and Lithuania there were many different ways to decorate towels by the pick-up technique. Pick-up horizontally striped towels have much more ornaments with a concentration of symmetrical structure stripes at the transverse edges (Figure 7 a, b). The most popular motifs in their décor were oblique crosses, “*flowering*” crosses, rhombuses, rosettes (four-, six-, eight-petal), etc. They were complicated, multi-harness achromatic and striped polychrome towels filled with rosettes, cross motifs, and rhombuses. Weaving techniques and decoration forms are similar in Ukrainian Volyn and Polissia ethnographic regions and in Lithuania. The same towels were also found in Lithuania. They were usually woven, with horizontal pick-up stripes at the ends of the towel, while the main towel was woven in another pattern and weave. These decorative stripes were usually made with a red pattern weft. This way of decoration was popular in all Lithuanian ethnographic regions, most often in Aukštaitija. This confirms the data from expeditions in different ethnographic regions and references [19,25-28].

Lithuanians used the pick-up weaving technique not only for the ends but also for the entire towel area (Figure 7 c). Towels with this kind of décor started to be used later, at the beginning of the 20th century. They were popular in the Dzūkija and Suvalkija regions, as well as in other ethnic regions but in less amounts. The main ornamental motifs of the pick-up towels were geometric (squares, rhombuses, circles, etc.), floral

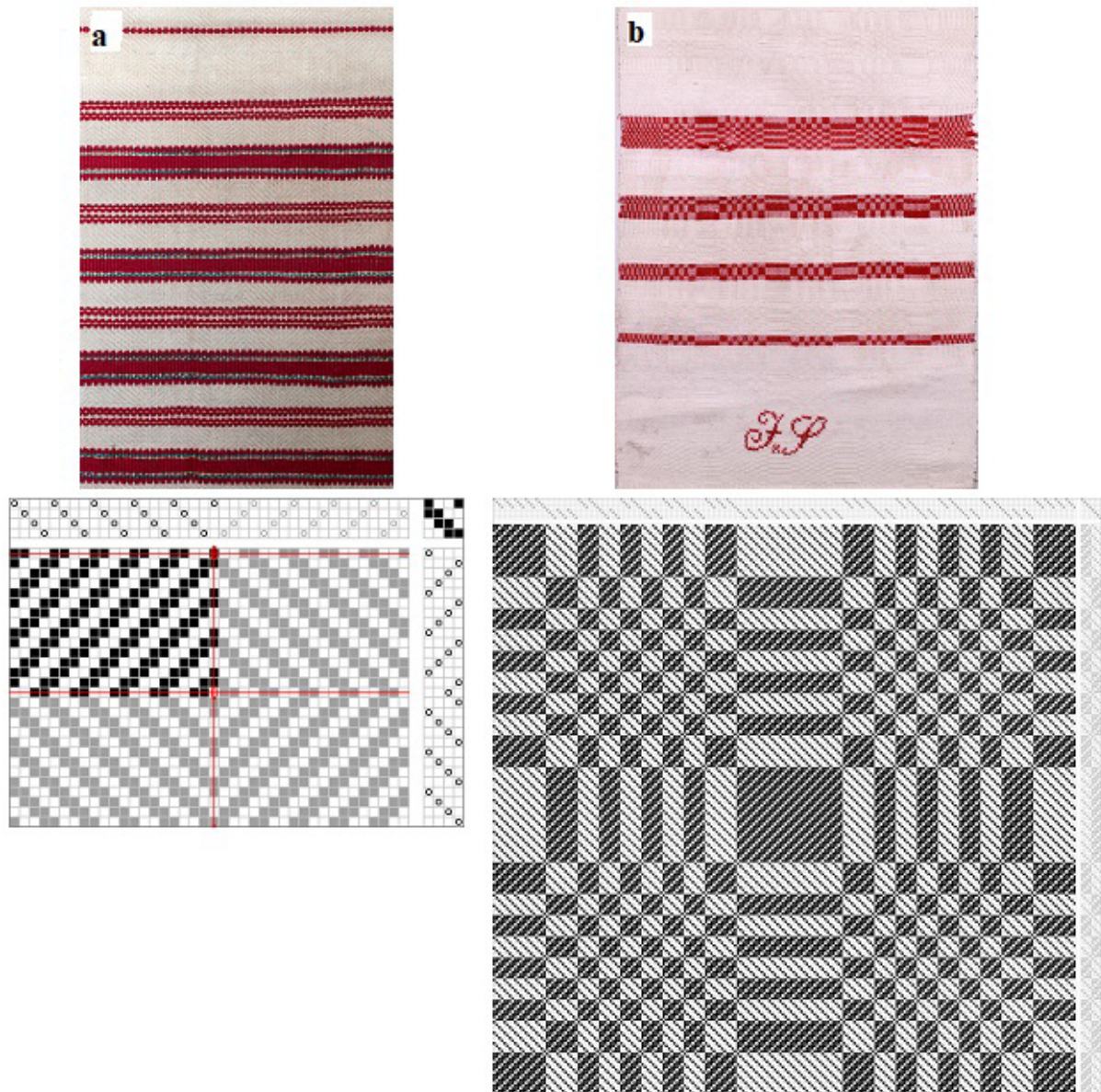


Fig. 5. Different types of stripe décor of towels of western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels: a – Zalischyky town, Chortkiv district, Ternopil region, Western Podillia, Ukraine, linen, 0.84×0.32 m, MEC EP 23060; b – Alytus district, Dzūkija, Lithuania, the 1st half of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 0.39×1.76 m, NČDM E-3571

(flowers, berries, leaves, branches, etc.), and animal (usually different birds). Flowers in pots placed in rhombuses are very popular in the Lithuanian Dzūkija region. This fact confirms the data of the expeditions in this ethnographic region and references [11,19]. The towels were usually woven with cotton or bleached linen warp and linen weft of natural colour to get a more contrast pattern. Several examples of such Ukrainian towels were also found.

The rich and voluminous pick-up decor was inherent in small-sized towels

from Transcarpathia (Ukrainian Boiko ethnographic region). Ten to twelve of these items were hung side by side on it. They were decorative accents in a home environment. Some of the items were filled with ornamental stripes of the pick-up technique. Wider red (cherry) planes without a pattern were combined with single dark blue stripes and white background gaps between them in the simplest type of this composition. Red strips without patterns were combined with dominant patterned strips, the ornament of which was formed by geometric and stylized floral motifs in a more

complicated version of the composition (Figure 8). Rhombuses of concentric structure, the outer edges of which are sometimes completed by straight or hook-shaped shoots or rosettes (four-, six-, and eight-petals), predominated among them. Local features of such items appeared in the form of leading motifs, with density or sparseness of structure, and colour compounds. Towels with a dense strip arrangement were typical for the Tiachiv region and neighbouring districts. Motifs were tightly spaced in pattern items from this region. The arrangement of leading motifs with a similar composition, rhythm

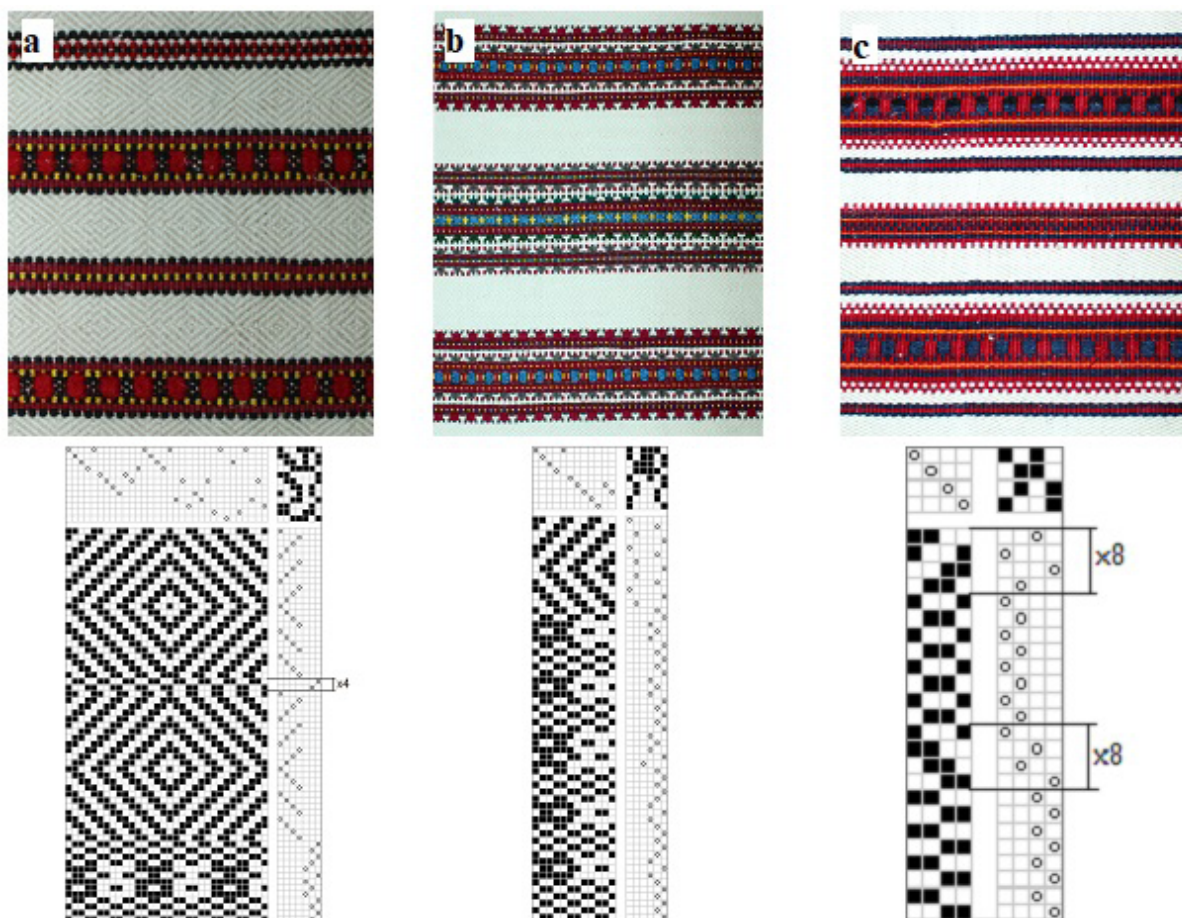


Fig. 6. Ukrainian pick-up towels called "pavuchkovi": a – Khotymyr village, Tlumach district, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Pokuttia, Ukraine, linen, 0.92×0.31 m, NMHP 6543 B2892; b – Kornych village, Kolomyia district, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Pokuttia, Ukraine, linen, 1.20×0.35 m, NMHP 4417 B1997; c – Kobaku village, Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Hutsulshchyna, Ukraine, linen, 0.48×0.25 m, NMHP 11978 B4146

and colour strips is much freer, with a longer distance from each other. The background between them is not densely filled with small elements in items from the Khust, Mukachevo, and Uzhgorod districts. Their colouring was polychrome. The main red and cherry colours were blended with yellow, orange, and green. Similar items did not exist in Lithuania, but almost all the above-mentioned types of towels, decorated with colourful cotton threads, were used for the decoration of the interior of living houses in all the ethnographic regions. Towels together with bedspreads were the main accents for interior decoration. The towels were hung on hooks and covered with a special decorative curtain on a special hanging called a "ragolė" in Lithuania Minor. Therefore, towels were less decorative in this region, but the curtain was usually abundantly decorated with embroidery [29]. These results also confirm the results

of the expedition in the Lithuanian Minor region.

Ornamental strips with main motifs of rosettes, crosses were placed in the centre or across the whole field of items in towels for Easter baskets from the Lemko Region, called "perebyrani" (not literally "go through the threads") (Figure 9). They are distinguished from other Western Ukrainian towels made by the pick-up technique by the arrangement of motifs, their smooth lines, and polychromies. The composition of the towels is based on contrasting juxtapositions of large and small motifs, and the alternation of narrow ribbons densely filled with small elements and wide ones, in which the motifs stand somewhat apart from each other. We did not find towels of similar décor in Lithuanian museum collections or during the expeditions in all Lithuanian ethnographic regions. No information

on such a way of ornamentation of Lithuanian folk towels was found in the literature analysed. Drawings of ornament, but not the plans of weave of overlaid fabrics, are presented in Figure 9. The colourful checks show places with a pattern, the white checks – places without a pattern. Colours differ, because each element of the pattern is of a different colour in overlaid fabrics. For better understanding, the colours are similar to the original ones of pattern places in the overlaid fabric.

The damask weaving technique is the most popular in Lithuanian folk towels. The pattern is made from two different opposite weaves. Warp floats predominate in one weave and weft floats in another weave. Checked twills or checked satin weaves were used for this weaving technique (Figure 10). Sometimes weaves form a checked

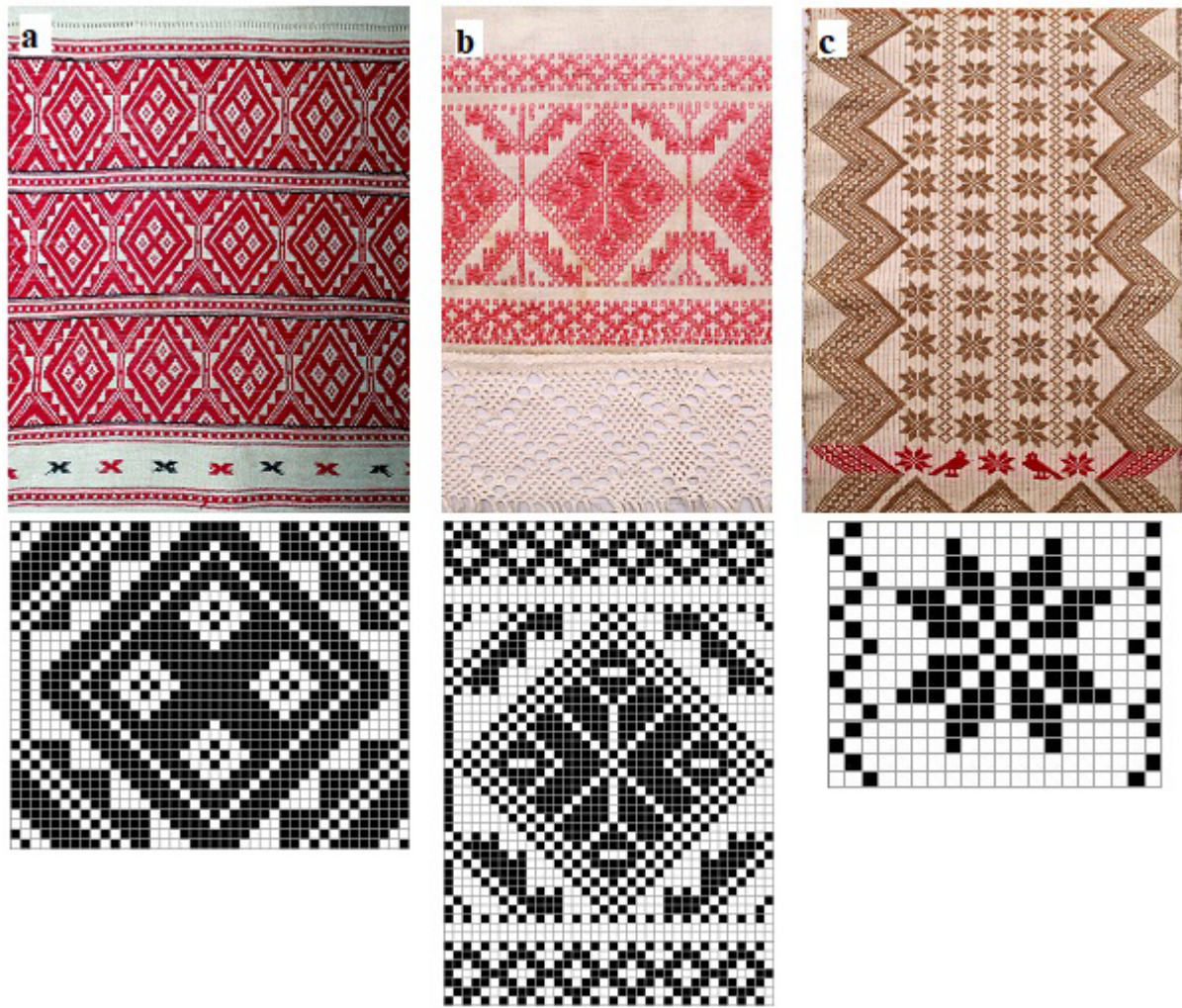


Fig. 7. Pick-up towels: a – Blizhovo village, Rokytno district, Rivne region, Polissia, Ukraine, linen, 1.06×0.31 m, MEC EP76057; b – Utena district, Aukštaitija, Lithuania, the beginning of the 20th c., linen, 0.4×1.8 m, NČDM E3003; c – Marcinkonys district, Varėna district, Dzūkija, Lithuania, the end of the 19th c. – the beginning of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 0.36×1.76 m, NČDM V5-331

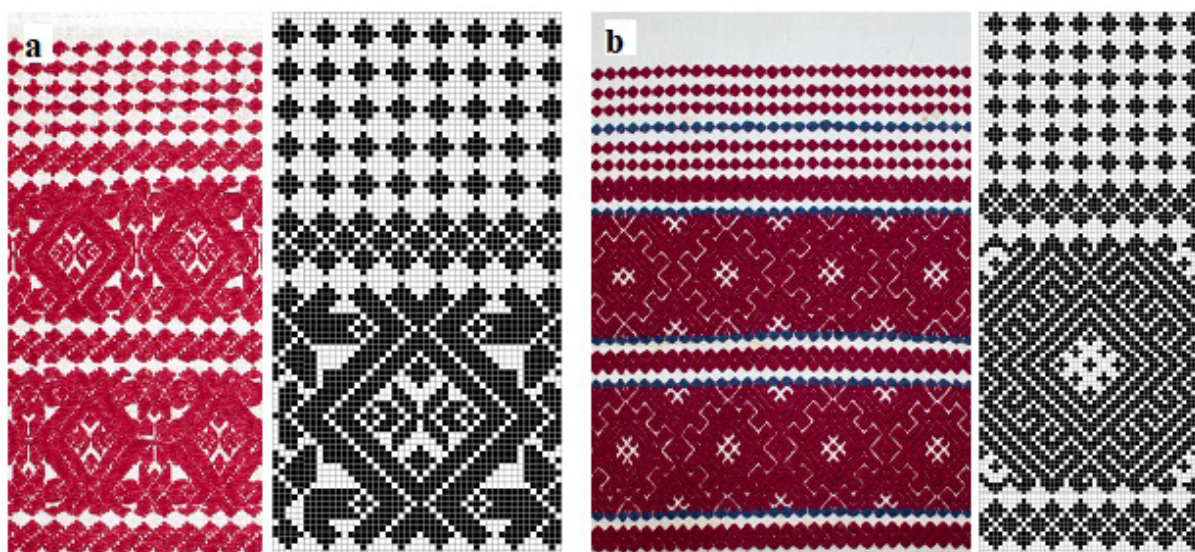


Fig. 8. Ukrainian Transcarpathian pick-up towels called "na hriedku": a – Steblivka village, Khust district, Zakarpattia region, Boiko, Ukraine, linen, 0.56×0.41 m, MEC EP73309; b – ibidem, 0.62×0.4 m, MEC EP81678



Fig. 9. Ukrainian pick-up towels "perebyrani": a – Likitsary village, Perechyn district, Zakarpattia region, Lemko, Ukraine, linen, 0.61×0.43 m, ZMFARL E-347; b – Dubrynych village, Perechyn district, Zakarpattia region, Lemko, Ukraine, linen, 0.67×0.48 m, ZMFARL



Fig. 10. Damask towels: a – Kirdeikiai village, Utena district, Aukštaitija, Lithuania, the beginning of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 0.32×1.79 m, NČDM E5106; b – Salos village, Ignalina district, Aukštaitija, Lithuania, the beginning of the 20th c., linen, 0.3×1.69 m, NČDM E6283

pattern, sometimes a longitudinal pattern. In the last case, horizontal stripes of a checked pattern decorate the towel ends. The main motives were checks, squares, stripes, and other motives – cat's foot, cucumber, apples, crosses,

etc. These towels were woven using 8, 10, 12 and 16 harnesses. The damask towels were difficult to weave due to the large number of harnesses. During the expeditions, it was established that only one or few women in the village knew

how to weave with the damask weaving technique, especially with a large number of harnesses. This weaving technique was described in detail in references [17-19,24-28]. The damask technique is not used amongst Ukrainian towels.

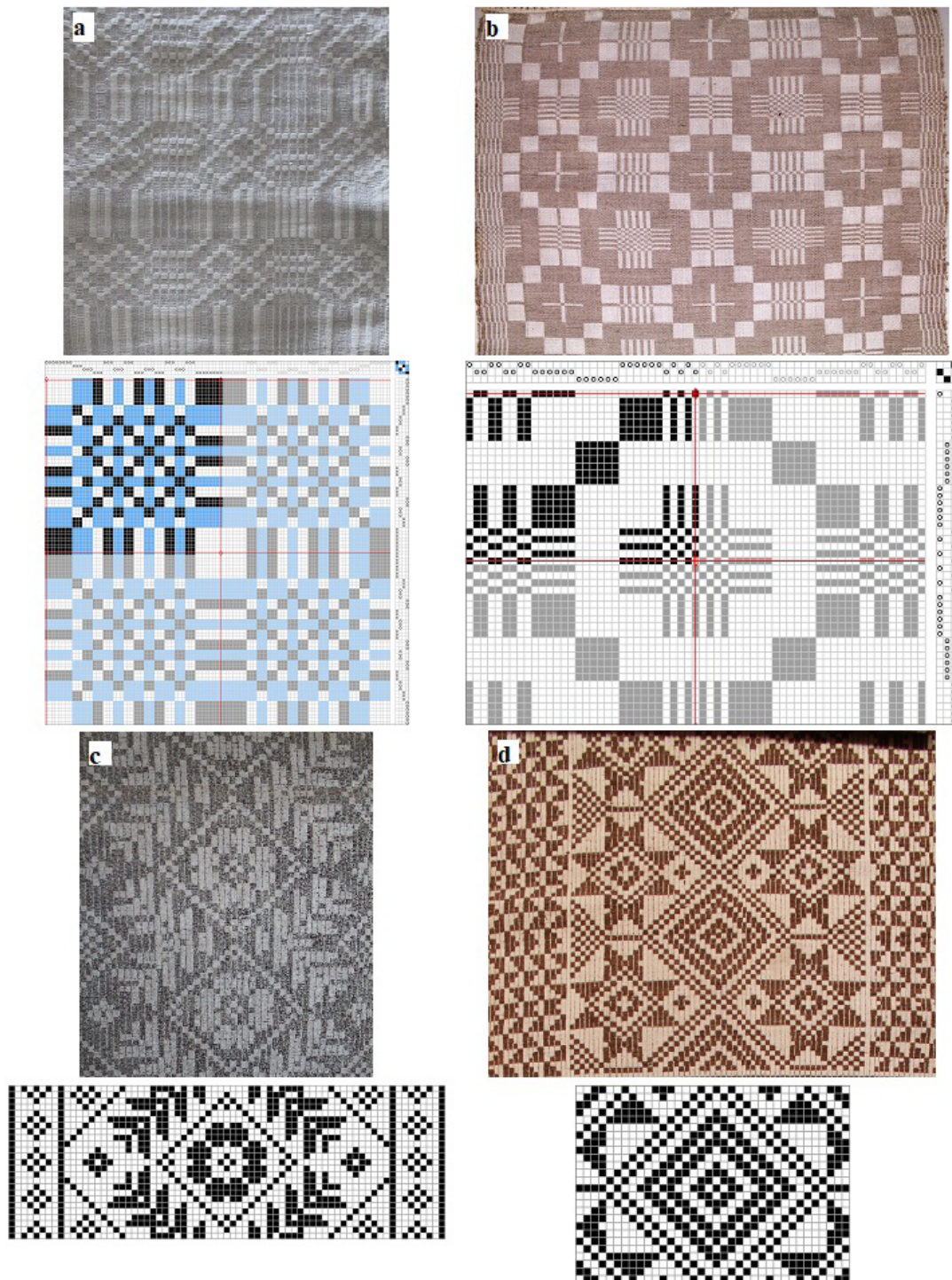


Fig. 11. Ukrainian and Lithuanian overshoot and pick-up towels: a – Hrabove village, Starovyzhiv district, Volyn region, Polissia, Ukraine, linen, 1.18×0.43 m, VRHM; b – Latežeris village, Varėna district, Dzūkija, Lithuania, the beginning of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 0.41×1.83 m, NČDM E6681; c – Kamin-Kashyrskiyi town, Volyn region, Polissia, Ukraine, linen, 2.88×0.32 m, NML T-2000; d – Varėna district, Dzūkija, Lithuania, manufacturing period unknown, cotton, linen, 0.37×1.80 m, NČDM E3002

The overshoot weaving technique is also often used for Lithuanian towels. These towels can be woven with four or eight, and, in rarer cases, more harnesses. Towels decorated in the same way came into use in the territory of Ukrainian Volyn and Western Polissia in the 1950s.

Their ornamental content, arrangement of compositional elements, and colour scheme are often close, and sometimes identical to Lithuanian items (Figure 11). The most popular motives of overshoot Lithuanian towels were cat's foot, cucumbers, squares and windows, circles

or apples, oak leaves, snowflakes in four-harness weaves and crosses, harrows, cucumbers, and clovers in eight-harness weaves. Usually, the combinations of a few motives were used in one towel. The motives of overshoot towels are described in more detail in references [5, 11, 17, 18,



Fig. 12. Lithuanian compound overshoot, pick-up and damask towels: a – Pūziniškis village, Utena district, Aukštaitija, Lithuania, the 1st half of the 20th c., linen, 1.92×0.4 m, NČDM E5283; b – Lazdijai district, Dzūkija, Lithuania, the 1st half of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 1.74×0.37 m, NČDM E1402; c – Alytus district, Dzūkija, Lithuania, the beginning of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 2.46×0.39 m, NČDM E2796; d – Šakiai district, Suvalkija, Lithuania, the 1st half of the 20th c., cotton, linen, 2.2×0.37 m, NČDM E4101

24-26]. The most popular motifs of the towels are also confirmed in data from expeditions in different ethnographic regions of Lithuania. Similar overshoot towels were also found in Ukraine in lower numbers. Figure 11 represents not a plan of weave but a drawing of a towel's ornament. Three colours are seen in some pictures – black checks show places in the fabric where a pattern is formed, white checks – places without a pattern, and blue checks – places where

background and pattern threads are interwoven equally (halftones).

Some of Lithuanian overshoot, pick-up and damask towels are very unique and compound. Their weaving process was usually very difficult due to the large number of harnesses on the weaving loom. From 8 to 20 harnesses can be used for such fabrics. The ornamental motifs are also more compound than in the overshoot of four-harness fabrics. The most common

motifs were “cucumbers”, “harrows”, “leaves”, “snowflakes”, “crosses”, “apples”, “intersecting circles”, “clovers”, etc. A few examples of Lithuanian towels are presented in Figure 12. Just one or a few women knew how to weave such complicated patterns, confirmed during the expeditions in all Lithuanian ethnographic regions. These weaving techniques can be observed in the whole of Lithuania, but they were not popular because of the compoundness of weaving.

4. Conclusions

Common features of Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels:

1. Using the same weaving techniques to make towels: plain, rib, twill weaves, pick-up, overshot, and overlaid techniques. In western Ukraine and Lithuania, different weaving techniques could be combined into one item. Twill and pick-up combinations were common. A textured background was made with twill and complex coloured ornaments with the pick-up technique.
2. In the items' decoration, the transverse edges of the towels were more often emphasized with patterns, much less the middle, the entire plane, or the perimeter of the items.
3. In towels of both countries a symmetrical arrangement of ornamental strips and motifs (rhombuses, rosettes, oblique crosses) in relation to the center of the items dominated.
4. In the items of both countries, achromatic threads of natural colour predominated, which were sometimes combined with black and red threads in patterned compositions.

Distinctive features of Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian towels:

1. In the Western Ukrainian territories, there was a greater number of types and shapes of towels according to their purpose: from small, almost square, to elongated vertically. Moreover, the Lithuanian ones are less distinct in form.
2. Western Ukrainian towels are characterized by a greater variety of ornamental arrangement schemes (except for the horizontal symmetrical arrangement at the two transverse ends) – at one end; a combination of vertical and horizontal patterned stripes in the decor of one item. Instead, in Lithuanian towels, asymmetric compositions of stripes relative to the horizontal axis of symmetry at the transverse ends of the items are more common.
3. Western Ukrainian cross-striped towels made by the pick-up technique are much richer and more diverse in decor than Lithuanian items made by the same technique. Small towels of the Ukrainian Boiko and Lemko regions could be almost completely filled with patterns in this technique. Instead, Lithuanians used the pick-up

weaving technique not only for the ends but also for the whole area of the towel. They were the most popular in the Dzūkija and Suvalkija regions.

4. Moreover, compared to similar Ukrainian towels, Lithuanian ones woven by the overshot and damask techniques are distinguished by a greater variety of schemes and a wealth of ornamental compositions.

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