

# OLD LACE

A Handbook for Collectors



PORTION OF LINEN COLLAR.

With border and broad ends of rose point. Venetian, seventeenth century.

# OLD LACE

A Handbook for Collectors

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DIFFERENT  
STYLES OF LACE · THEIR HISTORY,  
CHARACTERISTICS & MANUFACTURE

BY

M. JOURDAIN

JOINT-EDITOR OF PALLISER'S "HISTORY OF LACE"

WITH 163 EXAMPLES ON NINETY-  
FIVE PLATES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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## PREFACE.

IT may, perhaps, seem necessary to give some reason for the appearance of a new work dealing with hand-made lace, especially as two books on this subject have appeared in England alone in the course of the year. It has been suggested to me, however, by many collectors, that the *historical* aspect of lace has been dealt with in previous works, almost to the exclusion of its technical and artistic side. Mrs Palliser's history (first issued in 1865), which I re-edited in 1902, is almost exhaustive in certain aspects, and a storehouse of valuable material collected by the author relative not only to the history of lace, but of embroidery and costume. But even since 1902 new material, new facts have come to light in works dealing with lace of various countries.

I have, therefore, in this book, while giving the chief landmarks in the history of each lace in each important centre of production—especially those that affected the quality and design of the lace produced—included or referred to these fresh facts and information. The French have been especially diligent in investigating the origins and development of their national industries. I have also been interested in tracing, where possible, the influence of contemporary art and design upon the development of lace, which is, naturally, largely subject to the influences of and fashions in textiles, as may be seen by a comparison of French patterned textiles with laces of the three great periods which correspond roughly to the reigns of Louis XIV., XV., and XVI.

As the very large number of illustrations in each chapter are arranged in order of date, it will be easy for readers to follow this progress. For this reason, dated pieces—though these are naturally rare—have been illustrated wherever possible.

Another very interesting subject which has not hitherto been fully treated is the influence of lace of one country upon the lace of another, *i.e.*, that of Italian lace upon Points de France, of French design upon Mechlin of the Louis XV. period, &c.

The comparison and dating of laces have been rendered much more possible since the period when Mrs Palliser wrote, by the improvement in public museums at home and abroad, which have in many cases published portfolios of their lace collections.

Some account of the differences in manufacture of real and machine-made lace, and enlarged illustrations showing their essential differences in texture, will, I hope, be of use to collectors.

Many of these chapters appeared originally in the *Connoisseur*, but have since been revised ; and I have to thank the courtesy of the editor for the loan of some of the blocks.

M. JOURDAIN.

BROADWINSOR, DORSET.  
*November 1908.*

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# OLD LACE.

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## CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTION.

### THE DATE OF THE ORIGIN OF LACE-MAKING—TESTS FOR REAL LACE.

“LACE is the name applied to an ornamental open-work of threads of flax, cotton, silk, gold, or silver, and occasionally of mohair or aloe fibre. Such threads may be either looped, or plaited, or twisted together in one of three ways: (1) with a needle, when the work is distinctively known as ‘needlepoint lace’; (2) with bobbins, pins on a pillow or cushion, when the work is known as ‘pillow lace’; \* (3) by machinery.” †

It is the two former processes, *i.e.*, hand-made lace, that we have to consider.

The origin of hand-made lace is obscure. Flanders and Italy both claim its invention, but there is distinct evidence that Flemish lace was later than the Italian, in the fact that Flanders published no lace pattern-book until that of Jean de Glen at Liège, in 1597, and de Glen in his preface himself says that he brought his patterns from Italy. They are a transcript from Vinciolo. A pattern-book published

\* Or “bobbin lace,” which is the more convenient term, as needlepoint lace is also made upon a pillow.

† Art. *Lace*, Encyclopædia Britannica.

by "R. M." about the year 1550\* at Zürich, by Christoff Froschower,† gives proof that bobbin lace was known in Venice before 1526.

It says that "the art of lace-making ('die kuenst der Dentschnuren') has been known and practised for about twenty-five years in our country, for it was first brought by merchants from Venice and Italy into Germany in the year 1526. . . . Clever women and girls admiring it, continued with great industry and zeal to copy and reproduce the same . . . and invented new models much more beautiful than the first."‡

At the end of the sixteenth century bobbin and needlepoint lace was made in Flanders, as well as in Italy, and pattern-books were issued having the same general character as those published in Italy. France and England followed Italy and Flanders in adopting lace, and towards the close of the seventeenth century a great State-subsidised enterprise, the establishment of a lace industry, took place in France under the advice of Colbert, the minister of Louis XIV. In these French centres Italian needlepoint was chiefly copied. The lace made in Germany,§ Sweden, Russia, Spain, Denmark, Switzerland, and Austria, did not result in work of any high artistic quality or importance, and is not treated in this book.

In Belgium (though Brussels acquired some celebrity for her needle-made laces), very fine and artistic bobbin lace was produced; and

\* This date is given as 1536 in Mrs Bury Palliser's "History of Lace," and in E. Lefébure's "Broderie et Dentelles."

† Printed verbatim in Ilgs' "Geschichte und Terminologie der alten Spitzen," p. 31.

‡ The author continues: "In my opinion the art has now reached its highest point." Women "could earn a better living at lace than with spindle, needle, shuttle, or anything else of the kind." "At first these laces were only used for sheets, but now they have come to be used on collarettes, round the necks of bodices, on sleeves, caps, as edgings and bindings, on and round aprons and barber's cloths (or coarse cloths), on handkerchiefs, table and other linen, pillows and bedclothes, besides many other things which I need not mention." The author suggests varying the laces by the use of coloured threads. The patterns resemble the more elementary and least successful patterns of "Le Pompe" for plaited lace. Quoted in "Pillow Lace: a Practical Handbook," E. Minkoff.

§ A certain Barbara Uttmann of Nuremberg instructed the peasants of the Hartz Mountains in lace-making in 1561.

like Belgium, Flanders produced almost exclusively bobbin laces. From Flemish laces is derived the English Honiton.

The collector of old lace, unlike the collector of old silver, prints, china, enamels, and the like, has not to fear delicate and almost omnipresent fraud. A box of modern enamel may be produced by methods similar to those by which an old Battersea enamel box was produced, and when painted by a clever French workman (who copies an original piece) and finally chipped by the dealer, it would, and does, deceive the very elect. The new box is in the process of its manufacture, and in all essentials, like the old. This, however, is not the case with imitations of either embroidery or lace. The methods of production of real and of machine-made lace differ essentially. There is no deceptive quality in imitation lace, which is practically never described or sold as real lace in the shop of any lace-dealer.

Needlepoint lace, in which a single needle and thread are alone used to form the pattern, which is built up entirely of button-hole stitch and other loopings, has never been successfully imitated by the machine, which cannot produce a button-hole stitch.

Bobbin lace is more closely imitated than needlepoint by machine, but even here the texture is not to be mistaken for that of bobbin lace. The machine does not attempt to make a regular plait.\*

The man who most materially aided in the development of the lace machine was John Heathcoat, who was born in 1783. His interest in the making of lace had been aroused by seeing a skilled bobbin lace-maker at work. He began his experiments by patiently drawing out threads from hand-made lace, and attentively watching the direction they followed. He found that the majority of them were dealt with in a regular fashion, some going lengthwise and scarcely varying their direction, the others travelling backwards and forwards across the width. This led him to construct a machine in which half the threads were on a beam, while the twisting was done by the remaining threads, carried in to those which passed between the longitudinal beam threads. Since Heathcoat's day the details of construction rather than essential principles have been improved. "The bobbins of the weft

\* A French machine, "La Dentellière" (see *La Nature*, 3rd March 1881), produced plaited work, but the expense of this was as great as that of pillow lace, and has never been adopted.

threads as they pass like pendulums between the warp threads are made to oscillate, and through this oscillation the threads twist themselves or become twisted with the warp threads."\* As the twistings take place, combs passing through both warp and weft threads compress the twistings. Thus the usual machine-made lace may generally be detected by its compressed twisted threads.

This consequent ribbed appearance of the *toilé* is present in machine-made imitations of every kind of pillow lace, and serves most easily to detect it when compared with the flat and even appearance of the *toilé* of hand-made lace (see Plate II.). In the real lace also the meshes are slightly irregular.

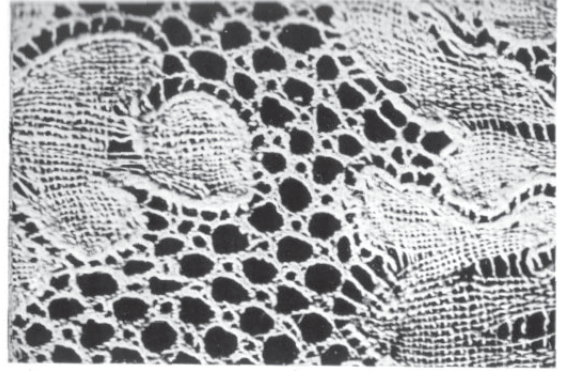
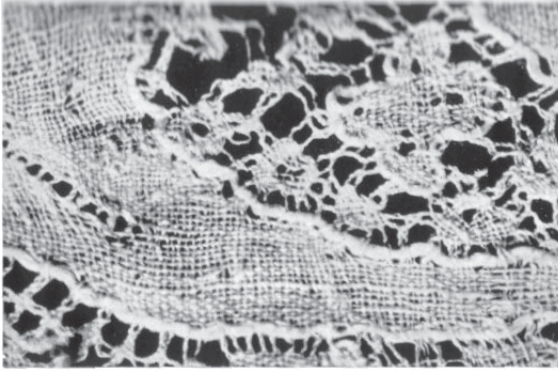
Of bobbin laces the most successfully rendered in machine lace are Valenciennes and Mechlin, but there is a clumsiness in the rendering of detail, and the poor readily torn edge of the machine-made lace is noticeable when compared with the hand-made. Mechlin is remarkable for its *cordonné* of thick flat thread outlining the ornament. The first imitation Mechlin left out this distinctive feature, and at the International Exhibition of 1867 Nottingham exhibited imitation Mechlin, in which the *cordonné* was run on by hand. At present modern imitation Mechlin is provided with the *cordonné* of stout cotton which is often cut at certain points in the design (as the design in Mechlin is not continuous). The cut ends are not firmly fastened down, and break away readily, especially after washing.

The finer qualities of Brussels, remarkable for the fidelity and grace with which floral compositions are rendered, it is impossible to reproduce in the relatively coarse machine-made cotton.

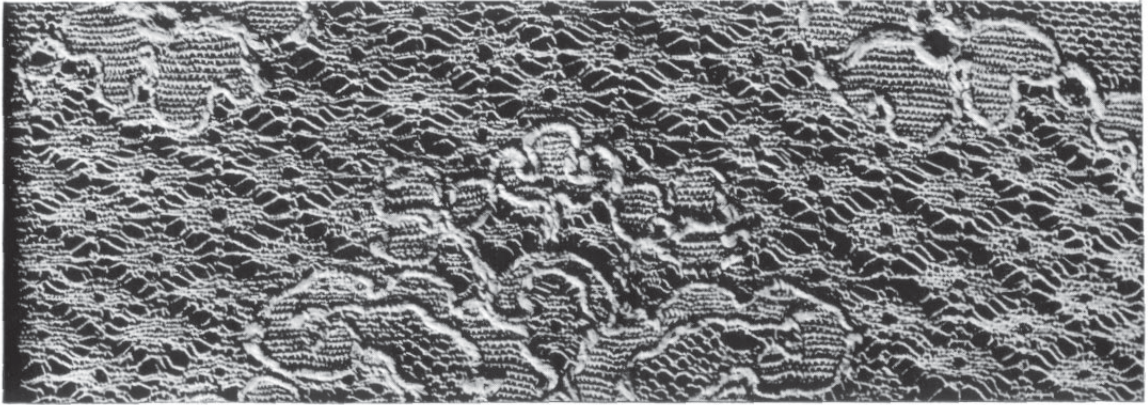
In addition to these special differences, Séguin in his book "*La Dentelle*" gives a general reason why machine-made lace cannot equal the handwork it imitates: "In machine work the operating force is uniform, continually the same, hence there is always an equal tension in the threads and a perfectly regular tissue is produced, but at the same time perfectly flat. Handwork, on the contrary, is bound to be irregular because, though the worker's hand represents a force of uniform strength, its action is unequal and cannot be regulated in the same way as can a mechanical force." He proceeds to show the

\* Art. *Lace*, Encyclopædia Britannica.





MECHLIN LACE (Enlarged).



IMITATION MECHLIN (Enlarged).



advantage of this regularity by alluding to the uneven surface of hand-woven cashmere shawls, which "present an infinite succession of waves and little imperceptible roughnesses which catch the light and cast shadows," making a surface vastly different from anything a machine can produce, "different in somewhat the same way in which the inside of a limpet shell differs from that of a 'sea-ear.' The one is flat, dead white, the other by its irregularities breaks the light into prismatic colours we call mother-of-pearl, and these colours depend only on the uneven surface of the shell; a cast taken in sealing-wax will reproduce them."

The best flax thread is too soft to bear the tension needed by a machine, hence the poor "cottony" texture of machine laces.

The variability of texture is easily recognised by people who are accustomed to look for the small but significant marks of the tool or the hand in works of art. This irregularity can be seen more readily under a lens.

The making up of flowers from Italian rose point is the only "faking" which is possible in lace, and this is really only the re-arrangement of genuine old pieces.

In rose point the brides are more liable to be destroyed than the relatively thick and solid ornament; lace-menders replace the brides, and this is a legitimate branch of lace-mending. In some specimens, however, it is easy to avoid replacing the brides, by forcing the details of the ornament to touch one another. An exceptional piece now and then appears to have been made without brides, like the collar of rose point in the Musée de Cluny (Plate XXIV.), or with a minimum of brides, as in a fine specimen in the Victoria and Albert Museum (see frontispiece), but for the most part specimens without brides should be looked upon with suspicion.

In pieces that have been forcibly dealt with, the scroll design, originally free, and linked by its background of brides, is wrenched and bent from a natural to a debased, flattened, or irregular curve in order that portions of the design may touch one another. Such specimens can be recognised by the overlapping and encroachment of certain details, and by the absence of continuity of design. As it is often impossible to fill up the required space with the scroll in its new position, detached flowers with no relation to the original design

are sewn in, the main line of the scroll is broken again and again, and the whole piece presents a fortuitous concourse of ornamental detail.

In clumsily pieced specimens (such as Plate XXVI.), one flower can be seen overlapping part of the ornament; a small detached flower is often suspended in an open space without any connection with a stalk or scroll. The scroll in its new position often wrinkles, and will not lie flat. As the flowers are often taken from pieces of different design and quality, the difficulty of combining them into a continuous or even coherent pattern can readily be imagined, and certain portions appear thicker and heavier than others. In more carefully treated specimens, the thickness and heaviness of the brideless design alone is visible.

## CHAPTER II.

## LACIS OR DARNED NETTING.

DRAWN-THREAD work was known in Egypt in the earliest times, and examples of this work are to be seen in the mummy cloths in the Egyptian room of the British Museum. The withdrawal of threads from linen is the simplest form of its ornamentation of linen. The material in old Italian drawn-work is usually loosely woven; certain threads were drawn out from the ground and others left, upon and between which needlework was made. The withdrawal of threads regulated the pattern to be produced; a curved scroll or a circle had to be approximately rendered in small squares. The background of such work appeared to consist of a net of square meshes.

What is known as *Lacis* is darned work upon a network of meshes (known as *réseau*, *rézel*, *rézeuil*), which we learn from the pattern-book of Matthias Mignerak (1605) was made by beginning a single stitch and increasing a stitch on each side until the required size was obtained, then the square was finished by reducing a stitch upon each side until it was reduced to one.

*Lacis*, though generally a term applied to the *réseau* when embroidered, was also occasionally used for the *réseau* itself. Such is its use in the "Béle Prérie contenant divers caractères, et différentes sortes de lettres alphabetiques . . . pour appliquer sur le réseuil ou lassis" (Paris, 1601), and in the lines of Skelton quoted on next page. Mary, Queen of Scots, referred to her *lacis*-work as "ouvres masches" (Fr., *mailles*; Ital., *maglia*\*). Cotgrave† gives, among other meanings of *maille*, "a mash of a net, the square hole that is between thread and thread."

The *rézeuil* was generally of linen thread, sometimes of silk or gold. *Lacis* were sometimes made in a long border or panel, at other times in small squares, which, joined together and combined with cutwork, were much used for bed hangings, table-cloths, &c. Prominent parts of the design were sometimes thrown into relief by

\* "*Maglia* is properly the holes in any net. Also a shirt or jacket of mail" (Florio, "A Worlde of Wordes").

† Randle Cotgrave, "Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues," 1611.

a thicker outlining thread—the forerunner of the cordonnet in lace. The darning is sometimes quite even in workmanship, at other times it is of different degrees of strength, lighter for certain portions of the surface, and heavier for others, thus producing a shaded effect. Relief is very seldom obtained; but in a fine piece with a vine pattern in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the grapes are raised into a considerable degree of convexity by tightly sewing round each portion of the canvas ground which had been previously darned so as to represent a grape.

A book containing designs for lacis was issued at Cologne, by P. Quentell. The patterns consist of borders, alphabets, &c., some on white, others on black, ground; some with counted stitches. The earliest edition extant is dated 1527; Quentell, however, refers to a previous edition, hence M. Séguin obviously puts the date of its invention too late when he gives 1520 as the approximate limit of its earliest use. In a painting by Lorenzo Costa in S. Giacomo, at Bologna (1488), the square openings of the dresses of the three persons depicted are filled in with a border of lacis. Knotted net (probably ornamented) was very much used in church work for lectern and frontal veils, and pyx cloths and “corporals,” as early as the fourteenth century, and Rock in his “Textile Fabrics” quotes from Dugdale’s “St Paul’s”: “St Paul’s, London, had a cushion covered with knotted thread” (“pulvinar copertum de albo filo nodato”). Network (filatorium) was probably another name for this darned net; in the “Exeter Inventory” we read that its cathedral possessed, A.D. 1327, three pieces of it for use at the altar, and one for throwing over the desk (“tria filatoria linea, unde unum pro desco”).

The earliest mention of lacis, by name, is to be found in the lines of the “laureate” Skelton (1460-1529), which also contain the earliest literary reference to samplers:

“When that the tapettes and carpettes were layd  
Whereon theis ladys softly myght rest,  
The saumpler to sew on, the lacis to embraid.”

Another argument against dating lacis only from the first quarter of the sixteenth century is the exceedingly archaic character of the design of some specimens; the work also must have been widely known before it created the demand for a pattern-book. The patterns

for lacis which form the greater part of the designs of the early Italian and German pattern-books \* until Vinciolo could be also used for embroidery in short and cross stitches. The earliest designs are conventional diapers. Subject designs and religious emblems, however, were soon introduced, and Vavassore gives patterns of a large flower-pot, mermaid, Paschal lamb, and a double plate representing Orpheus playing to the beasts. "Marriage groups, the bridegroom with a flower, the bride with a fan, and behind, a procession of tiny cavaliers and ladies; hunting scenes, animals of every species; rows of mermaids, winged lions, and cocks, dogs, stags, and eagles, forming a border to the central ornament. Castles, towers, falconers—"whole scenes to which we have now lost the key," are to be found among the designs for lacis.† The most influential designer, both for lacis and cutwork, was Vinciolo, the first edition of whose work‡ was published in 1587. The second half of this edition contains designs representing the seven planets—Sol, Luna, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. Four in squares of various designs, two of Amorini shooting stags and birds; Neptune and the winds, an arabesque with impresa of a column with circle and double triangle; five borders and squares, and "two bordures à carreaux." The interest of Vinciolo's work is that specimens of lacis are extant which reproduce his designs. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a specimen of lacis§ representing designs similar to those of Vinciolo. This bed-cover is composed of a series of squares, darned with representations of the months of the year, male and female heads, figures and groups. There is also a piece in the Musée de Cluny very much in Vinciolo's style.

In the second part of the edition of 1588, in his "Advertisement au

\* The earliest known pattern-book now appears to be that of Jorg Gastel of Zwickau, 1525, a copy of which has recently been added to the collection in the Königliche Kunstgewerbe Bibliothek, Dresden. Next in order of date seems to come the publication of P. Quentell of Cologne, "Eyn new Kuntslich boich," 1527. In the same year and at the same town appeared "Liure nouveau et subtil touchant l'art et scièce" of "matrepiere Quinty." See "Early Pattern-books of Lace, Embroidery, and Needlework," by Edward F. Strange (*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, vol. vii.).

† Elise Ricci, "Antiche trine Italiane."

‡ "Les Singuliers et Nouveaux Pourtraicts et Ouvrages de Lingerie," Paris, 1587.

§ No. 109, acquired in 1884.

Lecteur," Vinciolo says that having promised, since the first impression of his book, to give a "nouvelle bande d'ouvrages," and not to disappoint certain ladies who have complained that he has not made "du reseau assez beau à leur fantaisie," he wished for the third time to place before their eyes many new and different patterns of "reseau de point conté que j'ay cousus et attachez à la fin de mes premières figures." After the thirty plates already published, follow the twenty additional of "reseau de point conté," consisting of the lion, pelican, unicorn, stag, peacock, griffon, and the four seasons, &c. Lasis was frequently combined with point coupé or reticella in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the combination was known as punto reale a reticella. Elisabetta Catenea Parasole (1616) gives designs for this type of work, which made use of small squares of lasis.

In a pattern-book\* in the National Art Library is one for lasis, bearing the name of Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Frederick II., King of Denmark and Norway, and Sophia of Mecklenburg, who was the second wife of Henry Julius, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, Calenburg, and Blankenburg (1589-1613), and is dated two years after the death of the latter. It contains the arms of Denmark, a quaint representation of the Child Jesus, Jacob wrestling with an angel, the two spies with the bunch of grapes, Samson and the lion, Satan being chained by the angel, the four evangelists, &c.; also emblems of faith, hope, charity, justice, prudence, the story of the prodigal son, and a (double-page) dance of Saxon peasants.

In comparing characteristic specimens of German and Italian lasis and German and Italian pattern-books, we see that in the German designs eagles and heraldic emblems, oak leaves, acorns, thistles, and hunting scenes are often met with; in the Italian lasis the foliage is more conventional in character. Some squares of German lasis in the Kunstgewerbe Museum at Leipzig show coats of arms darned in a variety of stitches, with a raised cordonnet forming the outline. Some of the designs in this Museum are conventional, in others

\* The book is a MS., the draughtsman is unknown, and there are no indications of place of origin beyond the association with the person whose name it bears. There is no title-page, but the first leaf bears the arms of Denmark. It was described and illustrated in the *Magazine of Art*, vol. xxvi., pp. 179, 180, by Edward F. Strange.



Plate III.



PART OF A BAND OF LACIS.  
Italian, late sixteenth century.



OBLONG PIECE OF LACIS.  
Patterns of birds and beasts among trees. A  
representation of the Creation. Italian, six  
teenth century.

an attempt at naturalistic effects appears. Pieces of German make are frequently of a loosely made net, and of coarse linen thread. Germany, however, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was renowned for its lacis and embroidery with thread on net, of which there are several good examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum. But it is exceedingly difficult to assign a specimen of lacis to any definite country, there is but little refinement in the manner of working, and often little differentiation in design. The finer qualities were, no doubt, made in Italy. A very coarse type was made in Spain, of interest from the bold and naïf designs. Much lacis was produced in France under Catherine de Médicis, the patroness of Vinciolo, and the popularity of the work is proved by the number of editions of Vinciolo's work printed in Paris from 1587 to 1623, and by the fact that his designs were copied.\*

Italian lacis shows richer and more conventional designs than those of any other country. An angular scroll with a conventional vine-leaf is frequently met with (Plate III.), and curious Renaissance fantasies, tritons, terminal figures, or figures with foliated extremities, such as are met with in the decoration of the period, are combined with effective scroll designs. In Southern Italy and Sicily the influence of Oriental taste was of necessity more direct than in the north. In other South Italian and Sicilian lacis small skirted figures, holding up their hand, and other traditional motifs, are represented.

Cretan lacis is especially interesting, from the combination of the Italian structure of ornament and the strange way in which that system, with its cultured knowledge of form and balance, has been misinterpreted by the Cretan workers. There is a certain quaint almost grotesque air common to all the specimens of Cretan lacis, and it is especially pronounced in the human, quadruped, and bird figures which are introduced into the midst of the conventional branchage and foliage. The pink is a prominent feature in the design as in Cretan embroidery. The lacis is frequently divided into three portions—the most important central piece, and two narrow borders or insertions at top and bottom.

\* The title of Jean de Glen's pattern-book, "Les singuliers et nouveaux portraits, pour toutes sortes de lingeries," published at Liège in 1597, is borrowed from Vinciolo, and the plates are mostly drawn from his.



### CHAPTER III.

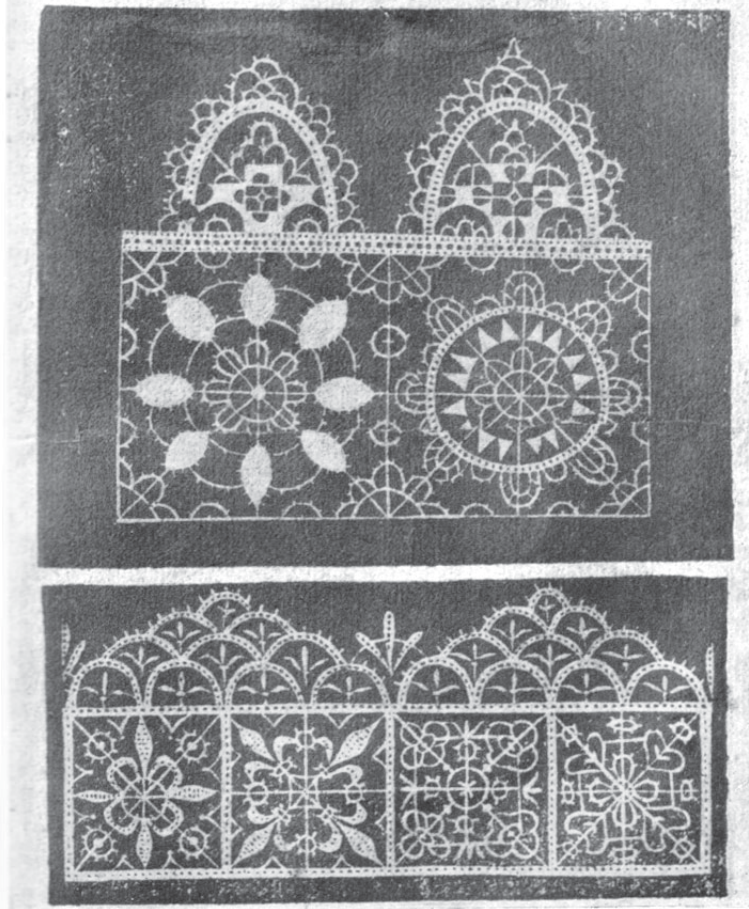
#### CUTWORK (RETICELLA) AND PUNTO IN ARIA.

LACE appears to be of Italian origin, though attempts have been made to trace it to Oriental sources. Though, however, it is impossible to prove that the work of the earliest laces was borrowed by Italy from the East, or from the Saracens of Sicily,\* or from the Greeks who took refuge in Italy from the troubles of the Lower Empire,† the influence of Oriental design upon the early geometric laces is a hitherto unrecognised fact. Venice in Italy was peculiarly fitted by her position to transmit Oriental influences. There are documents that prove that in 1390 the Venetians traded with India and had a consul at Siam. Venice was the great emporium and distributor of metal-work, silk, cloth of gold, which came to her from Constantinople and Greece; and in the fifteenth century Venetian commerce covered the whole of the civilised world. In furniture, the *intarsia* or inlaid work, which was in such favour in the sixteenth century, shows in its design the obvious influence of Eastern art; and in many cases the patterns have been taken directly from Arab sources. The same influence shows itself in the stuffs, embroideries, damascened metal-work, and other such objects, of which the industries were naturally directly affected by the importation of Eastern models and Eastern methods. The influence of the East upon European ceramic art and the artistic pottery of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, espe-

\* Francesco Nardi, "Sull' Origine dell' Arte del Ricamo," Padova, 1839: "What further confirms its Byzantine origin is that those very places which kept up the closest intercourse with the Greek Empire are the cities where point lace was earliest made and flourished to the greatest extent," *e.g.*, Venice.

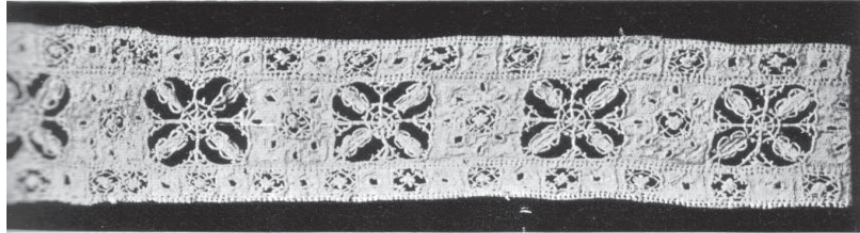
† Digby Wyatt, "Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century."

# Ouvrages de point coupé

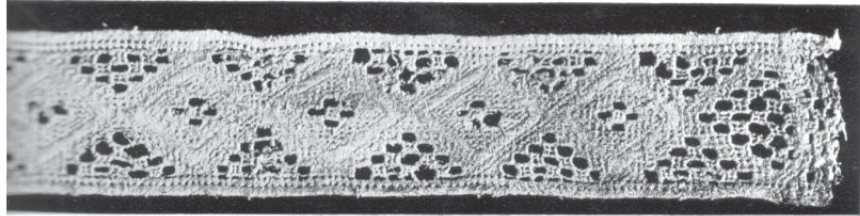


A DESIGN FOR CUTWORK (Reticella).  
From Vinciolo, "Les Singuliers et Nouveaux Pourtraicts," 1587.

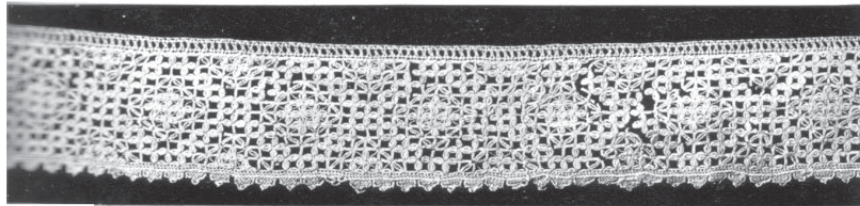
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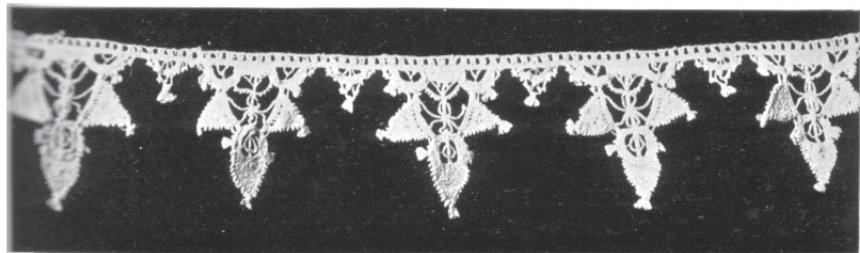
STRIP OF LINEN.  
With squares filled in with cutwork (Reticella).



CUTWORK (Reticella).



CUTWORK (Reticella).  
The lines of the linen foundation entirely covered with needlepoint.



VANDYKED EDGING OF NEEDLEPOINT.

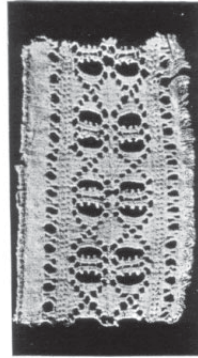


Plate VI.

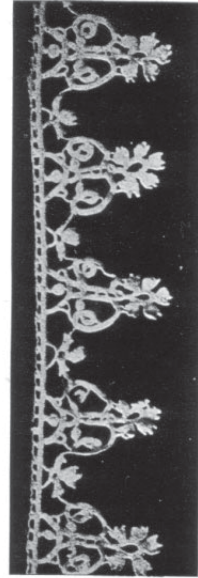


PATTERNS FOR EDGINGS AND INSERTIONS OF NEEDLEPOINT.

From Cesare Vecellio, "Corona delle Nobili et Virtuose Donne," 1592.



PIECE OF DRAWN WORK.



EDGING OF NEEDLEPOINT LACE.

cially that of Italy, has been noticed. "In the painting of the Coronation of the Virgin, by a pupil or follower of Giotto, in the National Gallery, there is a band of ornament on the upright of the step beneath the throne, composed of stars and crosses, as in Persian wall-tiles. Again, in the picture of the Circumcision, by Marco Marziale, in this Gallery, star shapes, similar to the tiles, figure in the ornamentation of a linen cloth."\* As Venice † was the place where embroidery and trimming of white linen first came into fashion in Europe, the motives of Oriental design—these same stars and crosses—were first applied to linen ornamentation in Venice, and it is possible that from Persian drawn-thread work with whipped stitches—possibly of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century—the Italian art of drawing out threads and stitching over them was derived.‡

What were these principles of design thus borrowed? § Interlaced, repeating star-shaped and polygonal ornament, purely geometrical; never naturalistic, or combined with figured ornament.

These geometrical forms are exclusively used in early Italian reticella and *punto in aria*, at a date when flowing scrolls and conventionalised flower ornament was freely used in the designs for embroidery.||

The successive types of lace we have to consider are: cutwork, or reticella; and its derivative *punto in aria*.

Cutwork is a term which is also used for reticella or Greek lace, which is its trade name. Reticella, first mentioned in the Sforza Inventory (1493), is not named in the pattern-books until Vecellio (1592). It is worked upon linen as a foundation; threads were

\* Henry Wallis, "The Godman Collection of Persian Ceramic Art belonging to F. Du Cane Godman, with examples from other Collections," London, 1894.

† Venetian linens for fine towelling and napery in general at one time were in favourite use during the fifteenth century. In the "Ducs de Bourgogne," by the Comte de Laborde, more than once we meet with such an entry as: "Une pièce de nappes, ouvrage de Venise," &c.

‡ A. S. Cole, *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 26th July 1895.

§ "On peut considérer l'art arabe comme étant un système de décoration fondé tout entier sur l'ordre et la forme géométriques, et qui n'emprunte rien ou presque rien à l'observation de la nature" (J. Bourgoïn, "Les Arts Arabes," 1873).

"L'idée qui domine dans le dessin des premières dentelles ne se rattache, par aucun côté, aux tendances de l'art décoratif du siècle où elles furent créées" (J. Séguin, "La Dentelle").

withdrawn or cut out of the linen to form the open spaces, and the remaining threads overcast with button-hole stitches (see Plate XI.). The effect of this work is identical with that of the geometric patterned needlepoint lace (early *punto in aria*); and the same patterns are equally suited to both classes of drawn linen and needlepoint lace, as may be seen by an examination of Vinciolo's pattern-book. The drawing out of the threads, by means of which the framework necessary for the reticella pattern was produced, was more laborious than the construction of skeleton frameworks of thread, firmly tacked down upon a piece of parchment—the foundation of *punto in aria*.\* The crossings of these intersecting lines of thread were secured, and then all the foundation threads were covered with the button-hole stitch. The elaboration of this foundation into solid pattern was effected by adding row upon row of button-hole stitches, sometimes close, sometimes open in effect. These skeleton designs were made in squares, and by joining several similar bits together a long border was constructed. Some reticella made in Sicily and Southern Italy is embroidered rather heavily upon the solid portions of the ornament.

The basis of design in both types of lace is very similar. According to the pattern-books it is open squares or diamond shapes with diagonals from corner to corner, and two bars from side to side, the diagonals and bars crossing one another at the common centre, and so forming a radiation of eight lines bounded by a square. In the earliest examples the geometrical forms are simple; the details of the ornament touch one another. Later, the design becomes more refined and complicated, and picots or small loops are freely used. In some late specimens of *punto in aria* of the seventeenth century there is a raised rib upon the design, and some have the pattern emphasised by a raised button-hole stitched border. The restriction of design to a series or combination of squares (the constructive basis of reticella), is broken through in later specimens, and curved lines are introduced; the next step was the fuller mastery of design, shown in the representation of figures of light scroll designs. This change in the character of *punto in aria* took place at the very close of the sixteenth century,

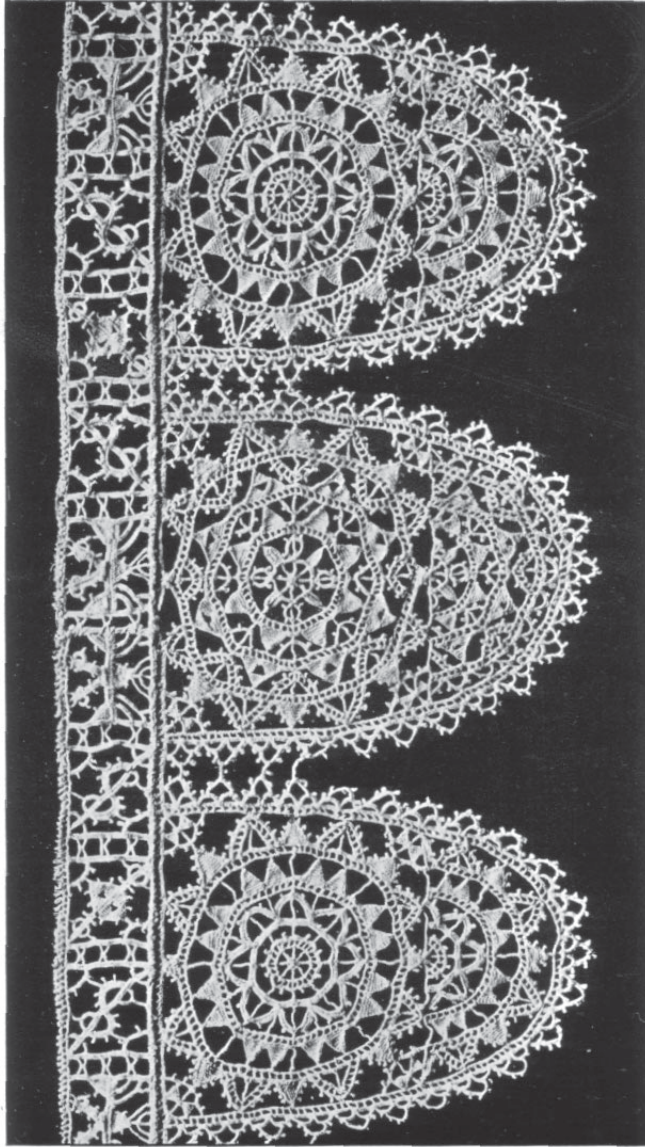
\* The term is first mentioned in Taglienti, "Opera nuova che insegna a le Dône a cuscire. . ." Venice, 1530. Brunet gives an edition dated 1528. In Taglienti it is mentioned as a stitch in embroidery.



DETAIL IN A FRESCO.

In the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena. By Ambrogio Lorenzetti.  
(See openwork ornamentation on cushion.)



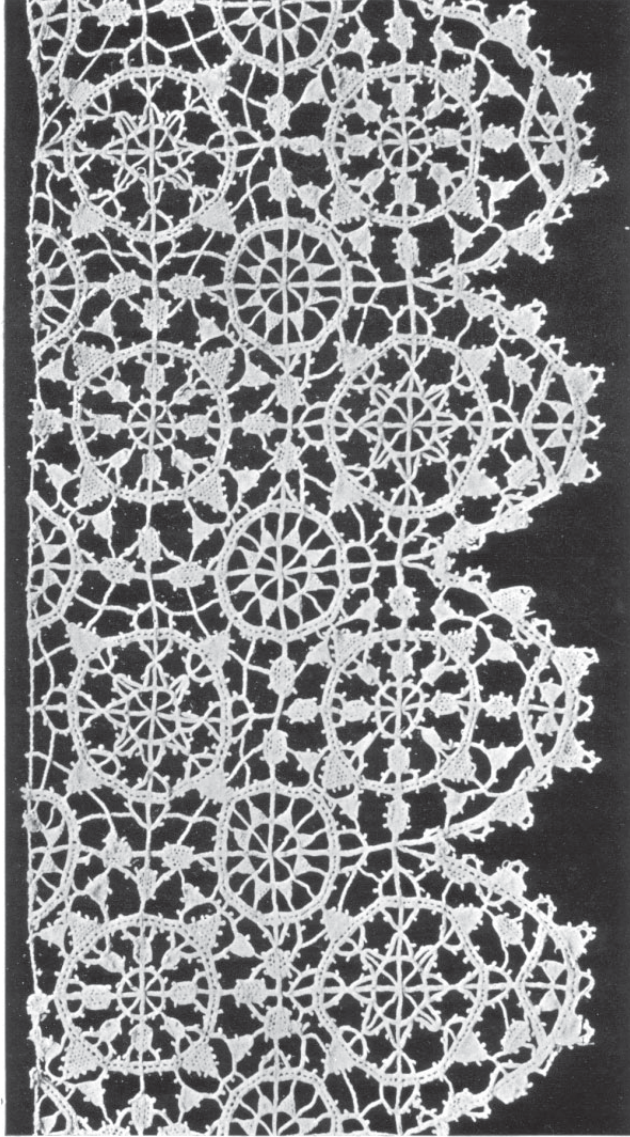


INSERTION OF RETICELLA.

With deep scallops of needlepoint. Late sixteenth or seventeenth century.



Plate IX.



NEEDLEPOINT BORDER.  
Venetian, sixteenth or seventeenth century.

when the pattern-books give all varieties of odd figures to be worked on lace.\* One design of Vecellio represents, within a border with a dentated edge, a harp, guitar, fiddle, horn, organ, trumpets, and pipes; and dolphins, running hounds, hunting scenes, Amorini, and mythological figures, are commonly introduced. In the collection of Mrs John Hungerford Pollen is a chalice cover representing the figure of St Peter with Bible and keys, supported by cherubs. Greek and Levantine work of the seventeenth century introduce curious archaic figures and devices with vases and stiff flower sprays.

In spite of the development of *punto in aria* reticella was in Italy not entirely abandoned even as late as the nineteenth century. In 1862 a certain Francesco Bulgarini was still living at Siena who made reticella of extreme fineness.†

In pictures I have found very little lace until the second quarter of the sixteenth century.‡ White lace has been *said* to be found in a portrait of a lady, by Carpaccio (1476-1522), in the gallery at Venice,§ but I have not been able to trace this picture. In other pictures by Carpaccio there is no lace and but little embroidery, and the linen is for the most part plain; in one case embroidery in cross-stitch appears. No lace is to be found in the paintings of Mantegna (1431-1506) or of Luini|| (1470-1530). In the work of Pinturicchio (1454-1513) embroidery of cord or metal gimp is applied in conventional patterns to the borders of dresses.¶ To judge by Italian painting, there is no

\* In Parasole (1616) the patterns for "*punti in aria*" are varied, apparently to show variety in stitch, some of which are close, some open. The *punti in aria* patterns are most rich and varied, and include in almost every design grotesque figures and animals.

† Elise Ricci, "Antiche trine Italiane."

‡ Cav. A. Merli cites as the earliest known painting in which lace occurs, a majolica disc, after the style of the Della Robbia family, in which is represented the half figure of a lady, dressed in rich brocade, with a collar of white lace. As the precise date cannot be fixed, and the work may be by one of Luca Della Robbia's descendants, this, as evidence, is useless.

§ "The cuffs of the lady are edged with a narrow lace, the pattern of which appears in Vecellio's 'Corona,' not published till 1591" (Lefébure).

|| In Luini's "Presentation in the Temple" geometric cutwork or embroidery appears on the priest's robe.

¶ Later, lace appears more frequently. In Titian (1477-1576) narrow lace is used to edge shirts and shirt sleeves in female costumes. In the Prado Museum,

evidence of Cav. A. Merli's theory that "the art was even at the apex of perfection at the commencement of 1500"!

An exceptionally early instance of what appears to be needlepoint fillings of open spaces in a linen cushion is to be seen in a fresco by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (completed in 1339) in the Public Palace of Siena (Plate VII.). Here Pax reclines upon a linen cushion with an openwork seam and diamond-shaped openings filled in with star-like devices. Simple work of this nature, approximating to embroidery, was no doubt produced as early as fine linen was in use in Venice.

Of the pattern-books, the earliest in date we know of is 1525.\* There may, however, have been earlier lost editions. Vavassore † begins the first book of his we know of by saying, "Havedo io pel passato alcuni libri di esempli" ("having made myself in the past some books of patterns"). The patterns are described as being for *recami*.

In that by Alessandro Pagannino, dated Venice, 1527—putting aside the author's ascription to himself of the credit of having published the first book on the subject—neither patterns nor titles indicate lace work. The first six cuts are designs for embroidery, the rest designs upon squares to be used for lacis or embroidery. In the work by Antonio Taglienti, 1530, ‡ there are also patterns for embroidery to be done upon a foundation of stuff with silks of various colours and gold and silver thread. Many embroidery stitches are mentioned, among others, *punto in aere*, § a term afterwards

Madrid, a portrait of a woman, ascribed to Del Sarto (1486-1531), has a narrow edging of lace. Del Sarto's "Portrait of a Sculptor" (portrait of the artist) has a border of lace to the shirt (National Gallery). In Tintoretto (1518-1594) narrow lace, apparently bobbin-made, appears in the picture of "Lucretia."

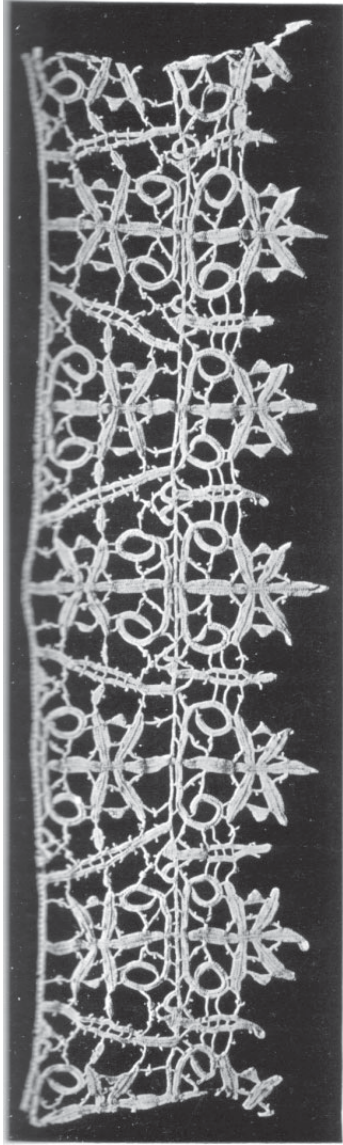
\* See Note, page 9.

† Esemplario di lavori, &c., N.D., Venice.

‡ Brunet gives an edition dated 1528.

§ In the six pages of instructions we learn the various stitches in which these wonderful patterns may be executed: "Damaschino, rilevato, a filo, sopra punto, ingaseato, Ciprioto, croceato, pugliese, scritto, incroceato, in aere, fatto su la rate, a magliato, desfilato, and di racammo" That *punto in aere* or *in aria* was a term used for embroidery appears from the fact that so early as "1476 the Venetian Senate decreed that no *punto in aria* whatever, executed either in flax with a needle or in silver or gold thread, should be used on the curtains or bed-linen in the city or provinces."





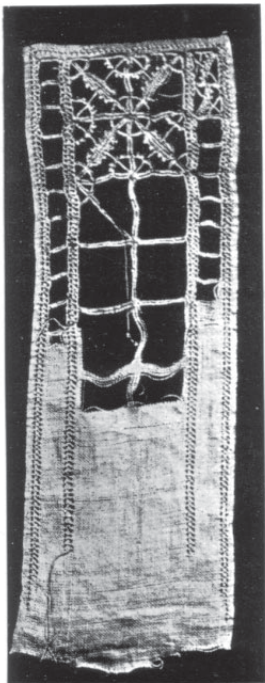
BORDER AND VANDYKE EDGE OF NEEDLEPOINT (*Punto in Aria*).

The pattern united by brides picotées. Italian, early seventeenth century.

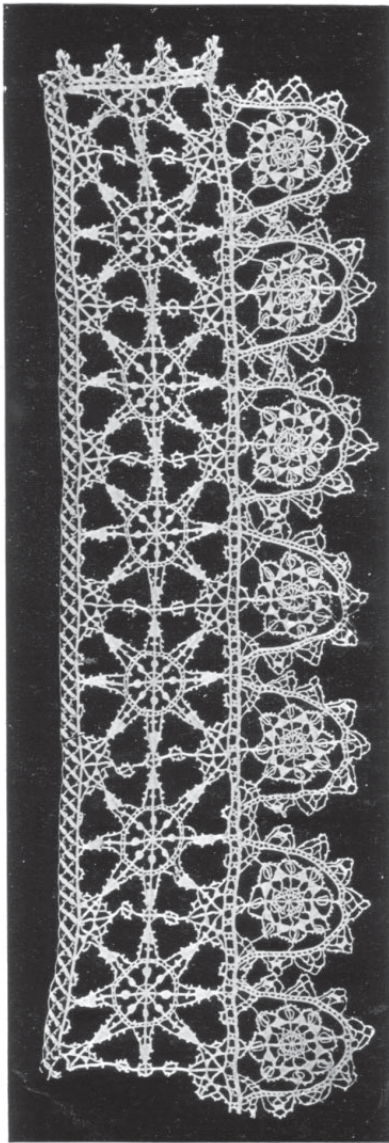


INSERTION OF RETICELLA.

Venetian, sixteenth century.



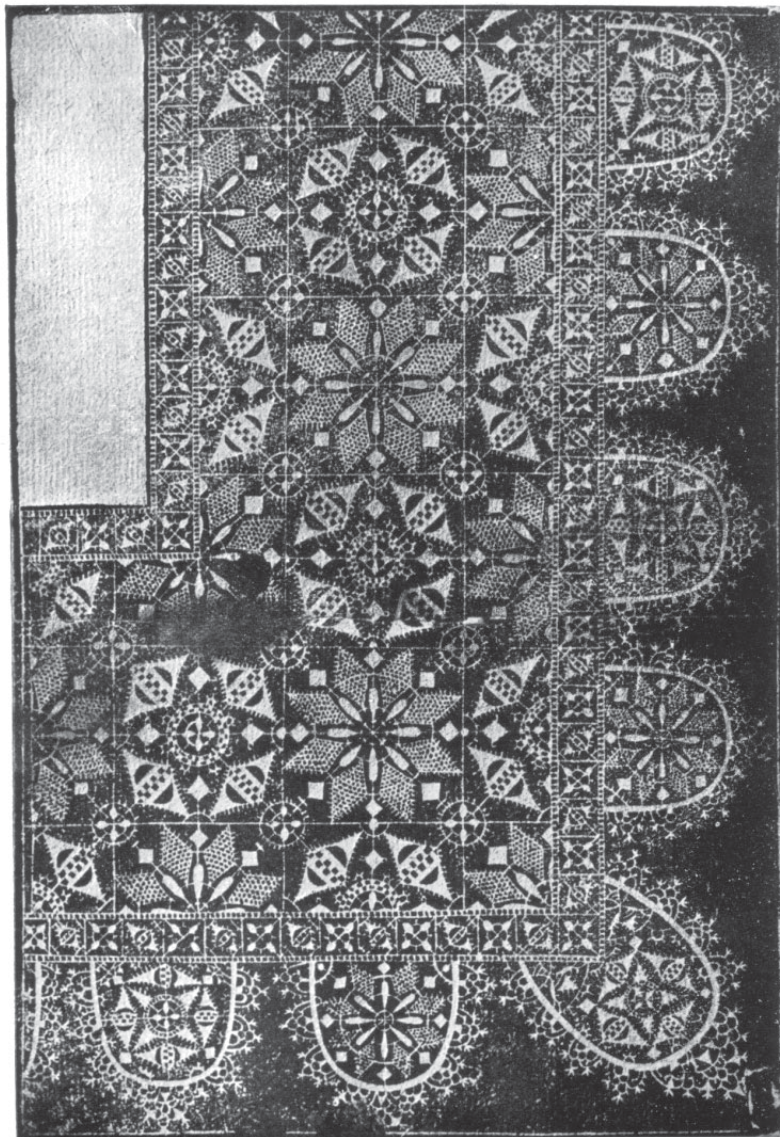
PIECE OF RETICELLA IN PROGRESS (Modern).



BORDER OF RETICELLA.  
With Vandykes of *Punto in Aria*. Venetian, about 1580.



Plate XII.



PATTERN FOR RETICELLA.

With border of needlepoint. From the pattern-book of Elisabetta Catanen Parasole, the "Teatro delle Nobili et Virtuose Donne," 1616.

used for needlepoint lace. The designs to be worked for collars, bed-hangings, and insertions in pillow-cases consist of scrolls, arabesques, birds, animals, flowers, herbs, and grasses.

In fact all the earliest engraved pattern-books contain only designs for various sorts of embroidery upon material, such as darning upon canvas (*punto fa su la rete a maglia quadra*), drawn thread work of reticulated patterns (*punto tirato* or *punto a reticella*), and "cutwork" (*punto tagliato*)—cut-out linen, not the cutwork before described.

It is not until about thirty years later that we have special geometric patterns workable by lacemakers. This development of lace was the consequence of the innovation of collars and ruffs, which began to be used in 1540.

From this date geometric lace made rapid progress, until it culminated in the beautiful and brilliant designs of Vinciolo (1587).\*

\* The various types of lace appear in the pattern-book of Elisabetta Catanea Parasole (1616). Her patterns are entitled—(1) Merletti a piombini ; (2) Lavori di ponto reticella ; (3) Lavori di ponto reale e reticella (cutwork combined with reticella) ; (4) Lavori di ponto in aria.

## CHAPTER IV.

## EARLY ITALIAN BOBBIN LACE.

KNOTTED FRINGES—EARLY BOBBIN LACE (MERILETTI A PIOMBINI)—  
EARLY GENOESE LACE.

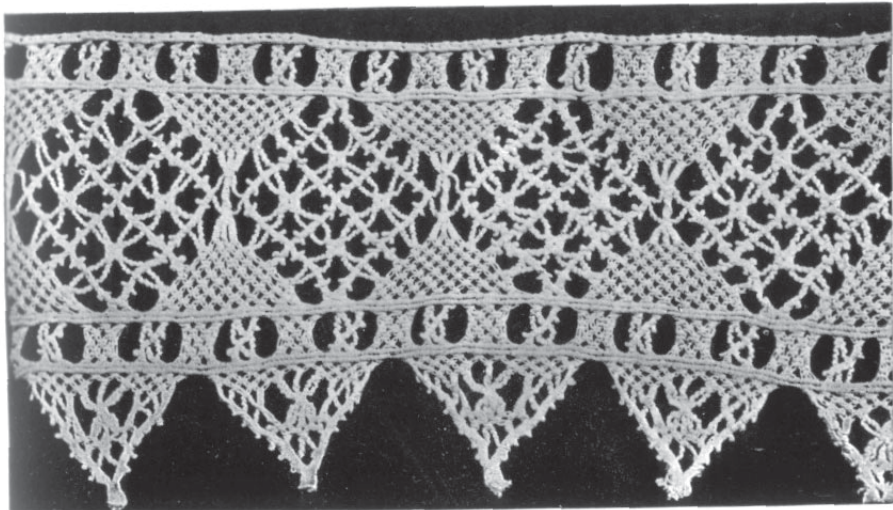
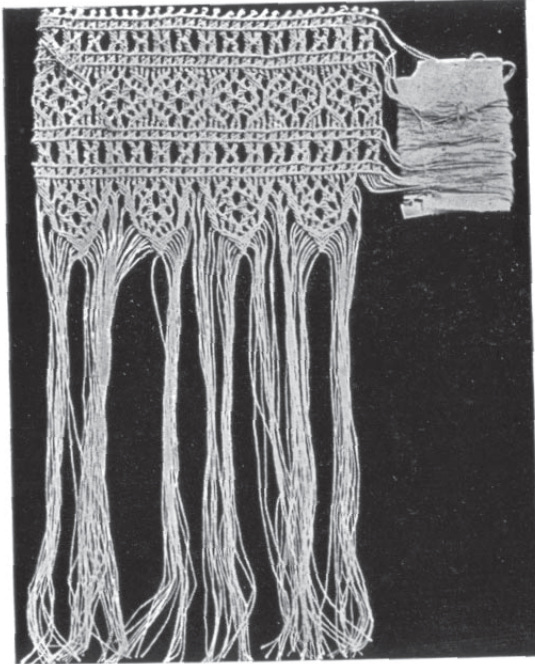
KNOTTING, a treatment of the fringed ends of stuff, may be considered a forerunner of bobbin lace, being made (when made separately as a fringe) on a pillow, though by knotting, and not by plaiting. A fringe of loose threads was formed at the edge of the material—generally linen—by drawing the warp threads, and then binding or knotting the weft threads together as tassels. During the sixteenth century much of this work was produced at Genoa. In a specimen illustrated in Elise Ricci's "Antiche trine Italiane," the threads are knotted to represent small figures. *Macramé*—a word of Arabic derivation used for a fringe or trimming—by which similar work is known in modern times, was reintroduced in Genoa in 1843.

The earliest bobbin lace appears in the form of twisted or plaited thread edgings for ruffs. Judging from the pattern-books in which they appear, they have the same dentated edge, but a more wiry make, and a lighter, more open appearance than the contemporary needle-points, and were consequently a more effective contrast to the lawn ruff.\*

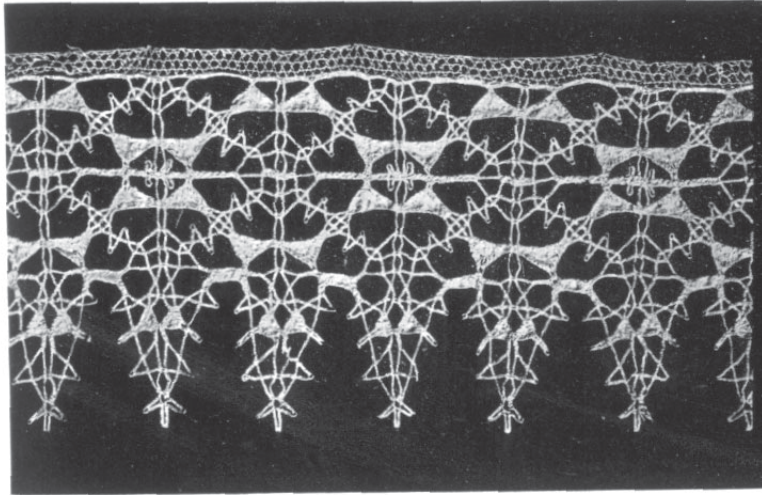
\* "Ces guipures plus souples et plus vaporeuses que celles à l'aiguille, distribuées à flots au bord des enroulements de gaudrons à triple rang, donnaient à l'objet une certaine élégance qui rendait supportable son développement exagéré; tandis que les passements de point coupé à l'aiguille, d'une nature plus ferme, fournissaient un pli plus sec dont les bords aigus, se tenant rangés trop correctement, les faisaient ressembler à une armée de piques qu'on aurait dites disposées pour la défense" (Séguin, "La Dentelle").



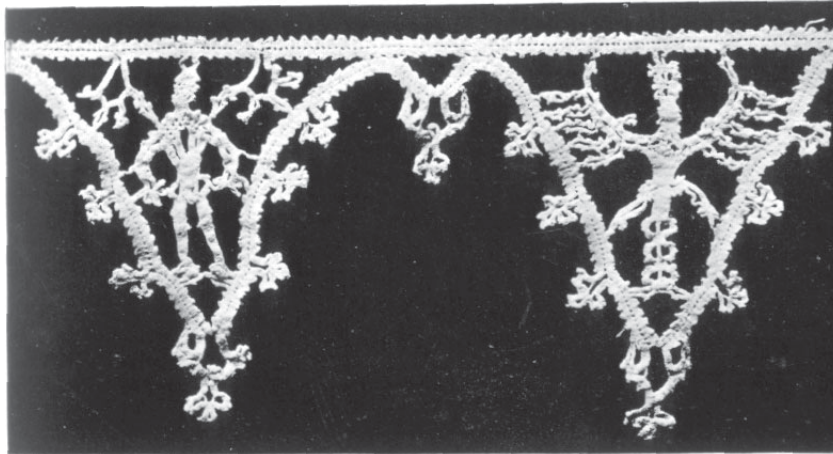
Plate XIII.



MACRAMÉ (Modern).



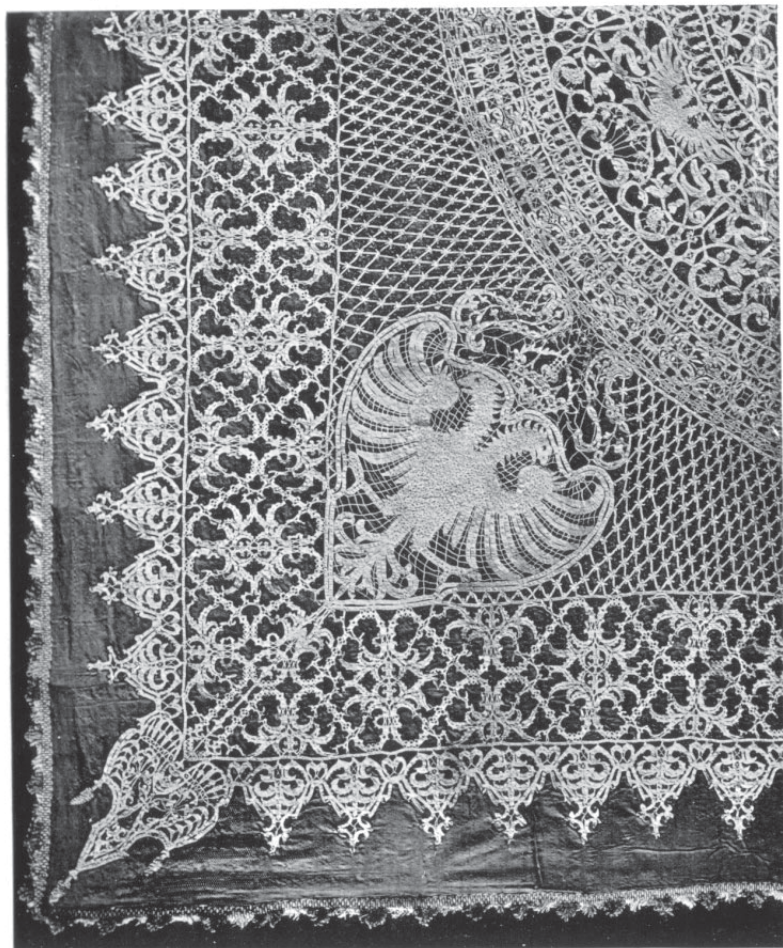
EARLY BOBBIN LACE.  
*Merletti a piombini.*



BOBBIN LACE (German).  
In the possession of the Misses Trevelyan.



Plate XV.



COVERLET OF BOBBIN LACE (Italian).

In "Le Pompe" (1557) small round loops are shown at the edge of various details, and this ornament also appears in Parasole. It consists of a single thread brought out in a loop and carried back again. Larger loops of plaited thread are also used to give a light appearance to the pointed vandykes. The design is geometrical like cutwork, but the pattern is formed of *lines* rather than *solid forms*, and these lines are less rigid and precise than the more solid needle-point. A narrow "footing," though worked in with pattern, appears in many of these merletti a piombini.\* The first edgings were narrow, and when a greater width was required the vandyked edge was sewn on to an insertion. The threads composing the pattern are, as has been said, plaited together, not worked across each other at right angles to form a linen-like toilé. The development of more important ornamental devices is shown in certain paintings, such as that of Charles of Saxony (1582), whose ruff is trimmed with deep and elaborate merletti a piombini.

Some later specimens show the transition from geometrical design to a conventional scroll with leafy ornaments. The important bed-cover in the Victoria and Albert Museum,† which is stated to be "either Flemish or Italian," and is catalogued under the Flemish laces, belongs to this period. To judge by the peculiar lightness and precision of the design, the "value" of the background, the design of the bordering pattern with its arrangement of diagonals with scrolling ends and the conventional treatment of every detail, it must be Italian, and probably Venetian (Plate XV.).

The piece is said to have belonged to Philip IV. of Spain, and the sixth circle from the centre is formed by the collar with jewels of the Golden Fleece, and within the four corners are two-headed eagles, displayed and surmounted by crowns.

\* "*Merletti*, all manner of little battlements, also the several wards or springs in a lock, by met. long purles wrought in bone-laces, usually worn in bands or ruffs" (Dictionary of Florio and Torriano, London, 1659).

The Italian word for lace, *pizzi*, is also derived from the vandyked character of the early laces. "*Pizzetti*, tongs, languets, lappets, labels or latches of anything, also peaks in bands and cuffs or any other linen" (Dictionary of Florio and Torriano, 1659).

"*Pizzo*, a peake or tip of anything" (Florio, "A Worlde of Wordes," 1598).

† No. 270, 1880.

The workmanship of this piece is remarkable. The plumage of the eagle is imitated by means of small holes left in the plaiting, in each of which a small loose loop or picot of thread appears. "The cross-bars of twisted threads which hold the feathers of the outstretched wings in their places are separate details of twisting, and are looped into the edges of the feathers. This is also the case with the trellis-work which occupies the space between the central circular device and its square border." \*

Genoa first imitated the gold threads of Cyprus, and her gold work, at first restricted to bed trimmings, was largely used for ornamenting dresses in the fifteenth century. After about 1420 this industry rapidly declined, and its workers emigrated. Genoese thread bobbin lace, which appears to have preserved the heaviness inseparable from metal *passements*, does not appear in portraits or inventories until just before the middle of the sixteenth century.† The portrait (Plate XVI.) of Henry II., Duc de Montmorency (d. 1632), one of the earliest examples, shows a deep and elaborate collar with a scalloped edge and wide insertion, and the popularity of Genoese lace was doubtless coincident with the first introduction of the falling collar, as it died out with the appearance of the cravat‡ (about 1660).

Genoese lace, as has been said, was coarse and solid, a characteristic which is early noticed in the seventeenth-century *jeu-d'esprit*, known as "Revolte des Passemens," where it is spoken of as having "le corps un peu gros." This very heaviness and solidity was eminently suited to its use upon boot tops, garters, shoe-roses, carriages, as well as upon collars, scarves, aprons, &c.

The "wheat grain" § ornament reappears in the various examples, combined with vandykes of the usual plaited and twisted type. The

\* Descriptive Catalogue of the Collections of Lace in the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1881.

† Vulson de la Colombière states that Genoese lace was not used in 1597.

‡ The cravat was a natural consequence of the periwig, which seems to have arisen in France about 1660. In England the Duke of York first wore one in 1663-4.

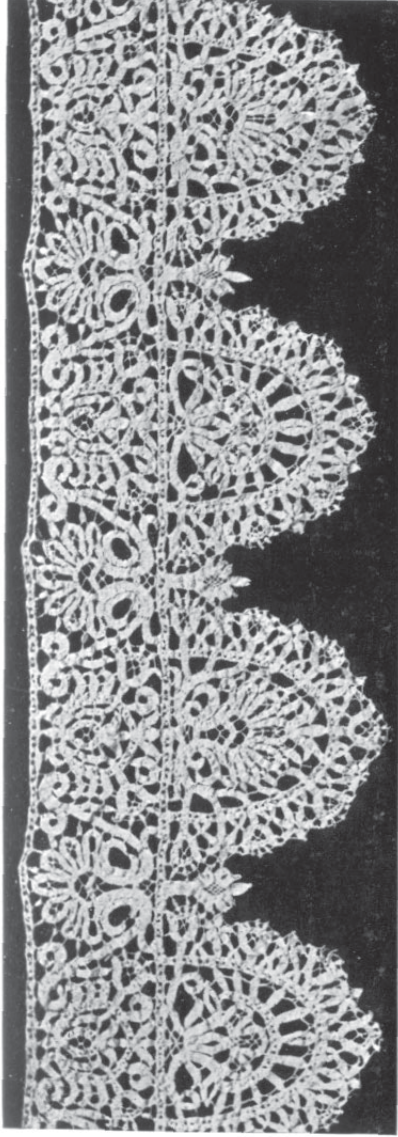
§ These "wheat-grains" are also a feature of Maltese lace. In 1833 Lady Hamilton Chichester introduced lace-making into Malta, and by adapting Genoese designs evolved what is known as Maltese lace by means of workers imported from Genoa.



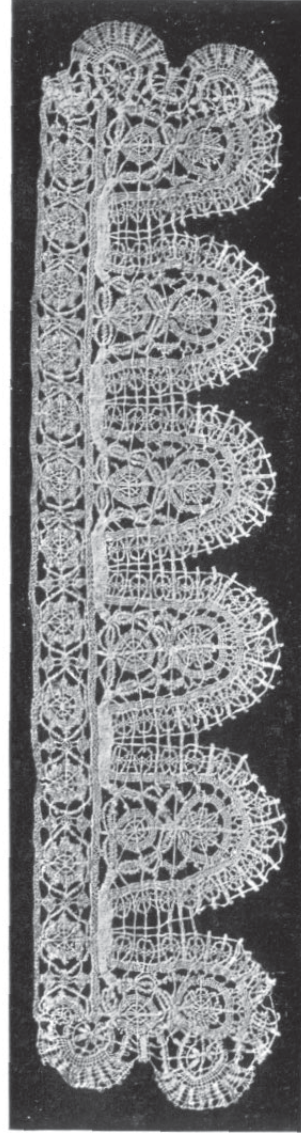


PORTRAIT OF HENRI, DUC DE MONTMORENCY (1595-1632).

By Lenain.

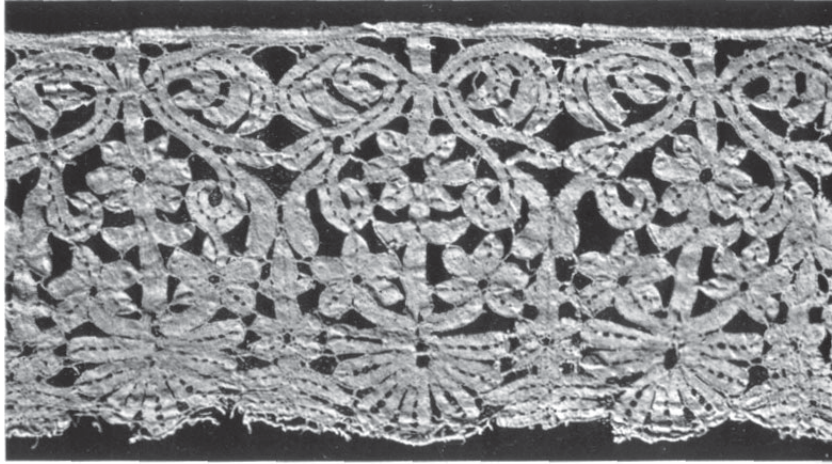


BORDER OF COLLAR (Scalloped).  
The narrow bands, twisted to form the ornament, are of plaited threads, a species of tape. Italian, early seventeenth century.



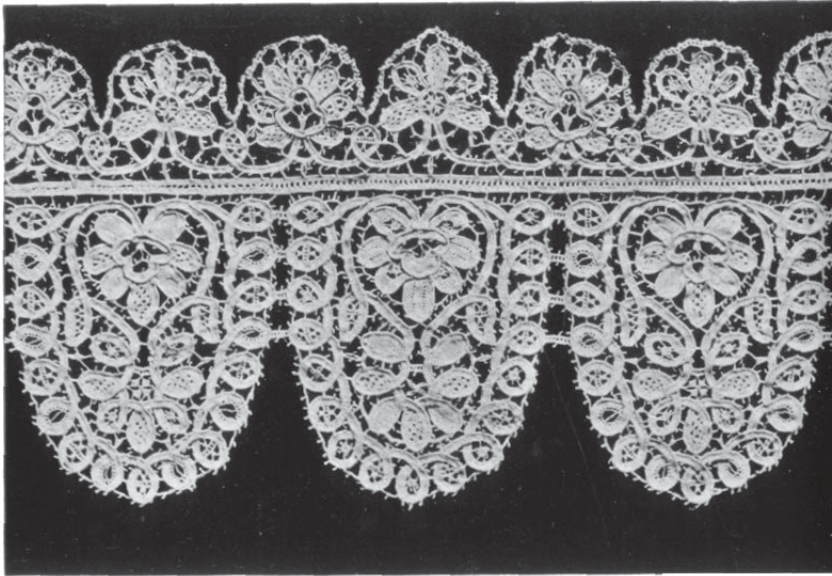
BOBBIN LACE.  
With round scallops. Italian, early seventeenth century.

Plate XIX.



BOBBIN MADE TAPE-LACE.

The pattern is linked together by twisted threads. Italian, seventeenth century.



ITALIAN TAPE-LACE.

With needlepoint fillings. About 1640.



lace used to decorate the collars of the period appears to be of two distinct types: first, a scalloped lace (which was used contemporaneously with the Flemish edgings for collars of the seventeenth century), the pattern of which consists of a tape-like, simple design, strengthened and connected by short brides. In the centre of the scallop is the profile of a flattened carnation. A succession of these carnation-like forms produces the effect of ornamental scallopings to the border. This lace was in vogue about 1640, succeeding the more formal scallops of the earlier part of the century.

The second type (*point de Gênes frisé*) is made entirely with plaits of four threads each, following the design, and is characterised by small oval enlargements resembling grains of wheat which are sometimes arranged as beads on a thread and sometimes composed into trefoils and quatrefoils, or spokes radiating from a common centre (Plate XVIII.). This lace, made up of an insertion and an edging of deep rounded scallops, is well illustrated by Lenain in his portrait of Cinq Mars. The scalloped edge and the insertion were made separately, but were supposed to harmonise in pattern. In an early comedy of Corneille, "La Galerie du Palais," a character criticises a piece of *point de Gênes*, of which

"Ja dentelle  
Est fort mal assorti avec le passement."

In the portrait of the Duc de Montmorency a figure of a horseman occurs in the insertion—an isolated example, for in no other illustration or extant specimen has any deviation from simple geometrical design been introduced in *point de Gênes frisé*.\*

By the middle of the seventeenth century the varieties of pillow lace had been considerably developed. The thin wiry pillow lace had been discarded, and the heavier Genoese collar laces went out of fashion, as we have said, by 1660. A tape lace with a straight edge between the ornament of which were grounds of meshes, or of bars or brides, was subsequently made in Genoa, and is remarkable for the twisting of the tape, always looped back upon itself.

\* The name is an old one. In the wardrobe of Mary de Médicis is enumerated among other articles a "mouchoir de point de Gennes frisé" ("Garderobe de feu Madame," 1646; Bib. Nat. MSS., F. Fr. 11,426).

## CHAPTER V.

## VENETIAN NEEDLEPOINT AND BURANO LACE.

ACCORDING to Molmenti,\* lace-making was always at Venice a private enterprise, unlike the great State-protected industries, such as the glass manufactures at Murano. A great quantity of cutwork was made in the houses of the nobility for their own use, and in the convents. Viena Vendramin Nani, to whom Vecellio dedicated his book † in 1591, was accustomed to make lace, and to employ the young women of her household in this "virtuous exercise."

Cutwork, as in France and England, was originally "greatly accepted of by ladies and gentlemen," and "consequently of the common people." The art spread downwards, ‡ and in the time of Daru "occupait la population de la capitale"—the daughters of the fishermen in the islands and the convents, as Peuchet writes.§ Geometrical-patterned lace continued to be freely made for ornamenting linen for household purposes until the eighteenth century, || but in the

\* "La Vie Privée à Venise."

† The "Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne" (1592). The dedication (dated 20th January 1591) is "Alla Clarissima et Illustrissima Signora Vendramina Nani," and mentions the delight she takes in these works and "in farne essercitar le donne di casa sua, ricetto delle piu virtuose giovani che hoggidi vivano in questa città."

‡ Morosini Grimani, wife of the Doge Marino Grimani, set up at her own expense a workshop, in which were employed 130 workwomen under the direction of a *mistra* (maestra), Cattarina Gardin, who worked exclusively for the Dogaressa.

§ "Dictionnaire Universel de la Géographie Commercante," 1789.

|| A piece of point lace border in white and brown thread, lent by Mrs C. Martin to the Victoria and Albert Museum, though of the eighteenth century, resembles the designs of the late sixteenth.



**LAVORO PUNTO IN ARIA.**



DESIGN FOR PUNTO IN ARIA.

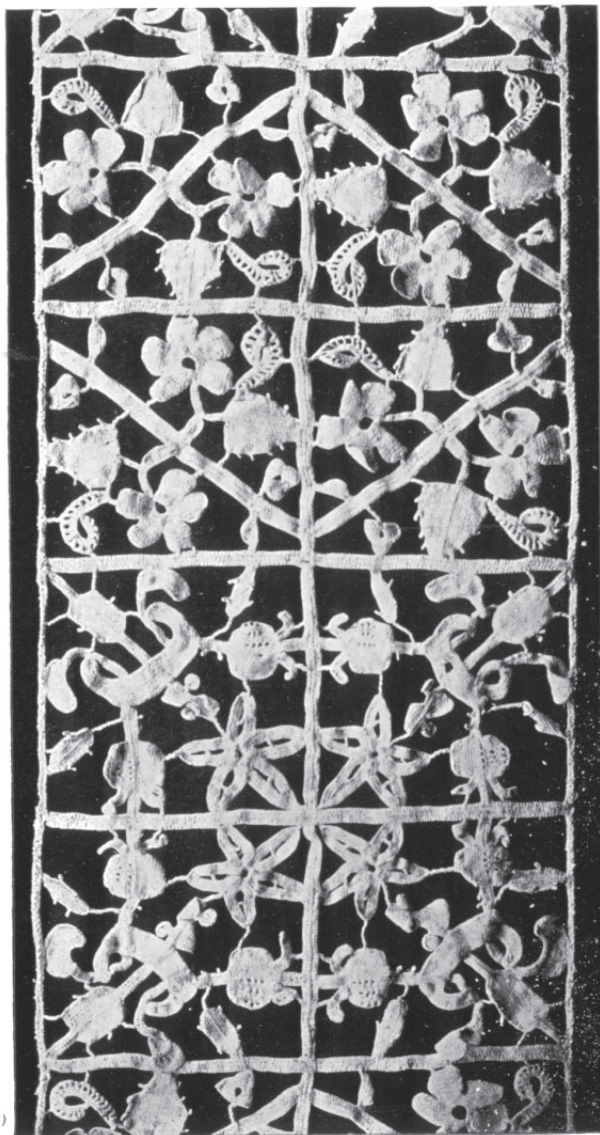
From the pattern-book of Elisabetta Catanea Parasole, the "Teatro delle Nobili et Virtuose Donne," 1616.

Plate XXI.



DESIGN FOR PUNTO IN ARIA.

From the pattern-book of Elisabetta Catanea Parasole, the "Teatro delle Nobili et Virtuose Donne," 1616.



VENETIAN, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. In the possession of Mrs J. H. Middleton.



VENETIAN, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. In the possession of Mrs J. H. Middleton.



last years of the sixteenth curved forms were introduced, and a new type of lace developed. In the early seventeenth century floral and human forms were often treated. The specimens with figures and animals are curious rather than beautiful. A type of lace of scroll design in flat needlepoint, recalling by its lightness very fine metal work or the arabesques of Persian ornament, is very interesting and well designed. In this type is a rosette-like or many-lobed flower, and the interlacing ribbon-like scrolls which show the influence of Oriental art. The solid part of the pattern is, in many cases, outlined by a slightly raised rib or edge, which also models portions of the ornament. The edge is also enriched by short picots, and the design is frequently united by short brides, either ornamented or varied by a single picot.

There is no distinguishing name for this rare and beautiful type of lace. It is, strictly speaking, *late punto in aria*, but the needlepoint laces which were produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were virtually all comprised under the general name of *punto in aria*, for in 1616, 1633, and 1634, the Proveditori alle Pompe forbade the wearing of "punto in aere da Venezia," under penalty of a fine of two hundred ducats for each offence.

The term is an unfortunate one, as it was also applied to a stitch in embroidery,\* "the high raised stitch," and continued to be applied to every kind of Venetian needlepoint lace. Marini quotes from a document of the seventeenth century, in which *punti in aria* appears to have been an alternative name for Burano lace,† and Peuchet states that Venetian laces were known by that name.‡

Rose point differs from *punto in aria* in three important details: in the highly conventional character of its design, its relief, and the elaboration of its brides. The design of the heavier rose points is

\* *Punto in aria* in Florio and Torriano's Dictionary (1654) is defined as "the high raised stitch."

† "Elles portent le nom de point ou punti in aria" ("Dictionnaire Universel de la Géographie Commercante," 1789).

‡ It is curious that in Florio's Dictionary the special terms used for lace have quite other significations. Pizzo is "a peake or tip of anything," Merli are "little turrets, spires, pinnacles, or battlements upon wals," Merletti, "the severall wards of a locke," Trine is a term for "cuts, iags, snips or such cuttings or pinching, pinkt works in garments." "Punto in aria" does not appear in Florio's "World of Wordes," 1598.

almost invariably a foliated scroll, with an ornamental flower based upon the pomegranate, but much conventionalised. A natural pomegranate appears in many specimens of late *punto in aria*, but the fruit, as it appears in rose point, is hardly recognisable. This conventional treatment of natural forms is a prominent feature of Italian design, as compared with the more naturalistic art of France, Flanders, and England.

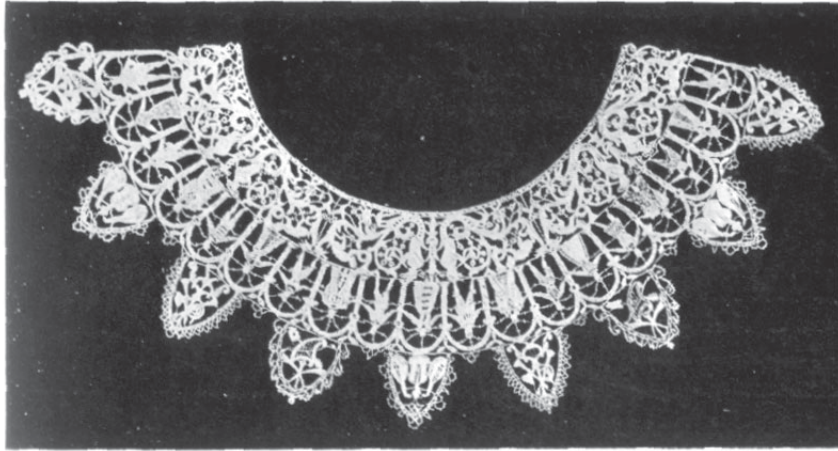
Figures and natural objects are rarely introduced even in ecclesiastical lace. A specimen of rose point, however, illustrated in Elise Ricci's "Antiche trine Italiane," shows a ship in sail containing three figures; and in a piece belonging to Mrs John Hungerford Pollen, which forms the front opening of an alb, is represented the Madonna crowned and seated on clouds, with her foot on the neck of a cherub, and attired in a robe sprinkled with stars. Above are the Three Persons of the Trinity. Part of the robes are worked in open stitch, small black beads are added to the eyes. Mr Samuel Chick, again, has an altar border, the central portion of which contains emblems of the Passion. In the middle is our Lord's face upon a cushion wearing the crown of thorns, and surmounted by a halo; underneath are the dice, pincers, flagellum, and hammer, to the right the flogging-post and ladder, to the left the cross, spear, and sponge on a reed. At the top are the crown of thorns and nails. This piece was at one time the property of Mary of Orleans, Queen of Saxony, granddaughter of Charles I. of England.\* In a curious "pale" or square of rose point in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate XXXIII),† two angels are displayed holding up a chalice, above which is the sacred monogram I.H.S. set in rays of glory. In one unique collar mythological subjects are either outlined by pin-holes or distinguished from the background by a closer stitch upon the flat toilé in irregular-shaped compartments. In a triangular piece in the possession of Mr Sydney Vacher stags and other conventionalised animals are introduced. Such specimens, however, were no doubt experimental in design, and are not often met with.

The second point in which rose point differs from *punto in aria*

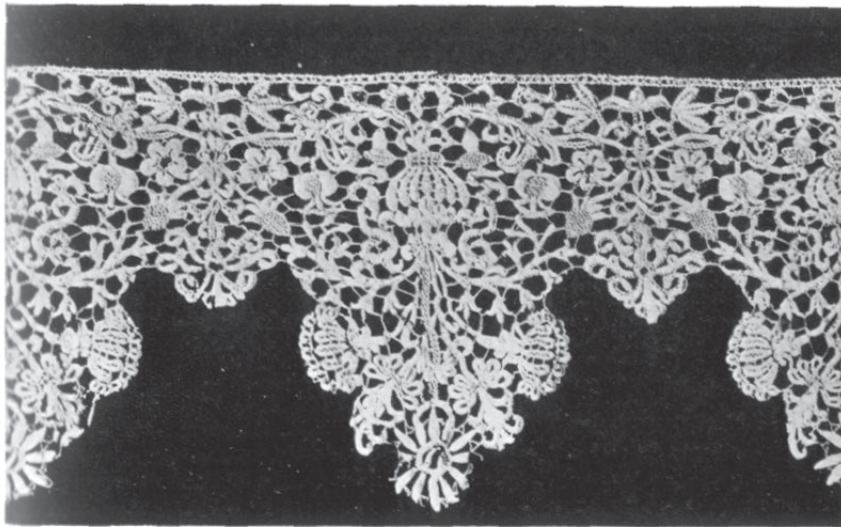
\* See Catalogue of the *Daily Mail* Exhibition of British Lace, March 1908.

† Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 556, 1875.





MODERN NEEDLEPOINT LACE.  
After a design of Vecellio.

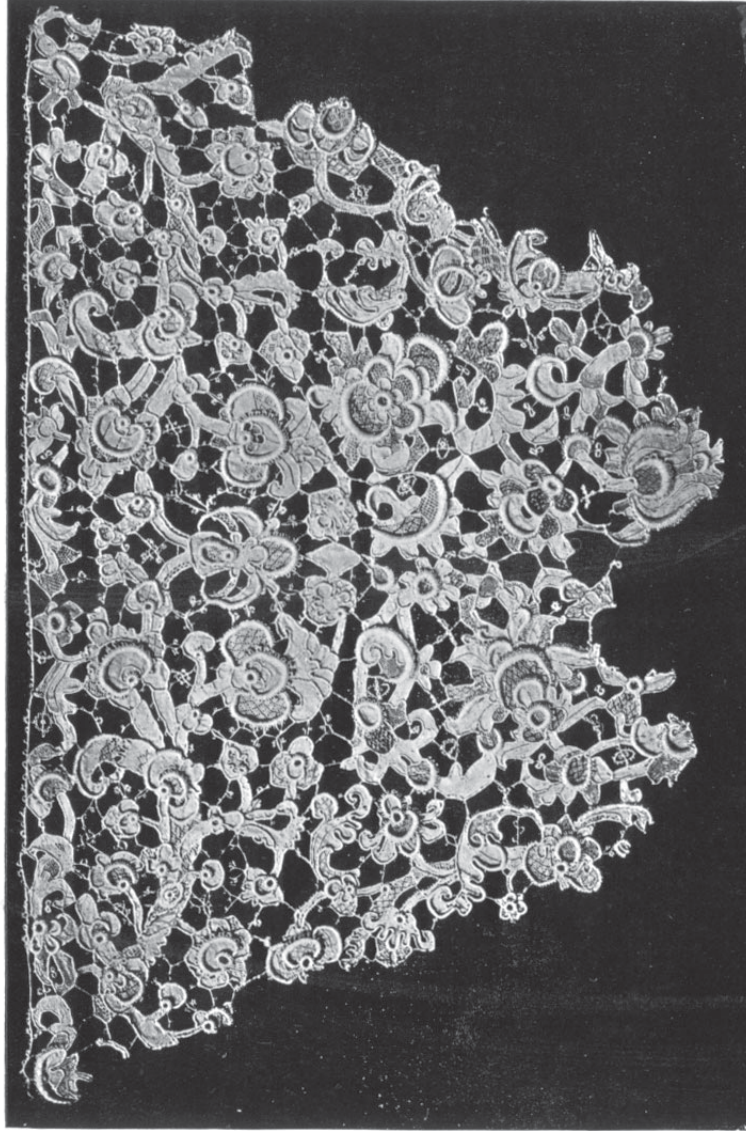


BORDER OF NEEDLEPOINT LACE.  
With scallops. "Flat Venetian." In the possession of Mrs. Christie Miller.



COLLAR, ROSE-POINT.  
Venetian, late seventeenth century.





SPECIMEN OF PIECED ROSE-POINT.

Where detached flowers are joined into a mosaic without forming any consecutive pattern.

is in its relief. In rose point, besides the raised edge which it has in common with some specimens of flat Venetian,\* higher relief is given by laying down a pad of coarse threads, varying according to the amount of relief it was desired to obtain, and covering this layer of thread by close button-hole stitches.

This thick sheaf of threads takes naturally an unbroken curve, and to this may be attributed the almost invariably rounded and lobed forms of the ornament. This pad is often ornamented with a close fringe of picots, or by an ornament of free loops—tier upon tier—ornamented with picots.

No open spaces or jours are introduced into the toilé, which is of an even and close button-hole stitch, varied by very small pin-holes arranged in lines or veins, or in simple chequer, chevron, or diamond diaper patterns, subordinated to the general effect of the design. In a specimen in the possession of Mr Sydney Vacher the pin-holes form a date.

The design is connected by a groundwork of brides, which have been already noticed in flat Venetian.

The brides, simple in the heavy points, become highly ornamented in the finest specimens, and in point de neige are ornamented not only with picots, but with picoted circles and semicircles, and S-shapes, and star devices. Sometimes the brides are single—sometimes two or three meet together, and are ornamented at the point of section †

\* In some specimens of rose point, however, the pattern is not strengthened on the edge by outer cordonnets of button-hole stitched work.

† In three square inches of a very fine specimen of rose point the following varieties of brides are to be found :—(1) A single bride ornamented with picots. (2) Double brides joined in the centre and ornamented at the sides by a circle four times picoté. Small picots also ornament the brides between the circle and the extremities. (3) Three double brides meeting in a small triangle, each side of which is ornamented with a circle five times picoté. (4) Three brides meeting in a point in the centre. Each is ornamented in a different manner. The shortest bride is ornamented with two picots upon each side, and by two semicircles, joining the two other brides, and ornamented with six picots. The second bride is decorated at one end by a similar semicircle eight times picoté, which joins the semicircle previously described, thus forming an S-shaped figure. Upon the opposite side is a small semicircle ornamented with three picots, forming the head of the S. The third bride, at the point of intersection, is ornamented with a segment six times picoté, which forms the tail of the S. The foot of this bride

(Plate XXIX.). Occasionally there is a ground of cross-barring or trellis-pattern, the effect of which is a very open square mesh, ornamented at the points of section and in the centre of each side with an ornamented device or loop.

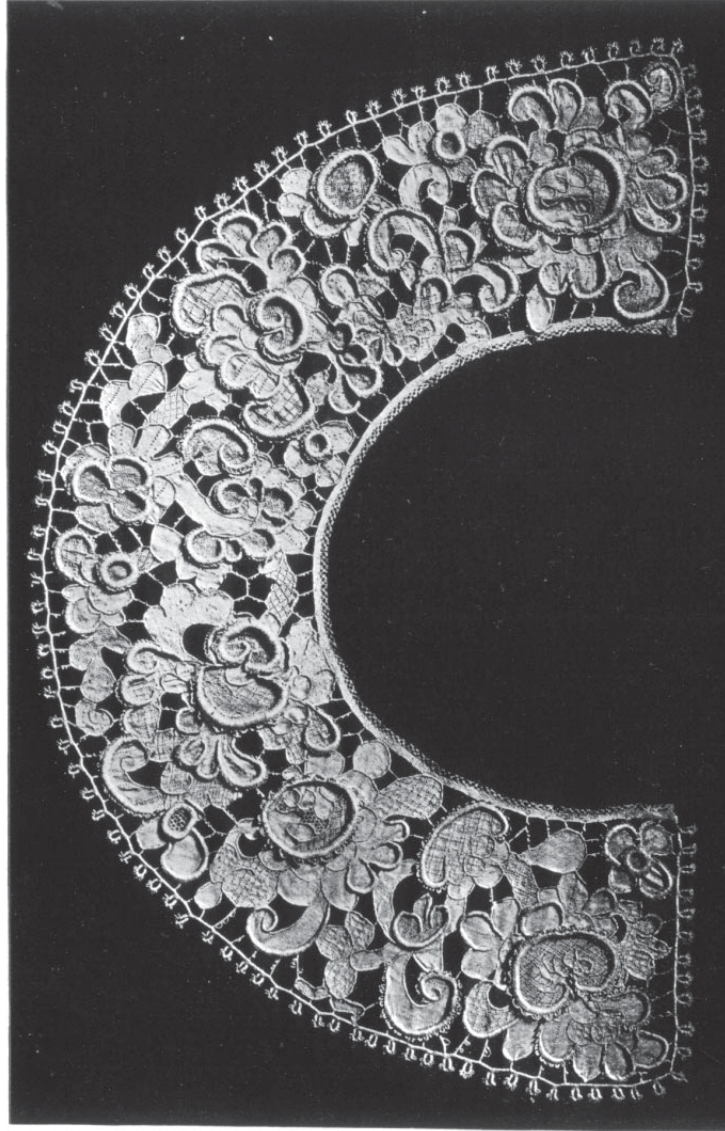
In certain late specimens the brides form a slightly irregular hexagonal mesh, richly picoté. This mesh is never, as in Argentan, a perfect hexagon, but is richer in effect, owing to this slight irregularity and to the enrichment of the picots, than the plain Argentan mesh.

The raised points are divided into gros point de Venise, punto neve (point de neige) with its ground of ornamented starred brides resembling snowflakes, and coraline point. Gros point de Venise, which was elaborated from 1620-50, and which was designed to lie flat and ungathered, is distinguished by the continuity of its designs, which are mostly horizontal; its scrolls are heavier than in point de neige, the brides simpler and less ornamental, the border or edge is usually straight—a single line of button-hole stitched thread enriched here and there with semicircles picoté. In point de neige, which was to hang fully or to be gathered, and which was in vogue from *circa* 1650-1720, the style is modified; the designs are composed on a smaller scale, and the groundwork of brides becomes a more important element, the scrolls are no longer continuous; detached sprays, consisting of slender leaves and minute renderings of the flowers of gros point, covered with a profusion of flying loops which almost hide the form it enriches, spring from a vase-like ornament and are arranged in many specimens symmetrically on either side of a vertical line. This change was probably owing to French influence.

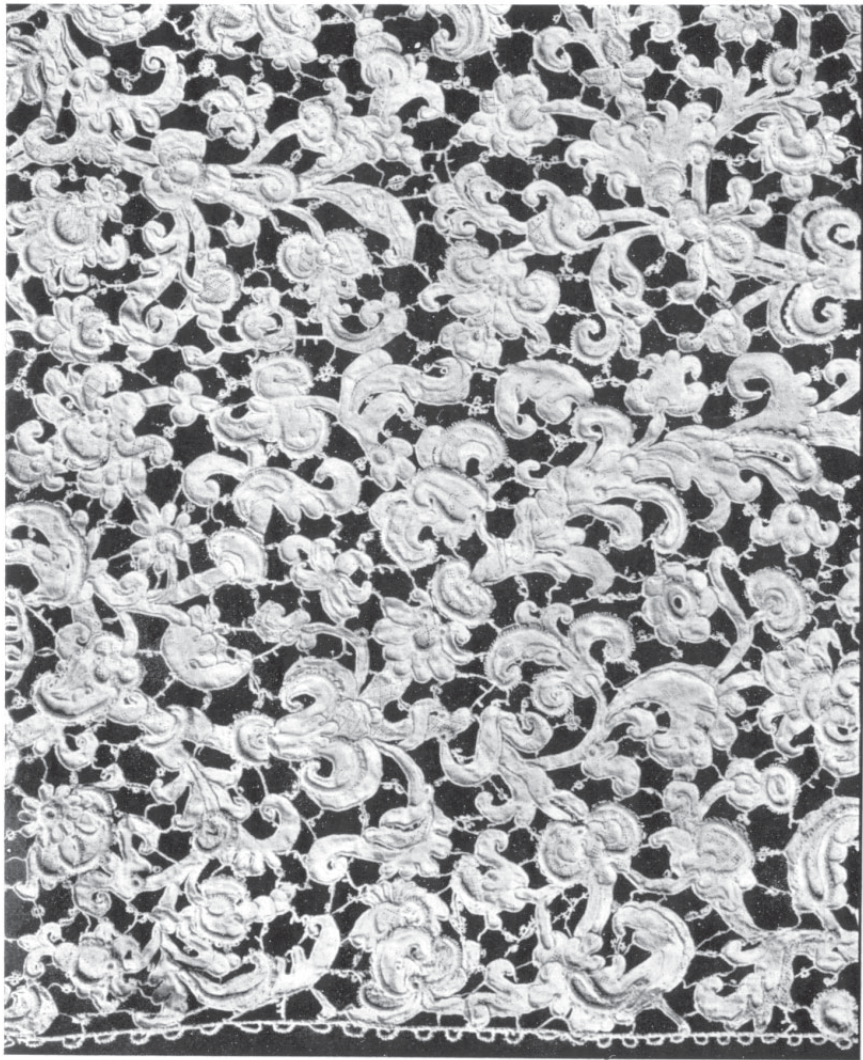
is also ornamented with a small circle picoté. (5) A straight double bride ornamented at either end by two picots on either side, and in the centre by two semicircles joined, and connected by another semicircle, forming a trefoil. Each semicircle has three picots. (6) A double bride ornamented on either side by two picots; in the centre by two semicircles, each four times picoté. (7) Two single brides and one double bride meeting in a point, the single bride ornamented on one side by a semicircle four times picoté, the double bride ornamented in the centre with a circle four times picoté. At the point of section the three brides are united by three semicircles five times picoté, forming a rosette. (8) Three curved brides meeting in a point, each bride being ornamented by a scroll-shaped ornament which crosses it, and ornamented with thirteen picots.



Plate XXVII.



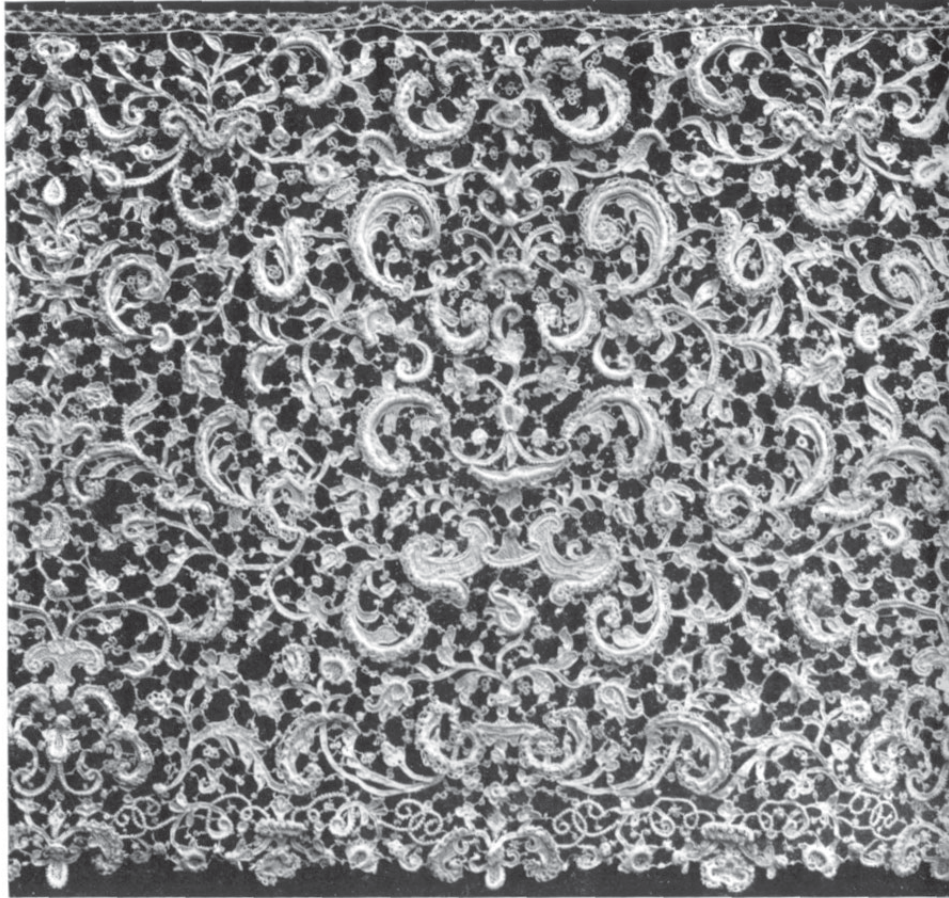
COLLAR COMPOSED LARGELY OF CUT LINEN, TO IMITATE ROSE-POINT.



PORTION OF A WIDE FLOUNCE OF ROSE-POINT.



Plate XXIX.



PORTION OF A FLOUNCE OF FINE ROSE POINT.  
Venetian, early eighteenth century.



UNFINISHED PIECE OF LACE.  
Tacked on green paper. Made by Frau M. v. Vislinghoff at Freiburg. German, eighteenth century.



S-shaped motifs are frequent, and upon details of the pattern knot-work is used as ornament. This type is always ornamented with a hanging pattern, or one in which the arrangement of the details is conspicuously vertical, which was more appropriate to the folds of cravats and full flounces than are the horizontal and continuous scrolls of the *gros point de Venise*.

Coraline point is a very attenuated variety of rose point in which relief is almost entirely absent, the leaves of the scroll have entirely disappeared, leaving a winding tangle of narrow coral-like ramifications ending in a small unimportant flower. The ground is of brides *picotées* arranged in hexagonal meshes.

Point plat de Venise is similar in design to rose point, but, as its name implies, is entirely without relief. The diaper and chequer pin-hole patterns are more freely used than in rose point, but the general appearance is that of unfinished rose point.

It is to be borne in mind that much of this lace was the produce of private individuals, or of convents outside Italy, and similar designs were often interchanged; but with the exception of such private or conventual manufactures of lace, it is highly improbable that point d'Espagne or Spanish point, a term applied to a heavier make of Venetian rose point, was ever made in Spain. The heavy and valuable point laces which unexpectedly came out of Spain after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1830, were in no way distinguishable from similar pieces known to be of Venetian workmanship, and it was no doubt from the great lace-making countries of Flanders and Italy that these valuable laces were brought.

From the unfinished piece of lace (Plate XXX.), made in the eighteenth century, at Freiburg, it will be seen that elaborate needle-point of typically Italian design was occasionally made outside Venice by private workers.

In *point de Venise à réseau*, a delicate type of Venetian needle-point, the design, unlike that of rose point which rarely varies from its variations on its highly ornamental flower, shows conventional tulips and pomegranates. This type of lace is chiefly distinguished by the conventional treatment and arrangement of the ornament, and by the general flat look of the work, by the outlining thicker thread or *cordonnet* stitched to the edges of the pattern and worked in

flatly,\* by a minute border to the cordonnet of small meshes which intervenes between it and the réseau, and by the horizontal appearance of the réseau, which is of square meshes composed of double-twisted threads throughout, and very fine. The pomegranate motif, so frequent in heavy rose point, reappears; but the crest of the fruit is elaborated into a scrolling leaf (Plate XXXVI.).

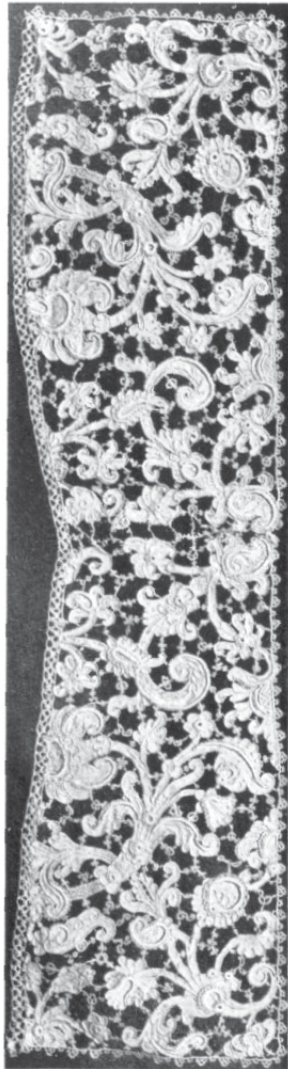
In other specimens a French influence is apparent in the larger number of open modes, in the ribbon motif crossing the design, the spacing of the ornament, and the cordonnet which is worked around certain flowers, and the more broken outlines of the ornament.

The work of these grounded laces is always flat; but in some pieces minute raised button-hole stitched rings are added.

Compared with this type, Brussels could not reach the high standard of Venetian workmanship, being forced to content herself with a frequent use of modes more open than the fine close modes belonging to the Venetian point à réseau, which are in general bar, chevron, trellis, and chequer pin-hole patterns, such as are found in the raised points. Variety of effect is obtained by the use of barring (or honey-comb grounding) inserted amongst the stems and leaves of the sprays; but very open modes, as a general rule, are used sparingly, like "high lights" upon a picture. The style of Venetian à réseau is less floral and more conventional than in Brussels; and the cordonnet of Brussels straggles.

From this grounded point certain details of fine Alençon appear to have been borrowed. Alençon differs from grounded Venetian point in design. Whatever France touched became French. Naturalistic imitations of flowers, birds, vases, and other material objects are freely interspersed in the more ornamental portions of Alençon, while in Venetian lace there is rarely any change from purely conventional treatment. Alençon also differs in workmanship from Venetian point in the raised and continuous outlines to the ornament. Lighter and more open decorative modes are introduced in Alençon; the réseau rosacé (*v. p. 68*) is more freely used as a groundwork; the réseau of grounded Venetian point is square; that of Alençon is hexagonal and

\* In some specimens certain details are outlined with a thick thread stitched along the stems, leaves, and flowers. The introduction of the thick thread, to give stronger definition to some of the forms, is, however, unusual in this make of lace.



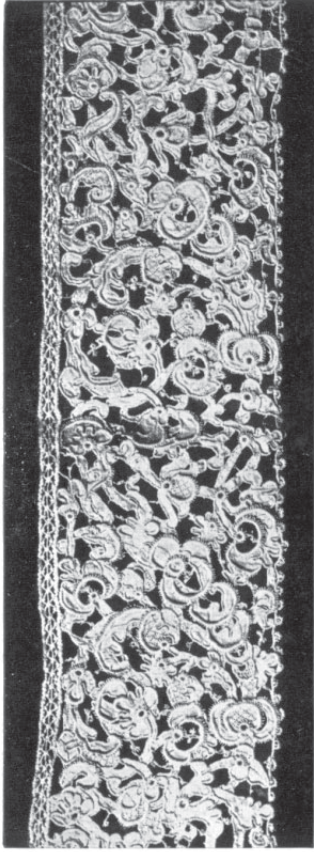
ROSE-POINT.

Venetian, late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.



PORTION OF BORDER OF ROSE POINT.

With highly raised and padded ornament. Probably Spanish.



PORTION OF BORDER OF ROSE POINT.

Of crowded design, and with few brides, but perfect, as the pattern repeats, and the curve of the scroll is not forced.



PIECE OF GREEN PARCHMENT.

Showing needlepoint lace partially worked.

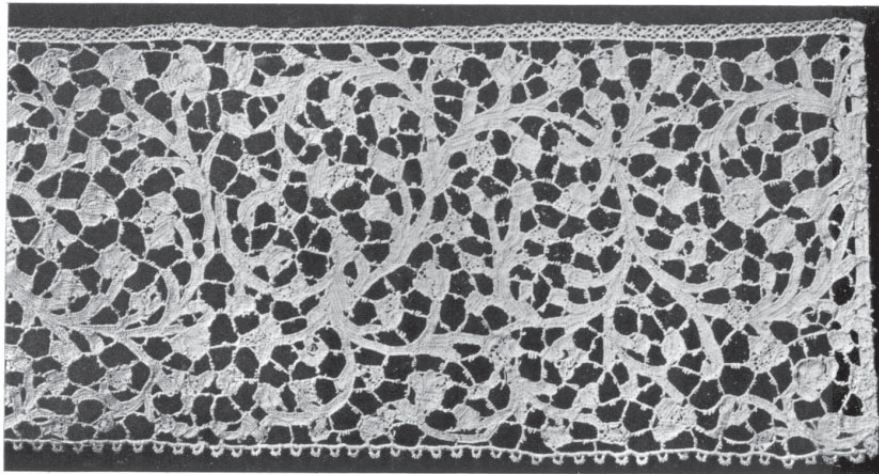


Plate XXXIII.



ROSE-POINT SQUARE.

A pale for covering the paten. The design displays two angels holding up the chalice, above which is the sacred monogram I.H.S. Rose point, seventeenth century. The details of the ornament are pieced.



FLAT NEEDLEPOINT.

less fine; the horizontal waved lines of the réseau are more irregular and marked in Alençon; the foliations in point de Venise à réseau are marked by minute regular open-worked fibres or veinings.

In general appearance, according to Mr Cole, the designs would seem to give a date somewhere about 1650, that is, at the time when the raised points were largely in circulation. Upon the establishment of the Points de France, in 1665, the French were diligent under the tuition of their Venetian workers in their attempts to imitate. Upon this the skill and invention of the Venetians perfected the point à réseau—an attempt to win back the custom the French manufacturers were taking away from them. Here their labours culminated. As Alençon rose this type of lace declined. “Hence it is that point de Venise à réseau, having probably had but a short existence, died out soon; comparatively few specimens of it are to be seen.” There are a fair number of specimens in perfect preservation—the Victoria and Albert Museum is peculiarly rich in them—and these do not appear to be later than the last years of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the lace industry was already declining. In 1734, French, Flemish, and English laces were sold at cheaper rates in the Venetian lace shops than the local production.\*

In 1750, Benedetto Raniari and Pietro Gabriele attempted to “improve” the lace industry by imitating Flemish and French laces, especially blonde. They were exempted from taxation for ten years by the Senate, and their enterprise succeeded from the commercial, if not from the artistic, standpoint, as is proved by their prosperity in 1758.†

The old Burano laces are a coarser outcome of the point de

\* “Figurarsi lo Stato Veneto tributario degli Stati forestieri nell’industria dei pizzi. E’ bello è che verso la metà del xviii. secolo alcune botteghe veneziane vendevano per lo più de’ pizzi esteri. Nel 1734 esistevano ancora a Venezia i seguenti spacci de pizzi: al San Carlo, alle due Rose, all Premio, all Bucintor Ducale, all’ Aquila d’oro, alla Madonna degli Angeli, al Cardinal. Non pochi certamente e più che sufficienti se in ognuno se fosse lavorato e venduto soltanto della produzione locale” (Melani, “Svagli Artistici Femminili”).

† “Nel 1758, si raccontò, erano addette alla suddetta fabbrica quindici maestre e quattrocentotrentette scolari e in dieci anni vi si produssero 289,000 braccia di pizzi di varia altezza” (*Ibid.*).

Venise à réseau, and alone of all the Venetian needle laces survived the dark days of the close of the eighteenth century. Marini quotes from a document of the seventeenth century in which, speaking of merletti, it is said that "these laces, styled 'punti in aria,' or di Burano, because the greater part of them were made in the country so called, are considered by Lannoni as more noble and of greater whiteness, and for excellency of design and perfect workmanship equal to those of Flanders, and in solidity superior."

Very little is known of the early history of Burano lace. Peuchet\* writes that a great number of fisherfolk in the island of Burano, as well as people in Venice itself and in the convents, were employed in lace-making; but that their profits were small. The thread, he adds, comes from Flanders, as the local flax thread was not so strong when equally fine. In 1793 the *Gasetta Veneta* refers to Burano lace, "del quale si esercitava largo commercio anche nei vecchi tempi." †

The designs of old Burano, like those of Venise à réseau, are distinguished by a conventional treatment of the flowers and ornament; but the designs are somewhat thinner, there is more réseau in proportion to the pattern, and in some specimens there are semés upon the ground, as in French laces of the Louis XVI. period.

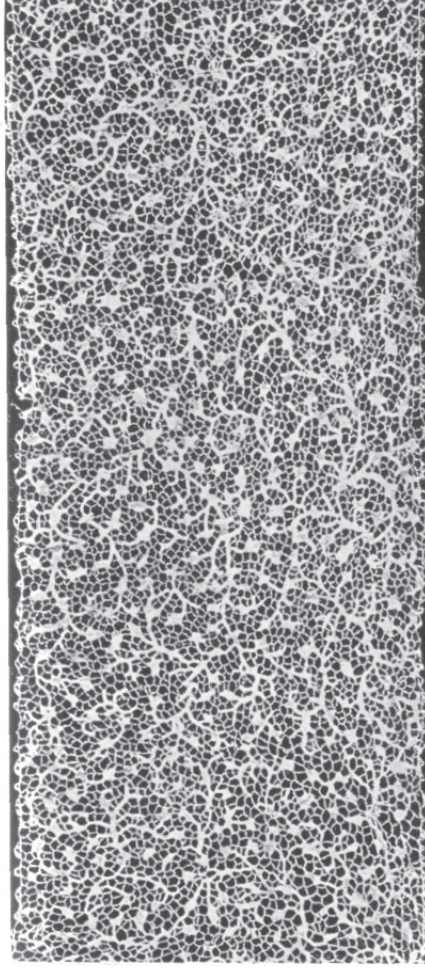
In a description in a letter written in 1875, of certain Burano laces in the possession of Sir Henry (then Mr) Layard, specimens were described as "exactly like Alençon," ‡ the only difference perceptible being that "the flowers are matted and thick, and very clumsily put into the ground." In an account of Venetian lace-making, written by

\* "Dictionnaire Universel de la Géographie Commerçante," 1789.

† Melani, "Svagli Artistici Femminili." "Il Moschini nel suo 'Itineraire' mostro che nel 1819 nell' isola de Burano non era scomparsa ancora l'industria dei pizzi" (*Ibid.*).

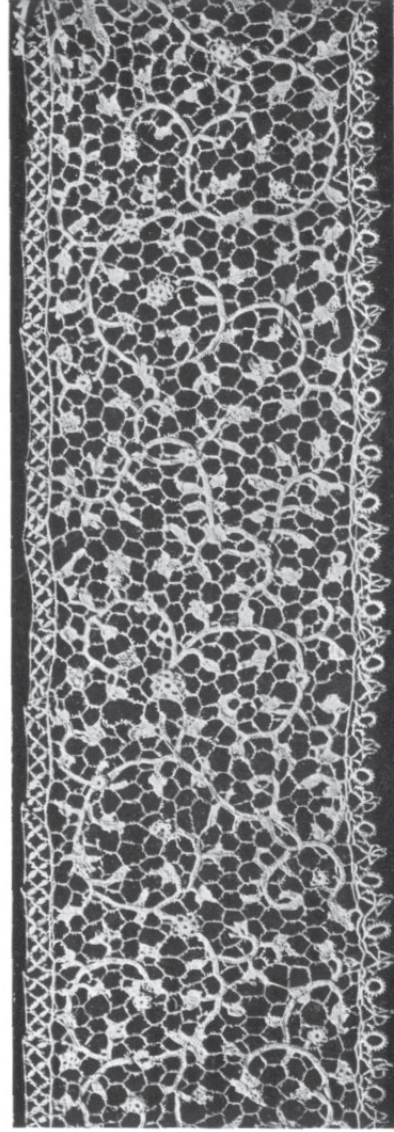
‡ Extract from a letter of 30th August 1875, to Mr A. Blackborne, *re* Burano laces: "Lady Layard joined with Sir Henry Layard in this enterprise, but it was not successful. Modern Burano laces at first suffered from the quality of the thread." One disadvantage long seemed unsurmountable, the coarseness and unevenness of any thread that would then be found in Italy. This difficulty, which had so much to do with the failure of the English lace trade in the seventeenth century, threatened to doom modern Burano lace to an inevitable inferiority. However, thread was chosen by Baron Beckmann, imported from the Belgian thread manufacturers, and much improved the quality of lace produced.





CORALINE POINT.

Italian, late seventeenth or first half of eighteenth century.



TRANSITIONAL PIECE BETWEEN ROSE AND CORALINE POINT.

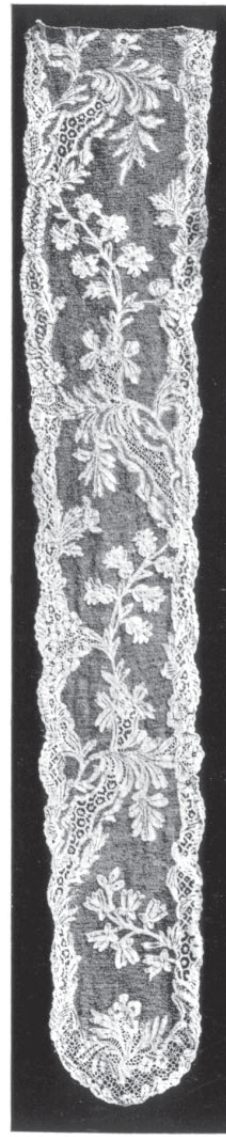




POINT DE VENISE À RÉSEAU.  
Eighteenth century.



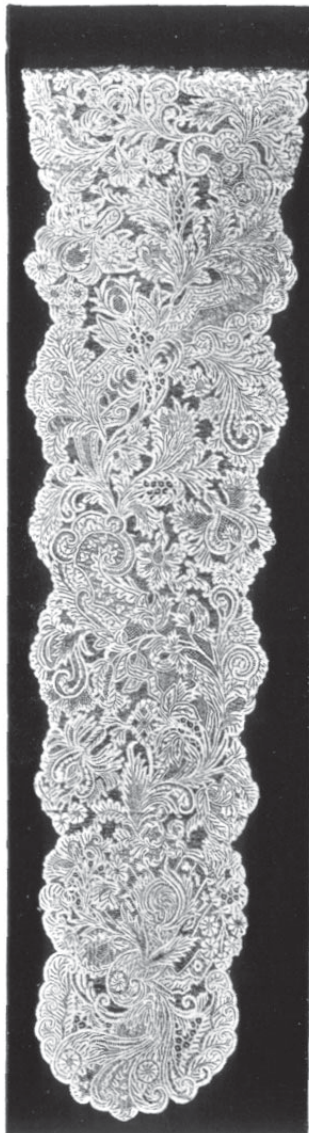
POINT DE VENISE À RÉSEAU.  
First half of eighteenth century.



LAPPET OF POINT DE VENISE À RÉSEAU.  
End of seventeenth century.



LAPPET OF POINT DE VENISE À RÉSEAU.  
First half of eighteenth century.



LAPPET OF POINT DE VENISE À RÉSEAU.  
First half of eighteenth century.

Urbani de' Gheltof, published in Venice, and translated into English by Lady Layard, a very detailed description, accompanied by diagrams, is given of the mode of execution of Burano point.

From this it appears that it is usually worked on a pillow, not, however, of course with bobbins, as for bobbin lace, the object of the pillow or bolster is merely to raise the work to a suitable height on the lap of the lace-maker, and to diminish the necessity of much handling. On the middle of the upper side of the pillow there rests a small wooden cylinder across which the parchment pattern is stretched, leaving an open space under it for the convenience of the worker; thus the strip of lace is kept smooth and flat. In working the *réseau* ground, a thread is fixed straight across the whole width of the lace as a foundation of each row of meshes, being passed through and fastened to any sprig or part of the pattern which may intervene, and on this thread the looped meshes are worked. The result is the formation of a remarkably square-shaped mesh, and by this and also by the streaky and cloudy appearance of the *réseau* (owing to the bad quality and unevenness of the thread), Burano point may be recognised. The *cordonné* is, like the Brussels needlepoint,\* of thread stitched round the outline, instead of the Alençon button-hole stitch over horsehair.

In 1866 the industry was extinct.† "Venice point," writes Mrs Palliser, "is now no more; the sole relic of this far-famed trade is the coarse torchon lace of the old lozenge pattern, offered by the peasant women of Palestrina to strangers on their arrivals at hotels."

\* Sometimes the *cordonné* is button-hole stitched.

† An important revival of the Burano industry took place after the great distress following the severe winter of 1872. The Burano workers do not copy only the old Burano lace, but laces of almost any design or model.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MILANESE LACE.

MILAN, like many another centre of lacemaking, was early famed for its embroideries.\* In 1584 a "Università" of embroiderers was already in existence, and flourished until the middle of the seventeenth century. Coryat mentions that the Milanese embroiderers are "very singular workmen, who work much in gold and silver." In the Sforza Visconti Inventory, the well-known instrument of partition between the sisters Angela and Ippolita Sforza Visconti,† are to be found the earliest records which are quoted in reference to Italian lace. *Trina* is mentioned there under its old form *tarnete*, but trina, like our English "lace" and the French "passement," was used in a general sense for braid or passement long before the advent of lace proper. Florio, in his Dictionary (1598), gives *trine*, cuts, tags, snips, pinck worke on garments, and *trinci*, gardings, fringings, lacings, &c. It will be seen that the "trine" of the Sforza Inventory are always of metal and silk.

\* Brantôme, in his "Dames Galantes," remarks that the embroiderers of Milan "ont sceu bien faire par dessus les autres."

† "Lenzuolo (sheet) uno di revo di tele (linen thread), cinque lavorato a punto.

"Peza de tarnete (trina) d'argento facte a stelle.

"Lenzolo uno de tele, quatro lavorate a radexelo.

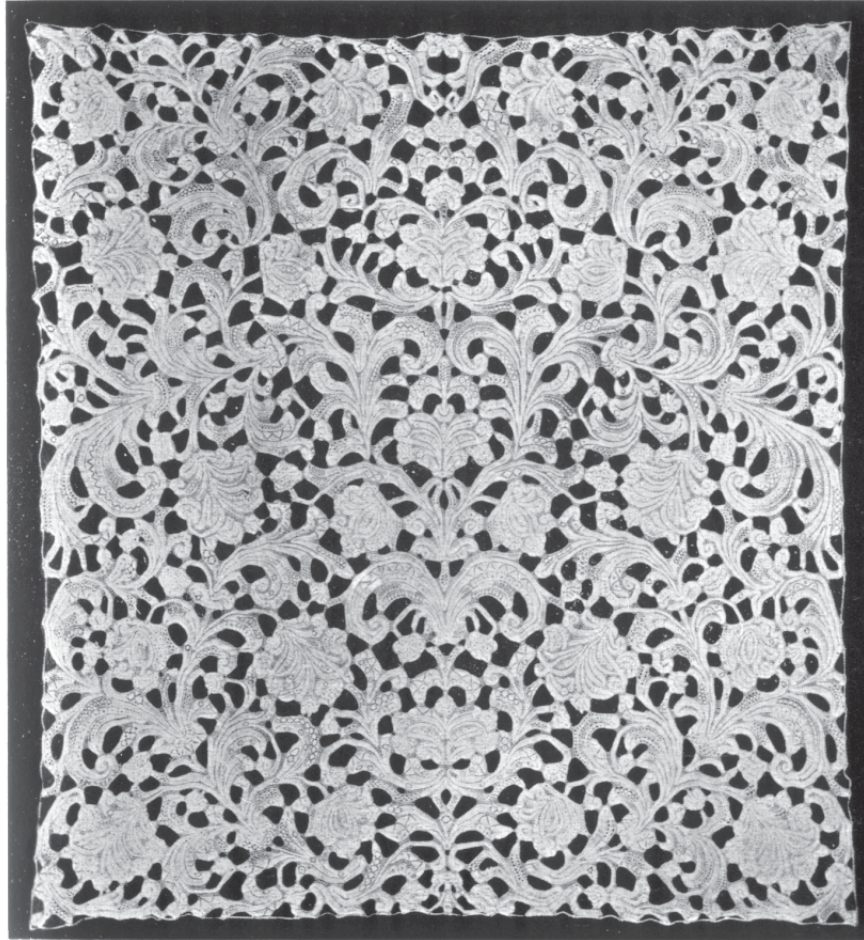
"Peza quatro de radexela per mettere ad uno moscheto (zanzariere—mosquito curtain).

"Tarneta uno d'oro et seda negra facta da ossi (bones).

"Pecto une d'oro facta a grupi.

"Binda una lavorata a poncto de doii fuxi (two bobbins?) per uno lenzolo" ("Instrumento di divisione tre le sorelle Angela ed Ippolita Sforza Visconti, di Milano, 1493, giorno di Giovedì, 12 Settembre").





PANEL OF MILANESE LACE.  
Without brides.      Seventeenth century.



BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.

About 1650-60.



BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.

With brides. Seventeenth century.



Plate XXXIX.



PORTION OF A BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.

With réseau ground. Late seventeenth century. (*In the possession of Mrs Hibbert.*)



PORTION OF A BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.

With réseau ground. Late seventeenth century. (*In the possession of Mrs Hibbert.*)