

= Sprang =

Sprang is an ancient method of constructing fabric that has a natural elasticity . Its appearance is similar to netting , but unlike netting sprang is constructed entirely from warp threads . Archaeological evidence indicates that sprang predates knitting ; the two needlework forms bear a visible resemblance and serve similar functions but require different production techniques .

Although examples of sprang have been unearthed from as early as the bronze age , sprang was almost entirely undocumented in written records until the late nineteenth century when archaeological finds generated interest in Europe . Museum examples of sprang had been misidentified as knitting or lace until discoveries of ancient examples prompted reexamination of newer pieces . Subsequently , sprang has been identified in a variety of cultures and traditions across several continents . Its practice as a folk art waned during the twentieth century and sprang traditions have disappeared in most locales . Knitting has largely supplanted sprang .

= = Technique = =

In principle , sprang may be regarded as a practical application of the fiber manipulation techniques used in the children 's game known as cat 's cradle . Sprang is made by preparing a set of warp threads either on a rectangular frame or between a pair of beams . The craftsperson then generates a fabric by interlinking the warp threads . Unlike most textile production techniques that add new rows at the end of completed rows , sprang works upon the center of a group of fibers and the material grows inward from both ends with symmetrical top and bottom halves . The craftsperson must maintain control of the center area or the structure unravels : most sprang worked upon has too many fibers to keep in hand , so rods or sticks maintain the appropriate fiber positions . The fiber manipulation itself is done by the craftsperson 's fingers . Decorative patterns may be generated by regular variations in the fiber crossings . As crossings accumulate the craftsperson beats the material flat with a stick . Work continues with the material growing from both edges toward the middle until the center band becomes too tight to continue work . The completed fabric is either separated into two identical items or permanently secured at the middle to stabilize the contrary twists . In traditions where two halves of sprang are not severed by cutting , this center seam is a telltale sign of sprang manufacture .

= = History and uses = =

The English word sprang is of Swedish origin . It may have spread southward toward the Mediterranean during the iron age or possibly the late bronze age . The earliest surviving example of sprang is a hair net , c . 1400 B.C. , that was recovered from a bog in Denmark . Most archaeological finds of sprang fabric come from the later classical era and early Dark Ages : locations include Norway ( third to fifth centuries A.D. ) , Switzerland , Egypt ( possibly twenty @-@ second dynasty , also early Coptic ) , and various Roman sites . Use of sprang has also been conjectured from archaeological recoveries of ancient looms and from depictions in period artwork .

Sprang is also an indigenous needlework technique among the peoples of South America , with the earliest known examples dating from before 900 A.D. among the Paracas culture and Nazca culture in present @-@ day Peru . Sprang has also been noted in the Middle East , Central Asia , the Indian Subcontinent , and North America . Indigenous North American sprang includes woolen scarves by the Ho @-@ Chunk of Wisconsin , and Hopi wedding sashes . The natural elasticity of sprang makes it suitable for stockings , hair nets , sleeves , bags , scarves , and other purposes where pliant material is required . Most sprang needlework is utilitarian and hence was overlooked by scholars until late in its history , according to needlework historian Catherine Amoroso Leslie .

In fact , it was not until the nineteenth century and the discovery of sprang at archaeological sites that it was recognized as a separate and distinct form of needlework . Many museum objects that were wrongly classified as knitting or lace have now been correctly identified as sprang .

Following nearly simultaneous archaeological finds in Denmark and Egypt during the 1870s , an

example of Coptic sprang brought to Austria in 1882 inspired the management of a factory near Vienna to manufacture sprang hammocks . The Paris World 's Fair of 1889 included an exhibit that duplicated ancient sprang , which led to renewed interest in the technique . Traditionally , cultures that practiced sprang had not produced written records of its manufacture or use . Shortly after the Paris exhibition , living traditions of sprang began to be documented . During the 1890s Ukrainian villagers were identified as practicing sprang in the manufacture of women 's caps . Soon afterward , local sprang production for various garments was also documented in parts of Eastern Europe and in Denmark . Local European traditions generally endured until the mid @-@ twentieth century . Sprang is , however , largely a historical technique that has been supplanted for most purposes by the later invention of knitting , whose earliest known example dates from the third century A.D.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a military fashion of decorative sprang sashes in silk known as faja in Spain gained international popularity among generals as a distinguishing ornament of rank . The fashion spread to northern Europe and to North America . George Washington wore a sash made of red silk sprang around the year 1779 .

= = Contemporary sprang = =

In a study of folk textiles of Anatolia , Greece , Linda Welters identifies the zonari as a long fringed belt constructed of sprang . The zonari is a rounded material of indeterminate length around 2 or 3 meters long and is wrapped multiple times when worn . From interviews conducted during the 1980s , Welters found that the technique was practiced by elderly women and regarded as a specialized skill which they worked on pairs of beams . Their vocabulary had no special term to correspond with sprang , so they referred to it with descriptive phrases such as knitting with sticks , plaiting , and weaving without passing through . The zonari are made from sheep 's wool hand spun with a drop spindle and dyed red , blue , or black depending on local custom . Zonari belts are a custom in much of Argolida and Corinthia where they are traditional dowry items worn by women from marriage onward and associated with fertility and donned on ritual occasions . Welters observes that these were mostly owned and worn by older women .

The sprang technique also survives as a traditional method for making hammocks in Guatemala , Mexico , and Colombia , and also in Colombia for making a shopping bag known as mechita . The work in these locations is generally performed on a backstrap loom . Handmade Mesoamerican sprang hammocks continue to be produced for export to a variety of international markets . Additionally , sprang remains in use for making silk trouser drawstrings for male and female attire in Punjab in India & Pakistan . There village women still use the technique to create colourful check / stippled / zigzag designs that have been handed down the generations . They finish the ends of the work using a weaving technique to make a hard 2inch 'harar ' with bunched twisted threads & knot . These sprang drawstrings are also used for the ' ghugrai ' [ full long skirts worn traditionally by Punjabi women : -it has been fashionable at times to have the drawstring ends on show , hanging with the ' harar ' having colourful pom @-@ poms or jewellery added on . The sprang technique is also used to make the black ' doria ' traditionally plaited into women 's hair- they also have a colourful ' harar ' ending fixed at the end. These can be found on sale in Punjab even now . Hairnets , baby cradles , hanging baskets for fruit were also made . In attempts to retain traditional Punjabi culture , there are cultural craft centres in and around Jullunder where sprang technique is one of several old textile arts being passed on to young craftspeople . Contemporary art textiles sometimes employ sprang in wall hangings .