

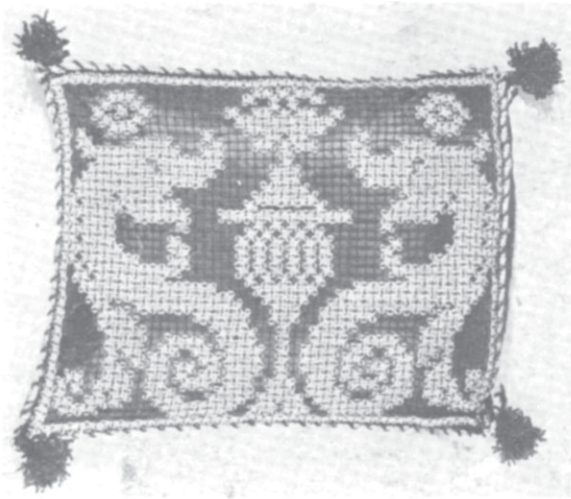
## Lacis

BY LOUISE AUSTIN CHRIMES

*Illustrations by courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City*

THE French word, "Lacis," properly used, denotes only darned netting, the "Punto a maglia," of the Italians. The English word "Lace" comes from this French term "Lacis."

There are two kinds of hand-made lace, — needle-point, that made entirely with the needle, and pillow-lace, made on a pillow with bobbins.



*Colored net — heavy thread embroidered in linen stitch.  
Designed by Louise A. Chrimes*

Darned netting is classed with the needle-made laces. The net is first made with a kind of needle and mesh stick, and the pattern is darned into net with a needle after the net has been stretched in a frame.

The art of making lace with figures in the design was first done in convents. Earlier than the net lace, linen with threads drawn out, then a pattern darned in, had much the appearance of lace. After the pattern was darned in, on this openwork ground, the remaining uncovered threads were whipped, often with colored silk, and sometimes with metal threads. Frequently silk was used to make the net with the patterns worked in various colors. Much colored net was made, and the patterns were darned in with a contrasting shade, or cream or natural linen color.

In the Middle Ages much embroidery and lace was made, not only in the convents but in the manor houses and palaces. As one writer has said, "To the noble lady the needle was a weapon of

defense against the ennui of her existence." Certainly they created with their needles a wealth of beauty, weaving into the nets quaint figures and beasts, and Bible legends.

Great quantities of these net laces were made for the churches, depicting Bible stories and the symbols of their faith. An altar frontal, hanging straight and flat, supplied a means of telling a story, and helped to teach the unlettered worshippers. One such altar frontal is fourteen feet long, four feet wide, and contains fifty-six figures in eighteen groups representing the Passion of our Lord.

Old inventories show amazing quantities and great variety of patterns of this fascinating work. The comparative quickness with which Lacis can be made may be one reason for its great popularity during this period, a popularity that has remained practically undiminished. In the earlier examples

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*Showing filet bands and square with linen*

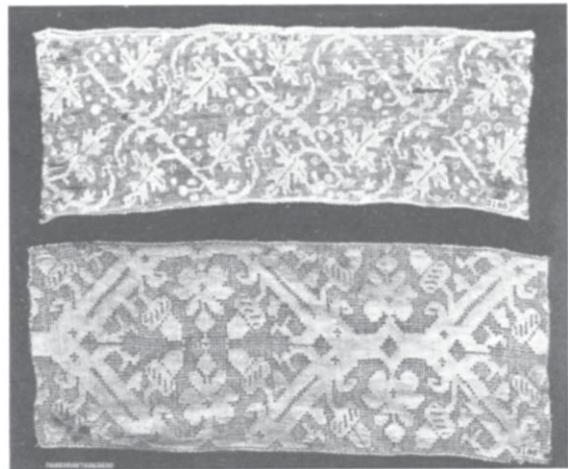


*Filet squares with bands of embroidered linen and reticella small squares*

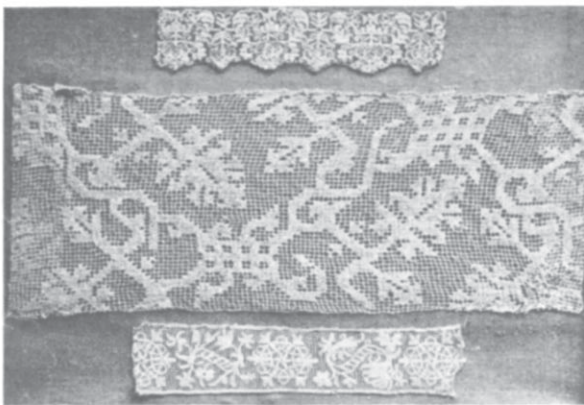




*Embroidered cross-way net*



*Linen stitch*



*(Upper) Embroidered net — (Lower) Sardinian weave —  
(Center) Linen darning*



*(Upper) Shadow with linen stitch. (Lower) Sardinian*



*Outlined pattern, heavy thread*



*Linen stitch weaving net made with two  
sizes mesh sticks*