

Complete Charts for

A Renaissance Sampler

from the Victoria & Albert Museum

including 17 patterns

by

Gunilla Borgefors



The sampler. Charts are given for the 17 motifs worked in tent stitch

Table of Contents

The Sampler	4
Technicalities	4
The Charts	
Parrot with red berries	5
<i>Parrot variations</i>	6
Leopard	7
Wild rose	9
Hare	11
Snake	12
Peacock	13
Tulip	15
Violet	17
Strawberry	19
Grapes	21
Rose	23
Caterpillar	26
Hart	27
Carnation	29
Lion	31
Cornflower	33
Pomegranate	35

The Sampler

The patterns in this book originate from a spot sampler, dating from the first half of the 17th century, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. There are 17 motifs realistically depicting plants and animals, together with some more geometrical designs at the bottom. The sampler material is silk yarn on linen canvas and the motifs are mostly worked in tent stitch. The stitches are fairly small and many different shades of silk were used.

Many such small motifs depicting the natural world were embroidered in tent and cross stitch in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The motifs were later cut out and applied to other fabrics, such as velvet or damask, to decorate various domestic textiles. These motif canvases were often made by amateur embroiderers, among them Mary Queen of Scots in her captivity. Advantages were that canvas is easy to work on, the small pieces were easily carried, and the final decision on arrangement of motifs could be made last. Famous examples of this technique that have survived are the Oxburgh bed hangings, some at Hardwick Hall and some at Victoria and Albert Museum, and the uncut canvases at Traquair House.


It should be remembered that when the sampler was made, the motifs were not only regarded as beautiful images, but usually had deep symbolic religious meanings. The particular flowers selected for this sampler are found repeatedly on both church and secular textiles. As an example, the rose is closely associated with the Virgin Mary. Moreover, various flowers and animals were used as badges for different royal and noble families. The sources of the motifs were often contemporary herbals and natural history books. Printing methods had improved and these types of books became reasonably available and very popular at this time.

The ambition here has been to give charts for all the 17 naturalistic motifs in the sampler, charts that follow the original as closely as possible. From these charts endless variations can be created, for example using different colourways, using only part of a motif, as a single rose or strawberry, or combining these patterns with geometrical borders and backgrounds.

Technicalities

Two types of stitches occur in the charts: squares (in original tent stitch) and lines (in original backstitch). In the original there are also a few occurrences of other stitches, but these have been converted to combinations of square and line stitch.

The charts can be used for many different techniques: cross stitch, half cross stitch, needlepoint, petit point, gobeline stitch, hooked rugs, beading, and even knitting and crochet. In some techniques, the backstitches cannot be included. Because of the many possibilities, no instructions relating to techniques will be given here, nor will there be suggestions of materials to use. The charts are illustrated by the motifs sewn in tent stitch on Penelope canvas using stranded cotton on a background of beige wool gobeline stitch.

The original silk yarn colours are reasonably well preserved, but it is naturally impossible to have an exact idea of the original colours. They were probably brighter than those seen today. In the patterns many different shades of the same colour are usually used. An effort has been made to keep this richness of shades, as it is essential to the beauty of the final results. All colours will be given in the following system: Colour/blend - brightness. *Colour* is a "pure" colour, such as green or yellow. *Blend*, where used, indicates that the colour is between basic colours, so that a yellowish green is denoted "green/yellow" and a greenish yellow "yellow/green". The *brightness* uses the scale: almost black - very dark - dark - medium - light - very light - almost white. The same symbol is used for the same colour in all charts. Thus  is always Red - medium.

In addition to the size and the number of colours for each chart, the number of stitches of each colour is given. This is a help in estimating how much yarn is needed. Make a test square of 7 x 7 stitches and measure how much yarn was used. Double this amount and add 25% for ends, to get the amount needed for 100 stitches. Thus, if 50 cm (20 inches) of yarn was used in the test square, about 1,25 m (50 inches) will be necessary for 100 stitches.

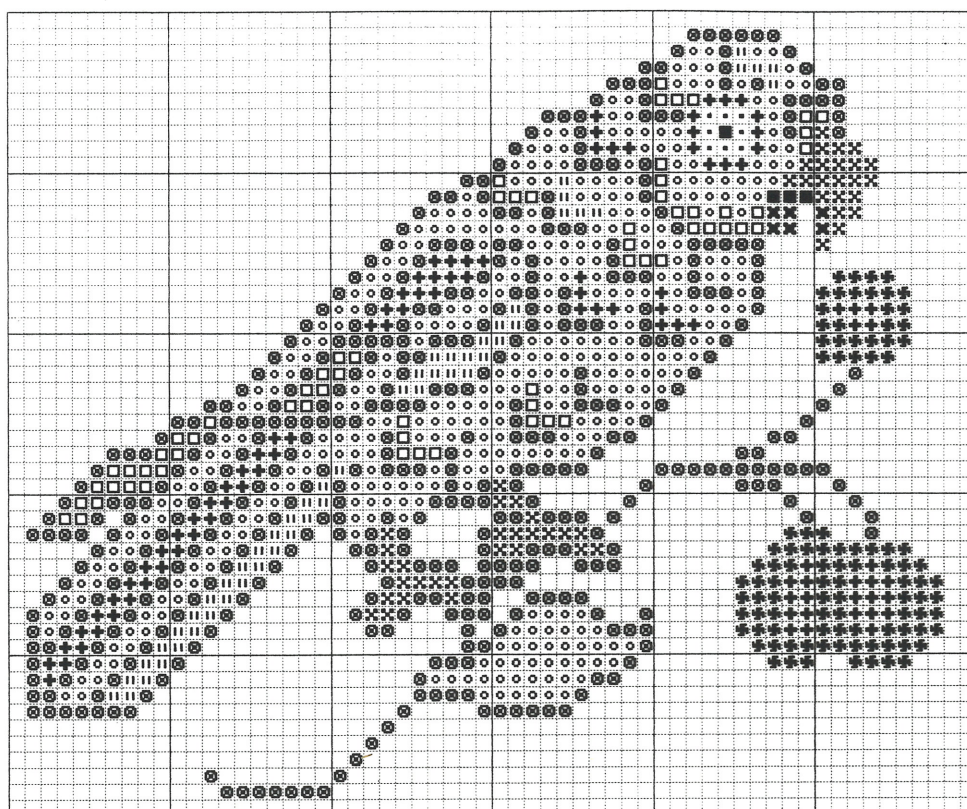
The "Parrot with red berries" slip is used to exemplify the possibilities of variations of a pattern. The parrot pattern was worked in cross stitch on beige aida, using eight different colourways. This example also shows the effect of mirroring the pattern to get a left (original) and a right version.

Parrot with red berries

Size: 57 times 48 stitches. Ten colours.

Square stitches:

■	Black	4
■	Grey - dark	6
■	Grey - medium	49
□	White	8
■	Red - dark	101
+	Red - medium	98
	Yellow - light	53
⊗	Green - very dark	437
⊙	Green/yellow - light	388
□	Blue - medium	64



Parrot variations

The parrot pattern is shown in eight different colourways: white, yellow, orange, red, green, blue, lilac, and black. The berries also have the same colours, but in a completely different order. Half the patterns have been mirrored, and the eight birds are bound together with a simple line of stitches representing a vine. The technique is cross stitch in stranded cotton on aida cloth.



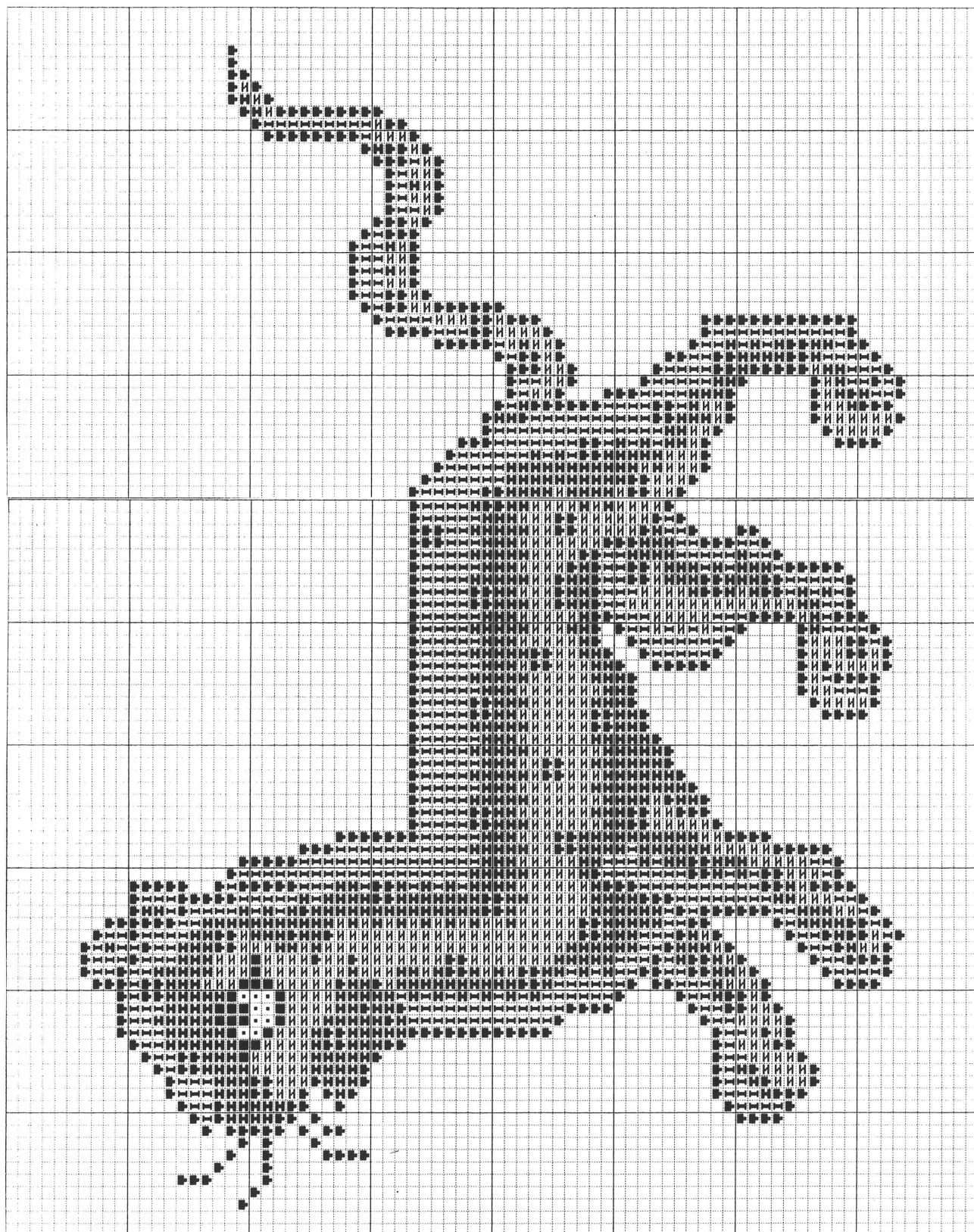
Leopard



Size: 95 times 68 stitches. Six colours.

Square stitches:

■	Black	20
□	White	9
■	Brown - dark	674
■	Brown/yellow - medium	593
■	Yellow/grey - dark	580
■	Yellow/grey - medium	497














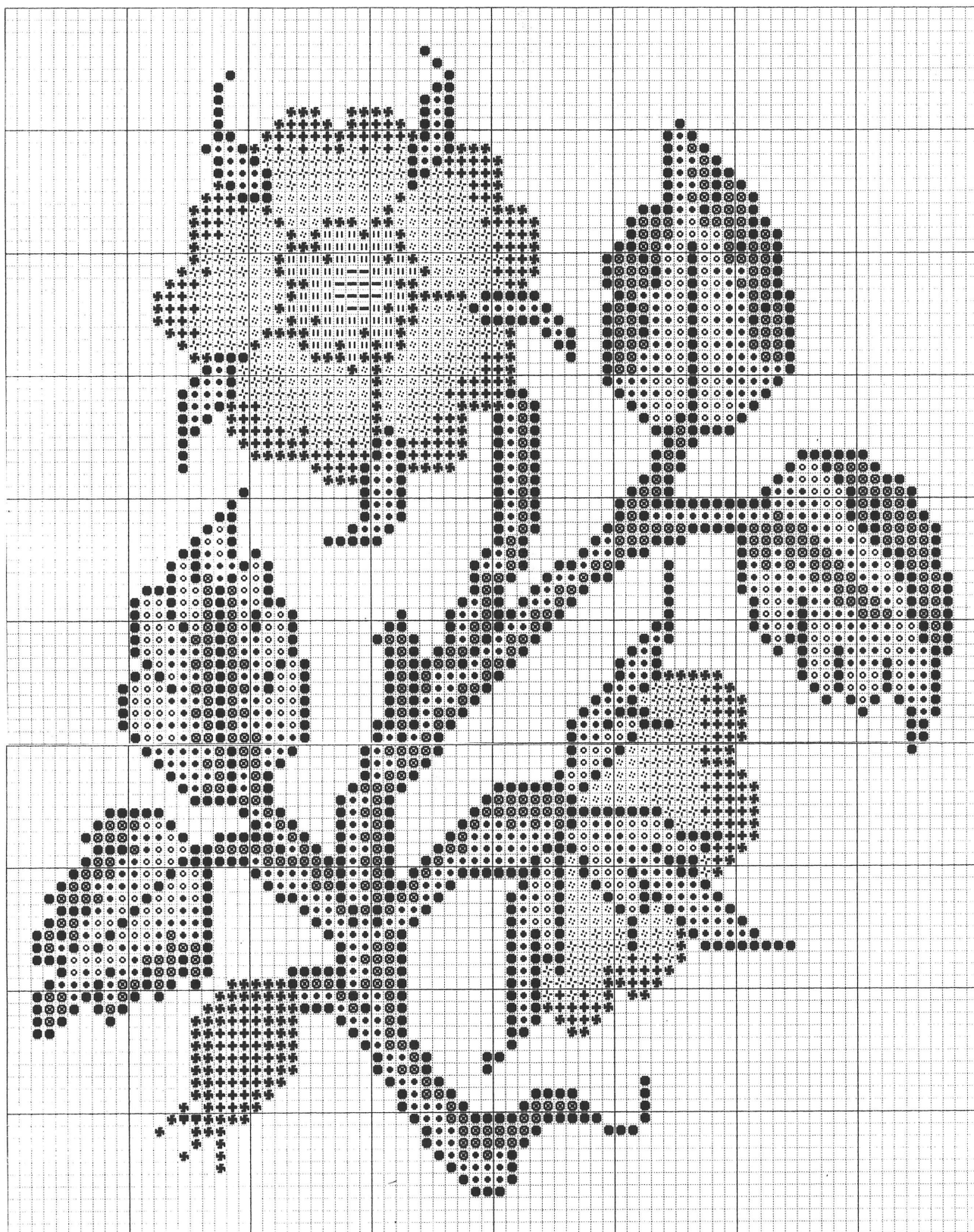
Wild rose



Size: 76 times 94 stitches. Eleven colours.

Square stitches:

	Red - dark	252		Yellow - light	62
	Red - medium	199		Green - almost black	842
	Pink - light	267		Green - very dark	447
	Pink - almost white	184		Green - medium	537
	Brown - dark	2		Green/yellow - light	276
	Yellow - medium	12			

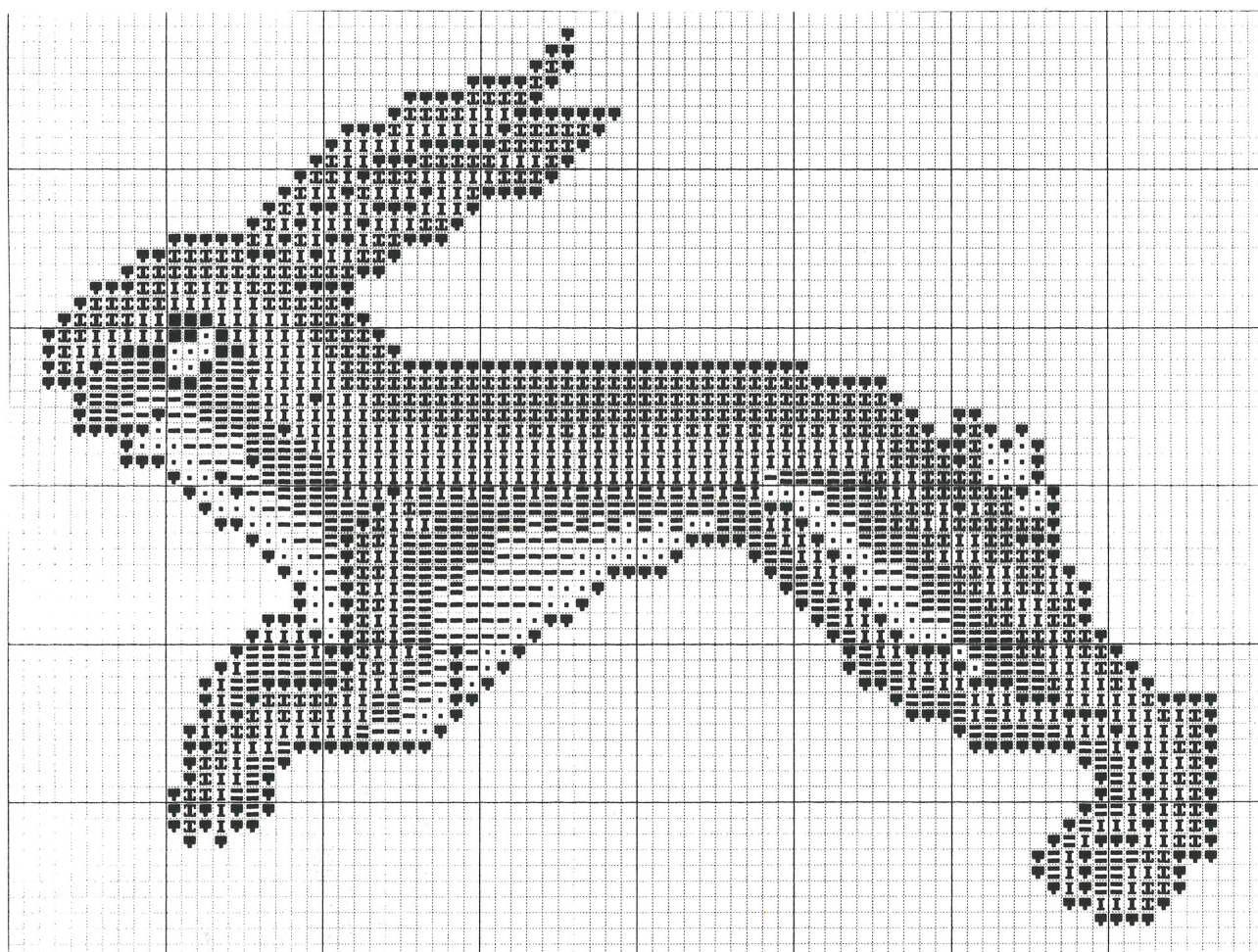


Hare

Size: 75 times 57 stitches. Seven colours.

Square stitches:

■	Black	15
□	White	100
■	Brown - dark	366
■	Brown/yellow - dark	353
■	Brown/yellow - medium	410
■	Yellow - dark	252
■	Yellow - medium	99

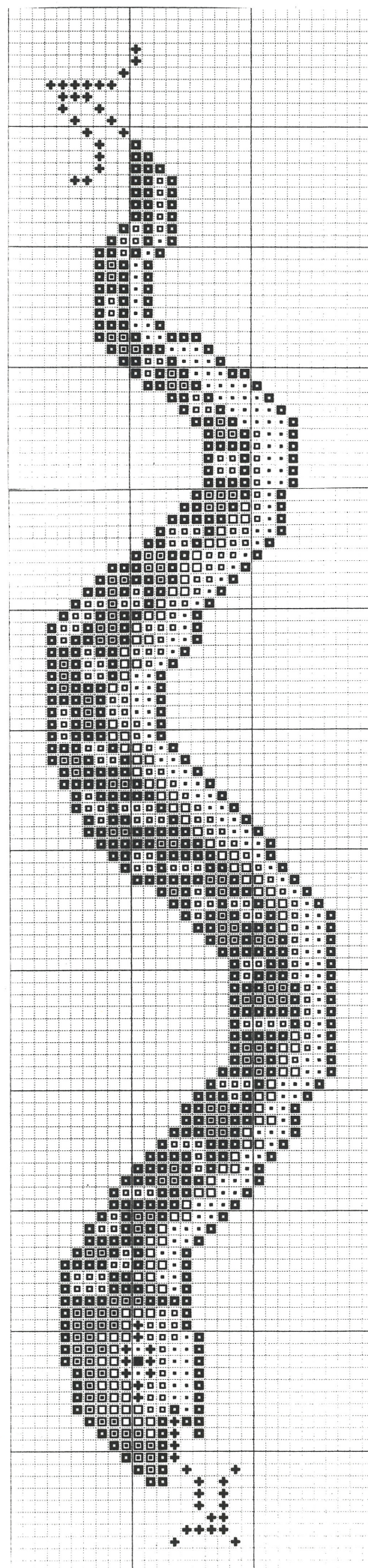


Snake

Size: 125 times 24 stitches. Seven colours.

Square stitches:

■	Black	1
□	White	167
+	Red - medium	53
▣	Blue - almost black	479
▤	Blue - dark	117
▥	Blue - medium	110
▦	Blue - very light	190



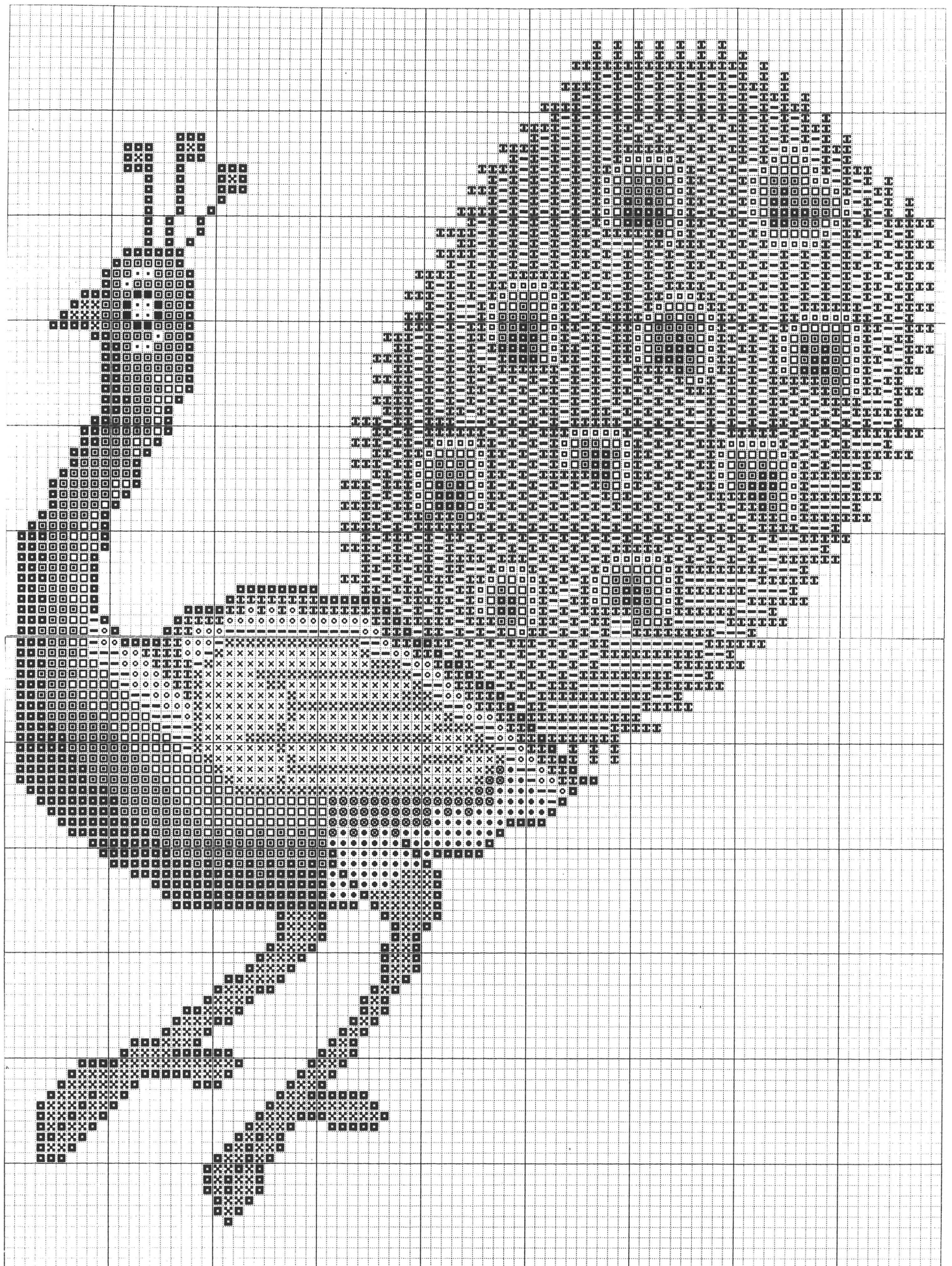
Peacock



Size: 88 times 113 stitches. Thirteen colours.

Square stitches:

■	Black	8	■	Green - medium	84
■	Grey - medium	329	■	Green/yellow - light	73
■	Grey - light	208	■	Blue - almost black	647
■	White	10	■	Blue - dark	377
■	Brown/yellow - dark	1395	■	Blue - medium	300
■	Yellow - medium	846	■	Blue - very light	167
■	Green - very dark	47			














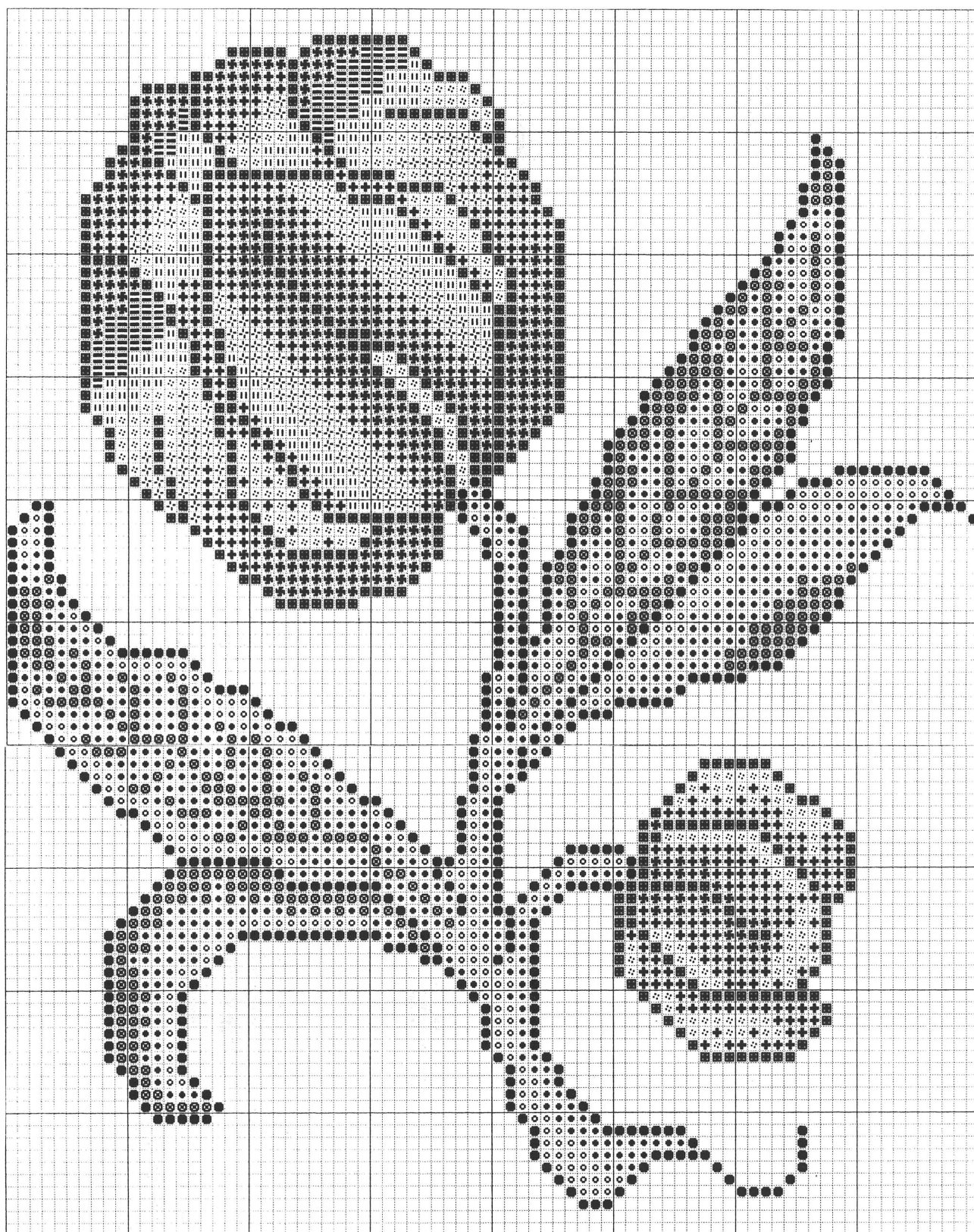
Tulip



Size: 80 times 96 stitches. Eleven colours.

Square stitches:

	Red - very dark	432		Yellow - light	156
	Red - dark	333		Green - almost black	452
	Red - medium	408		Green - very dark	403
	Pink - light	195		Green - medium	589
	Pink - almost white	245		Green/yellow - light	377
	Yellow - dark	65			



Violet



Size: 80 times 95 stitches. Fifteen colours.

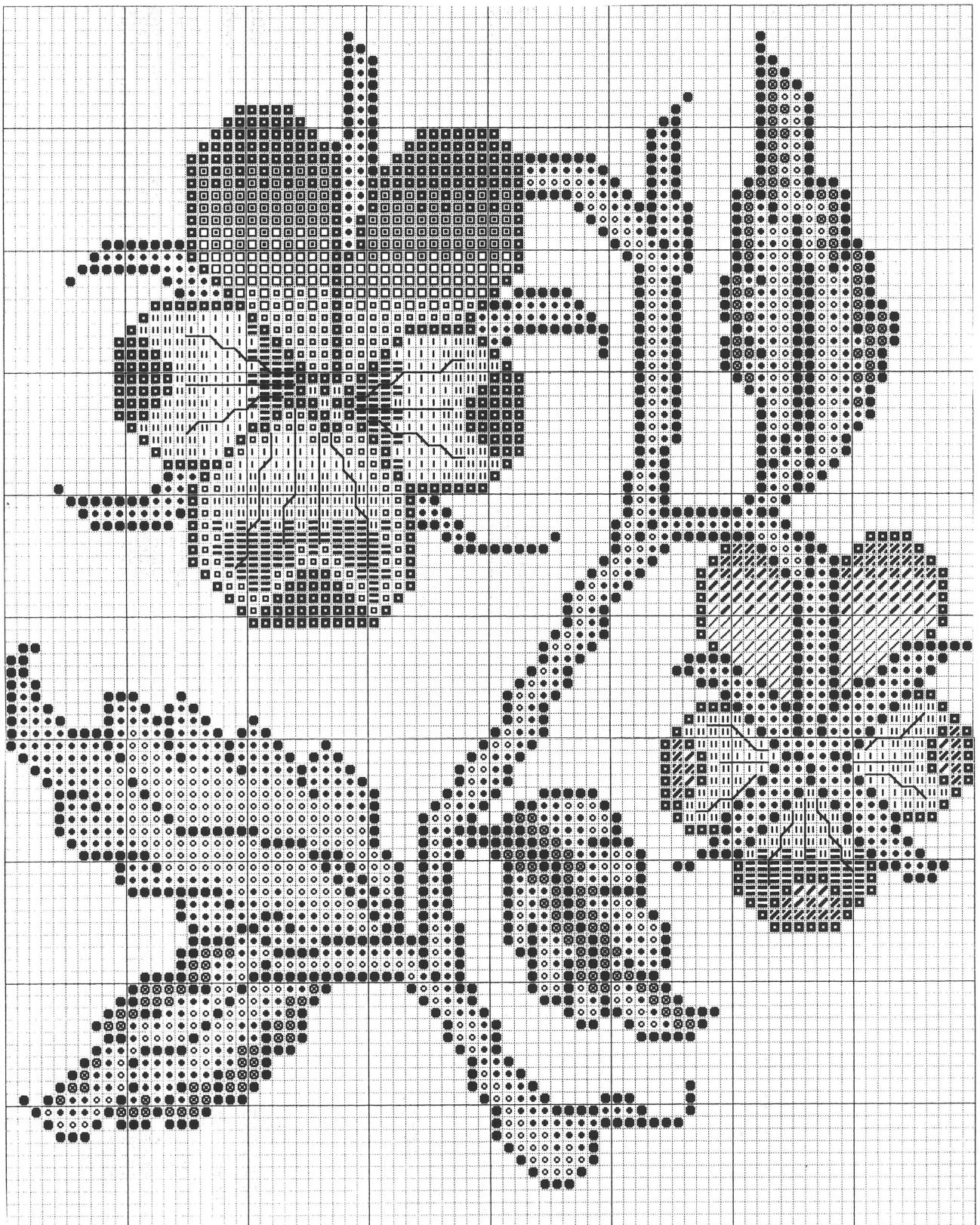
Square stitches:

	Yellow - dark	121
	Yellow - medium	224
	Yellow - almost white	148
	Green - almost black	901
	Green - very dark	163
	Green - medium	682
	Green/yellow - light	460
	Blue - almost black	434

	Blue - dark	110
	Blue - medium	100
	Blue - very light	132
	Purple - medium	45
	Purple - light	52
	Purple - very light	68

Backstitches:

-	Black	139
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Strawberries



Size: 78 times 98 stitches. Nine colours.

Square stitches:

	Red/brown - medium	360
	Red - medium	243
	Pink - light	107
	Pink - almost white	87
	Yellow - medium	88
	Green - very dark	1381

	Green - medium	678
	Green/yellow - light	874

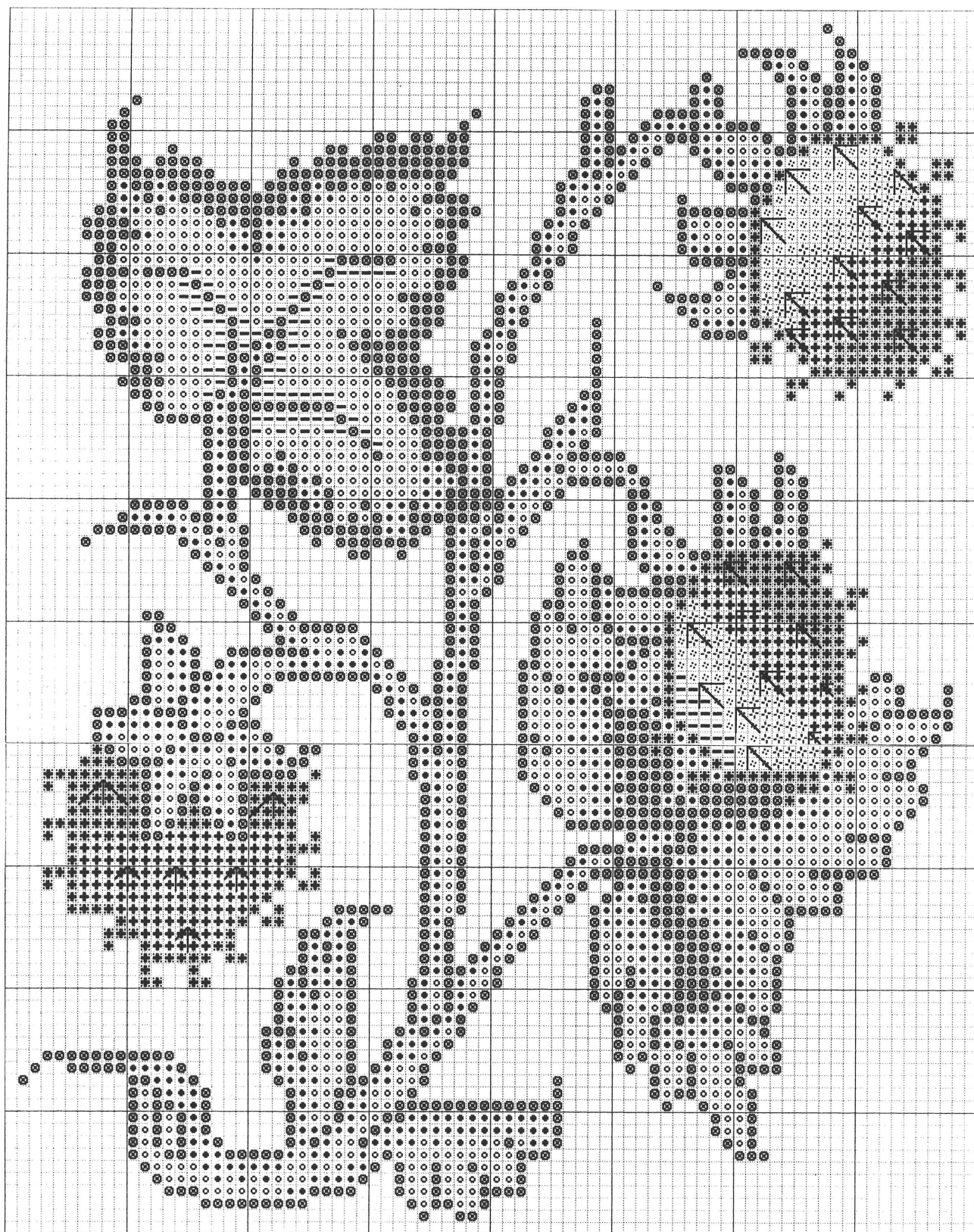
Backstitches:

–	Brown/red - dark	56
–	Yellow - medium	99

Backstitches are in groups of three:

The mid dashes (vertical on left berry, diagonal on right berries) are Brown.

The outer dashes (diagonal on left berry, horizontal/vertical on right berries) are Yellow














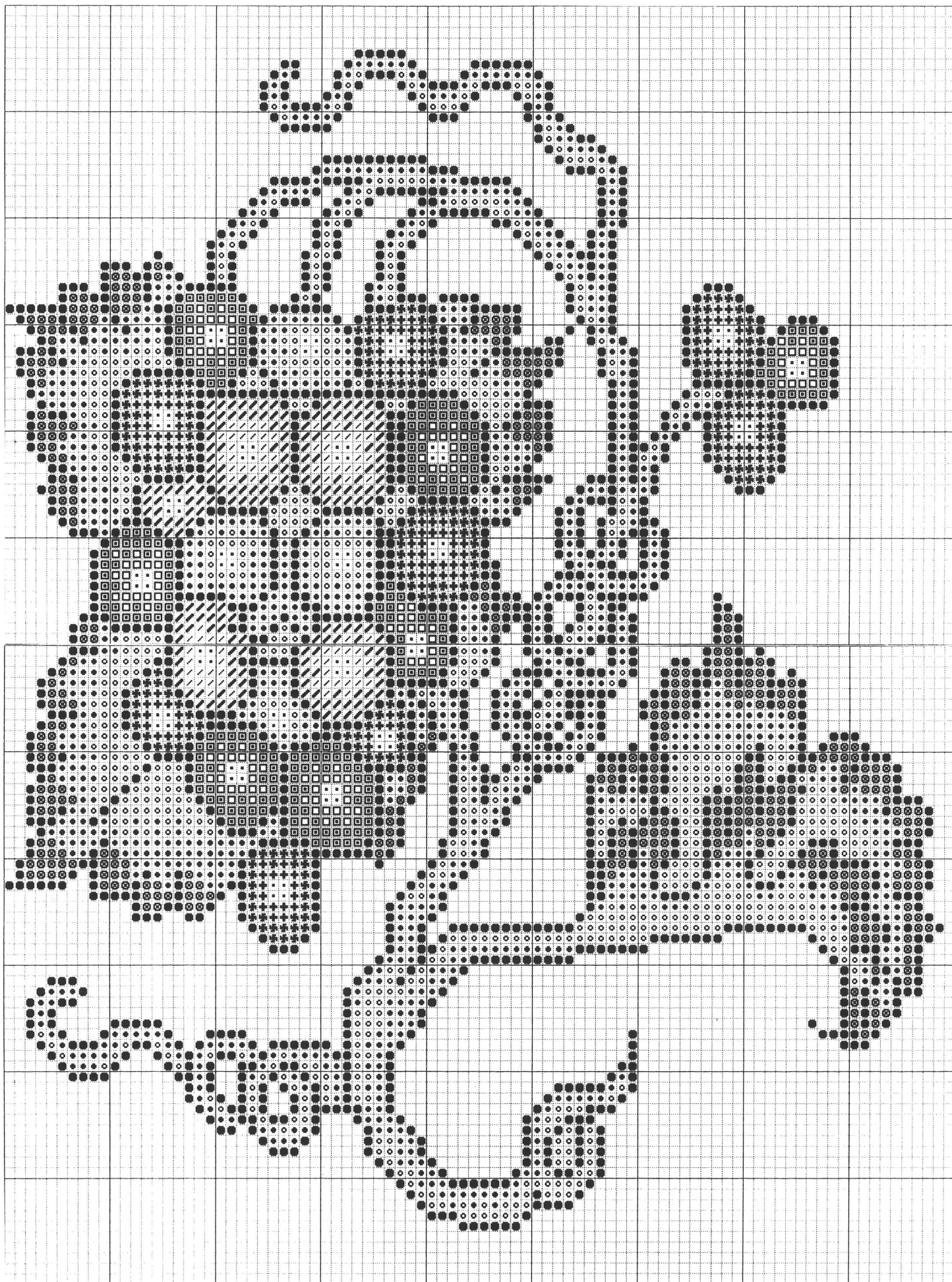
Grapes



Size: 89 times 111 stitches. Eleven colours.

Square stitches:

	White	96		Green/yellow - light	736
	Red - dark	191		Blue - dark	220
	Red - medium	138		Blue - medium	123
	Green - almost black	1671		Purple - light	188
	Green - very dark	358		Purple - very light	84
	Green - medium	995			






Rose



Size: 93 times 116 stitches. Ten colours.

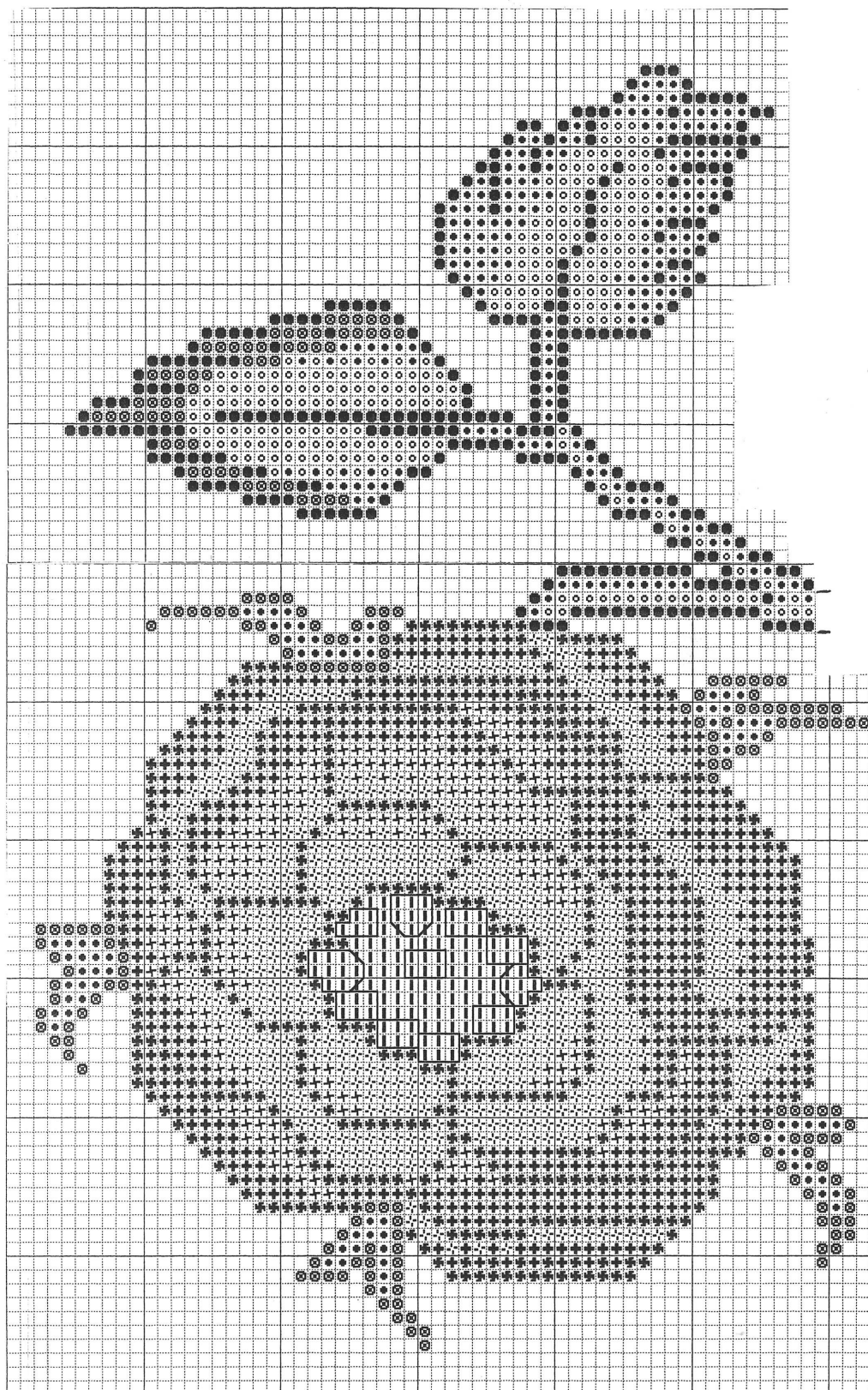
Square stitches:

	Red - dark	630
	Red - medium	742
	Pink - medium	491
	Pink - light	738
	Yellow - medium	133
	Green - almost black	1061

	Green - very dark	378
	Green - medium	767
	Green/yellow - light	508

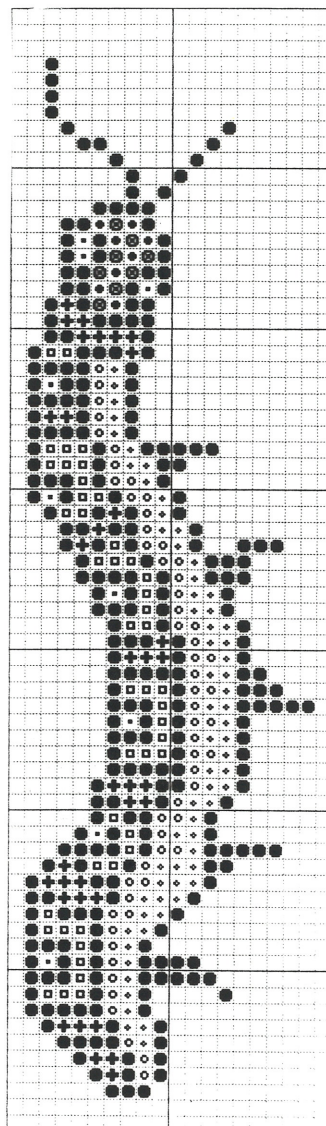
Backstitches:

-	Yellow/grey - dark	109
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Caterpillar



Size: 65 times 18 stitches. Eight colours.

Square stitches:

■	White	9
+	Red - medium	35
■	Green - almost black	278
■	Green - very dark	8
■	Green - medium	8
■	Green/yellow - light	57
■	Green/yellow - almost white	65
■	Blue - very light	46

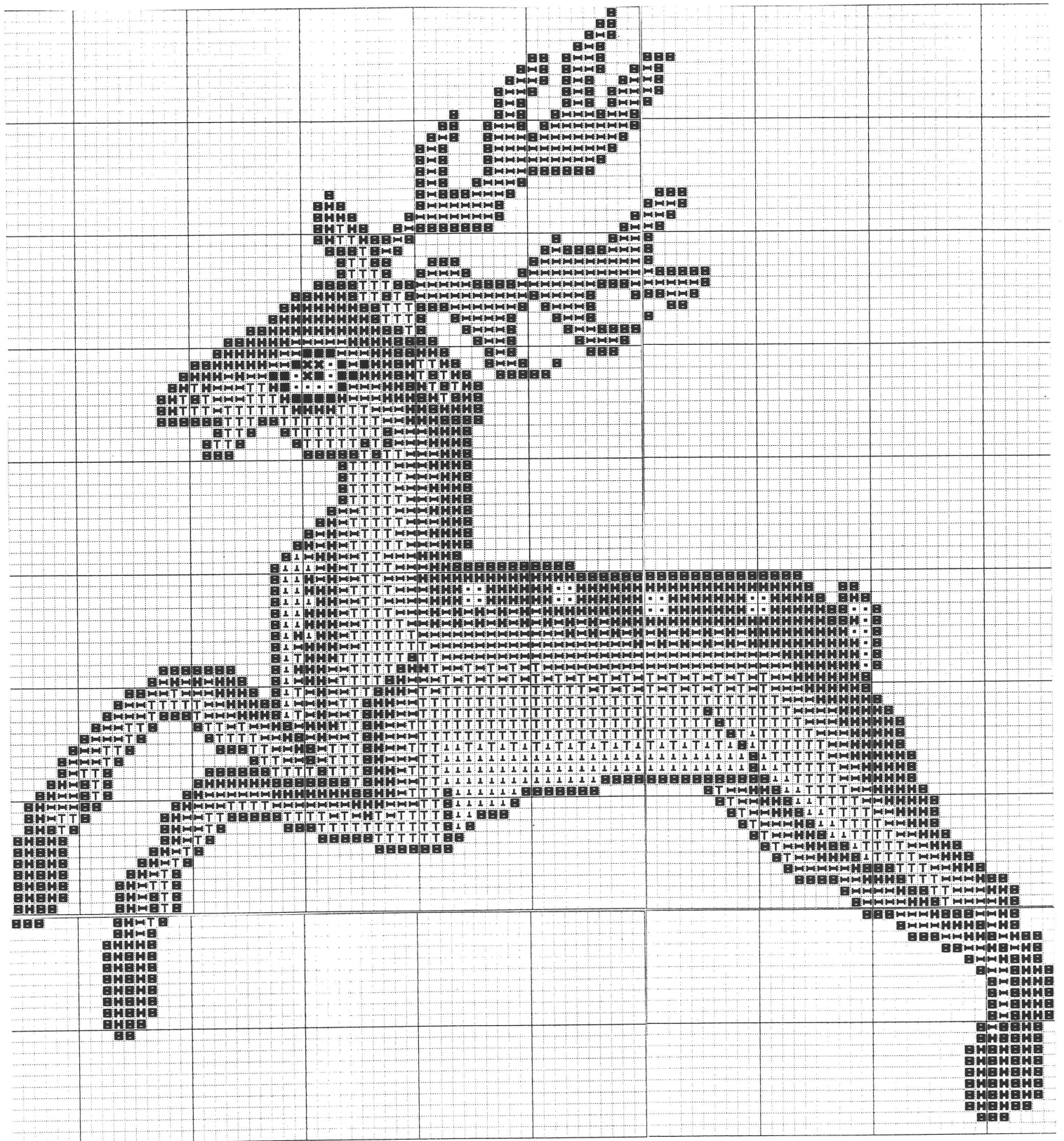
Hart



Size: 92 times 99 stitches. Eight colours.

Square stitches:

■	Black	17
⊠	Grey - dark	3
□	White	31
⌈	Beige - light	530
⌋	Beige - almost white	139
■	Brown/red - dark	698
■	Brown/red - medium	574
■	Brown/red - light	673










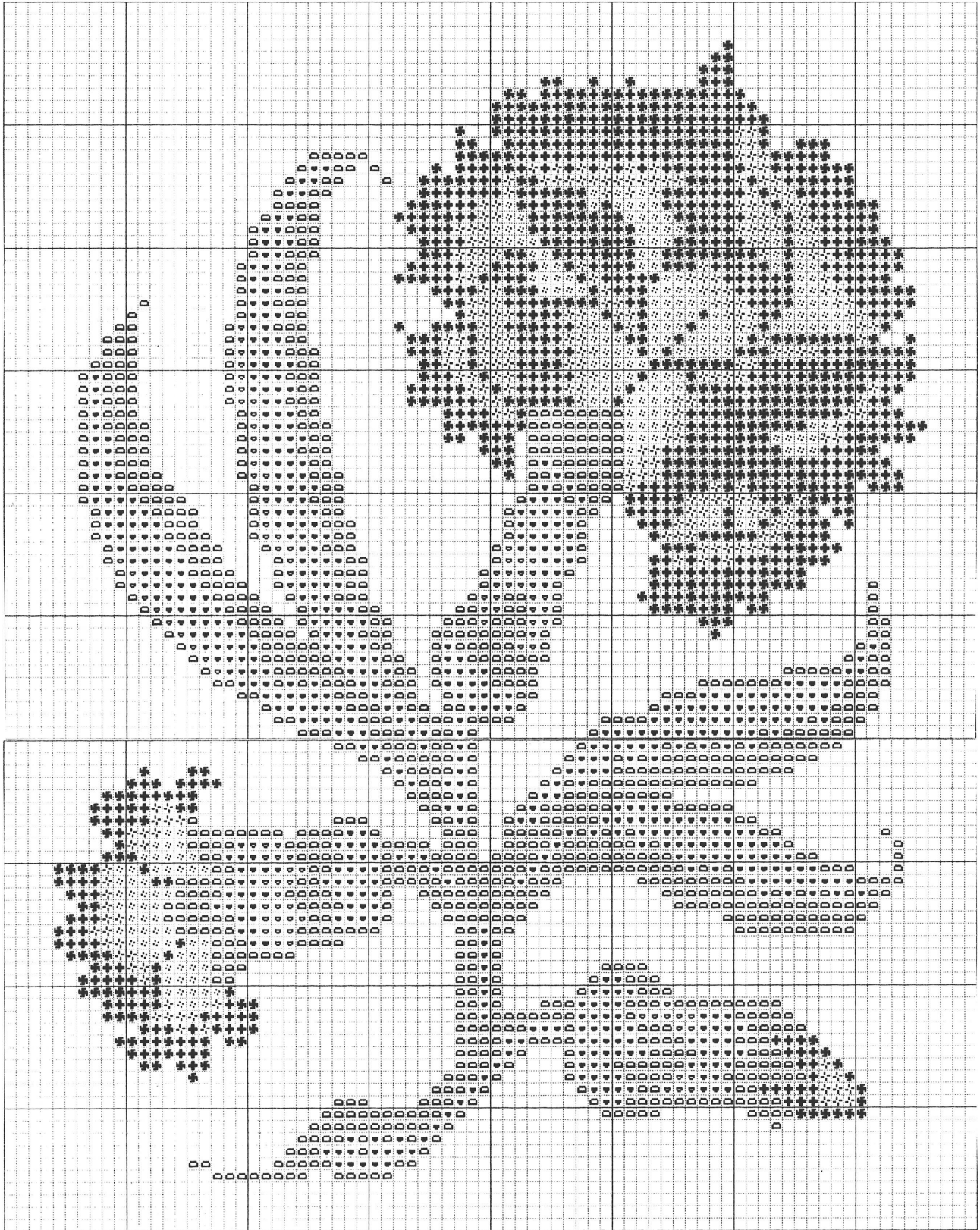
Carnation



Size: 75 times 93 stitches. Seven colours.

Square stitches:

	Red - dark	568
	Red/brown - medium	482
	Pink - light	269
	Pink - almost white	228
	Green/blue-grey - medium	1165
	Green/blue - light	647
	Green/blue - very light	99



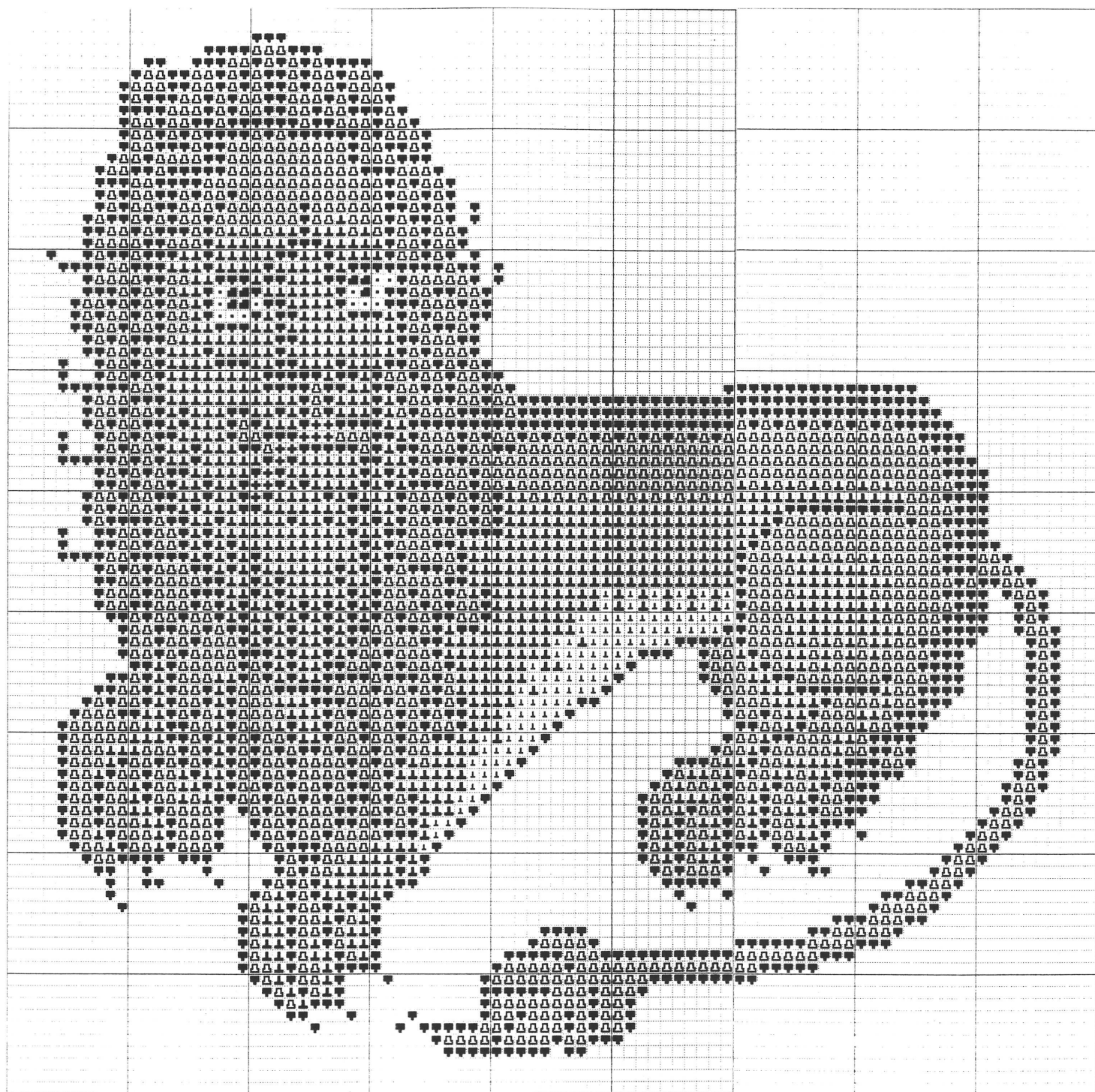
Lion



Size: 84 times 85 stitches. Seven colours.

Square stitches:

□	White	13
+	Red - medium	12
■	Brown - very dark	7
▣	Brown - dark	1463
▤	Beige - very dark	1378
▥	Beige - dark	927
▧	Beige - almost white	110



Cornflower



Size: 90 times 110 stitches. Ten colours.

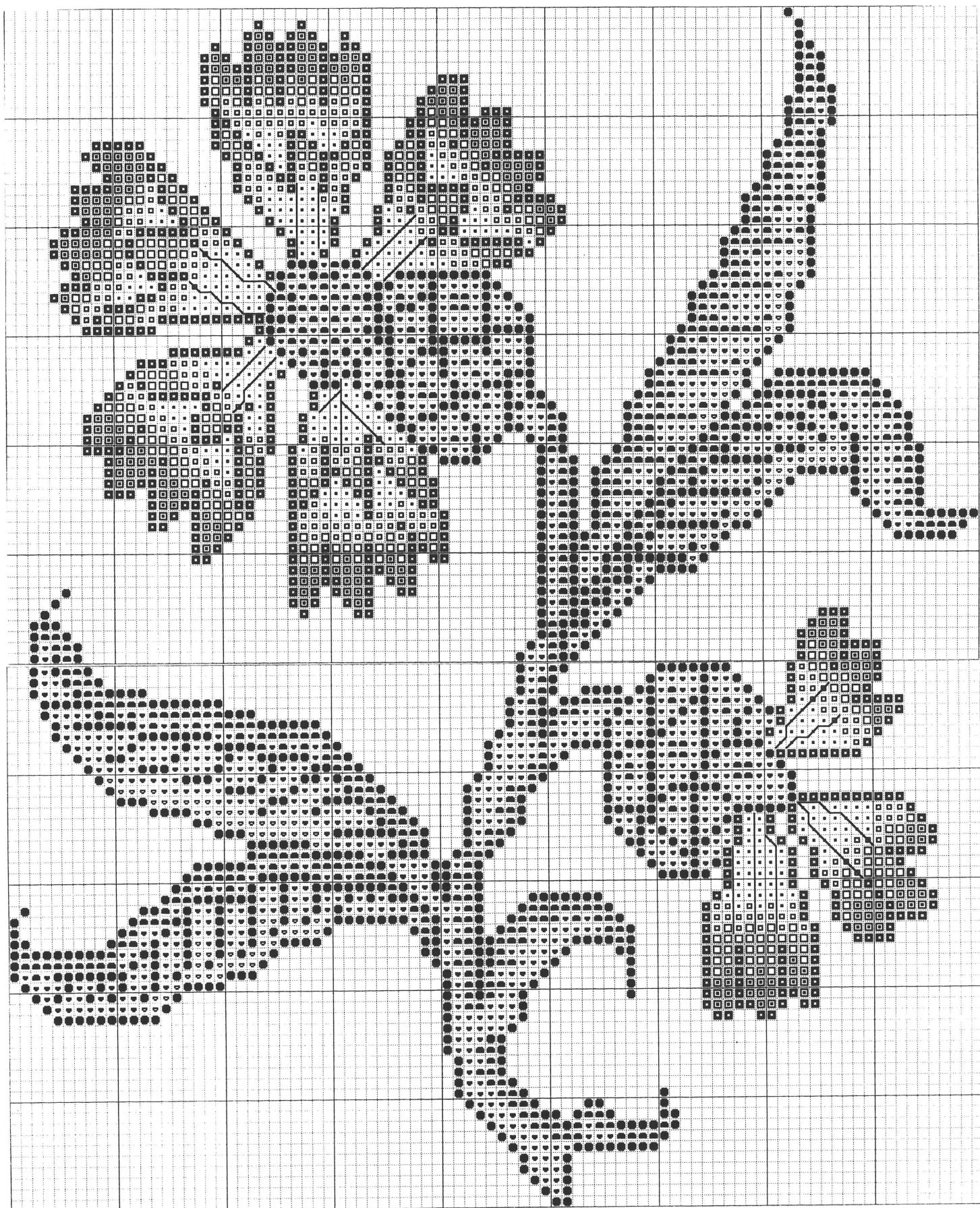
Square stitches:

□	White	314
■	Green - almost black	1003
▣	Green/blue - dark	490
▤	Green/blue - light	900
▥	Green/blue - very light	118
▧	Blue - almost black	574

▨	Blue - dark	206
▩	Blue - medium	270
▪	Blue - very light	273

Backstitches:

—	Brown/red - light	111
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Pomegranate



Size: 77 times 93 stitches. Ten colours.

Square stitches:

□	White	64
⊕	Red/brown - medium	418
⊕	Pink/brown - dark	131
⊕	Beige - light	147
⊕	Yellow/grey - very dark	112
⊕	Yellow/grey - dark	452
■	Green - almost black	758
⊕	Green - medium	682
⊕	Green/yellow - light	575
⊕	Green/yellow - almost white	104

