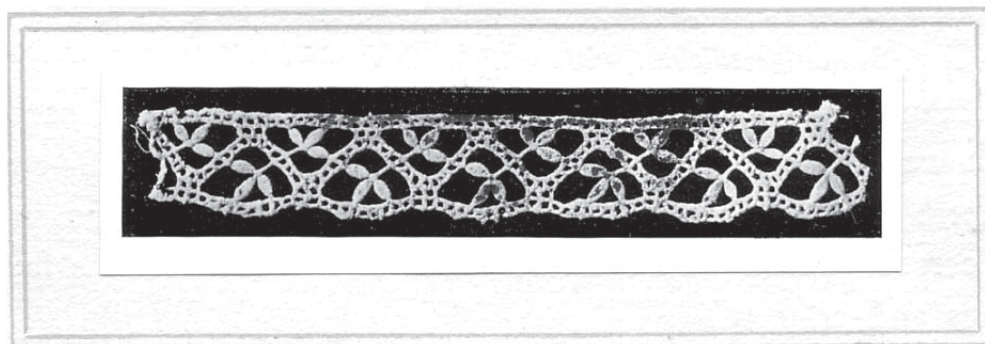




No. 122 — Jan Ravensteijn (?). Portrait of unknown woman. Flemish lace resembling Genoese lace.

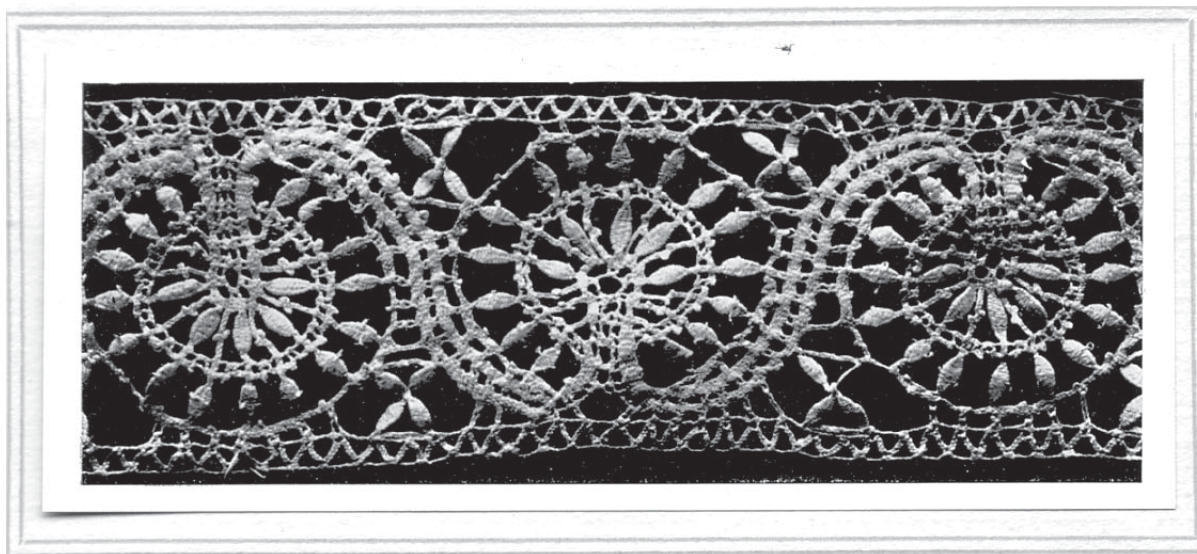


No. 123 — Little bobbin-made insertion imitating *reticello*.
The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

In Ida Schiff's collection of lace, there is a tablecover with *reticello* insertion and edging of Genoese lace in which the bobbins (spite of almost insuperable difficulties) carry out the design intended to be represented in needle-lace.

In order to accomplish this successfully, the Genoese women invented a method of their own: they interweave the threads into a mesh resembling matting; such a mode is never met with in early Venetian laces and not in Milanese lace until much later, that is to say, when the distinction of types was becoming blurred. By means of the matting-stitch the so-called *armelletta* of Genoa is formed, permitting the bobbins to design the little seed-like forms proper to *reticello*, and by a similar means they form the tiny triangles of *punto tagliato*.

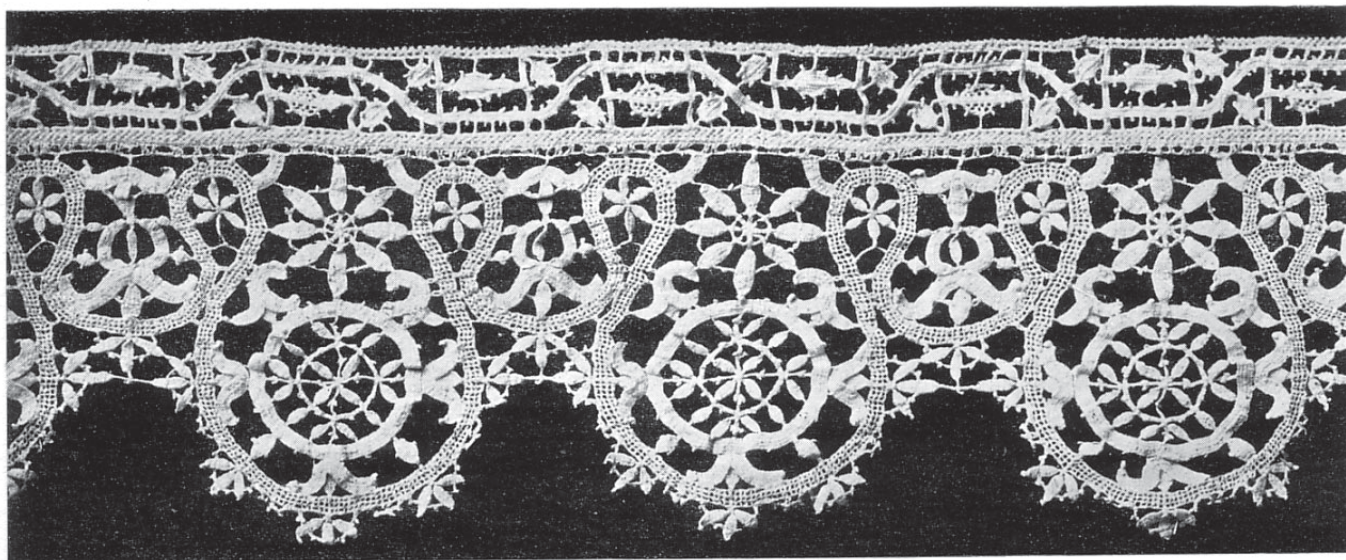
As Venice hastened to free herself from designs snatched in haste from silk trimmings, turning with joyous gratitude to the graceful points of Parasole, so, in the XVII century did Genoa cast off the formality of rigid squares which had



No. 124 — Bobbin-made insertion imitating *reticello*.
The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

been imposed on *reticello* by reasons of technical necessity and, rich in the possession of those *armelle* and *matting-stitches*, with which charming effects of relief and *chiaroscuro* are obtained, she learned to join them to her magnificent roses (*rosaces de Gènes*) which were so frequently depicted by the brushes of the first artists of the day. For superb decorative effect, nothing in any lace-work can approach the celebrated Roses of Genoa which in the XVII century became the favourite ornament of kings and princes.

The wardrobe of Maria de' Medici (1646) contained a handkerchief of Genoese Point *frisé* (the name given to Genoese lace with *armelle*); and in 1644



No. 125 — Genoese Rose Point. XVII century. The insertion is needle-lace.

Madame de Soissons possessed a dressing-gown, apron, and head-gear of fine lawn trimmed with Genoese Point.

Rucellai's Diary of 1643 retails the fact that when Anne of Austria, Queen of France and mother of Louis XIV, was seen by the Tuscan ambassadors as she dined in public in her Parisian palace she was « dressed in black, with a most magnificent collar of Genoese Point. »

If the light and simple little edgings made by Venetian bobbins are more suitable for thickly-pleated ruffs, this Genoese Lace holds its own triumphantly by the side of the *punto in aria* and the *punto tagliato a fogliami* in those cases where it is allowed to remain stretched on a flat surface which affords a good view of the

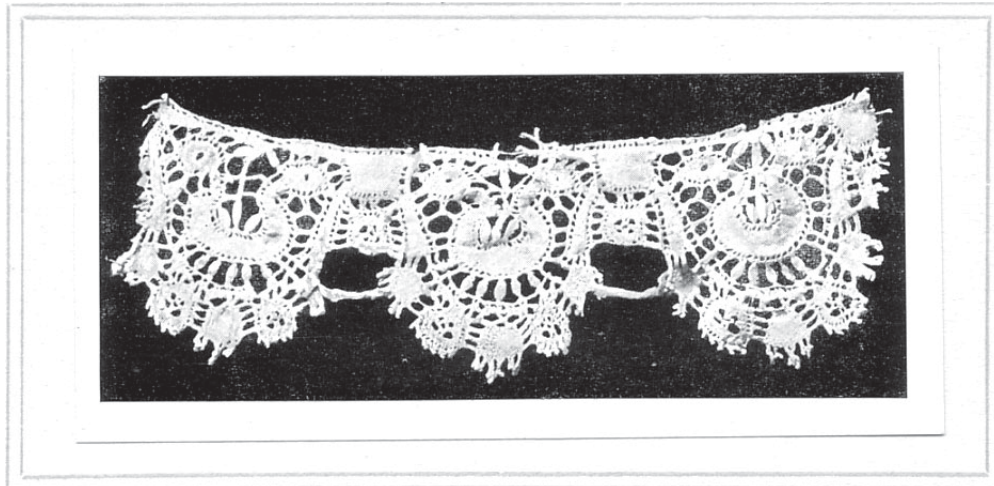
severely artistic design and allows us to admire the perfection of the work. When in 1665, Count Vinciguerra di Collalto introduced into Venice the French custom of wearing wigs, the new fashion was found to be incompatible with the wearing of the usual stiff ruff of the period, and the latter gave way to falling collars and those full cravats which put the final touch to the happy fortunes of « Genoese Point. »



No. 128 — Frans Hals. Fragment. Bobbin lace collar, made from a *reticello* design.

It quickly became celebrated throughout the civilised world, though under a wrong designation, as « point » should be reserved for needle-lace. Ladies and cavaliers competed eagerly for it and the victory did not always remain with the ladies! Men crowded priceless laces round their wrists, necks, knees, and feet, and stretched them on their capes and on the seams and hems of doublets and breeches; ladies spread them out behind their heads by means of invisible wire, making an exquisite, diaphanous frame for delicate or blooming heads.

If we take paintings as guides in the matter, it would seem that Genoese rose-point had almost a greater success abroad than in its native country; inventories and documents also bear out this contention. But without dwelling on the fact that Rubens and Van Dyck, who initiated the school of aristocratic portraiture in the XVII century, worked for some time in Genoa, we should recollect there must have been a crowd of lesser artists employed on family-portraits of the middle-classes who would most likely be wearing native or local laces, could we only have the good luck to find these portraits of unknown ancestors by unknown painters! We know, however, that Genoese rose-point was not painted only by Rubens and Van Dyck. Frans Hals stayed his lively brush from large effects in order to



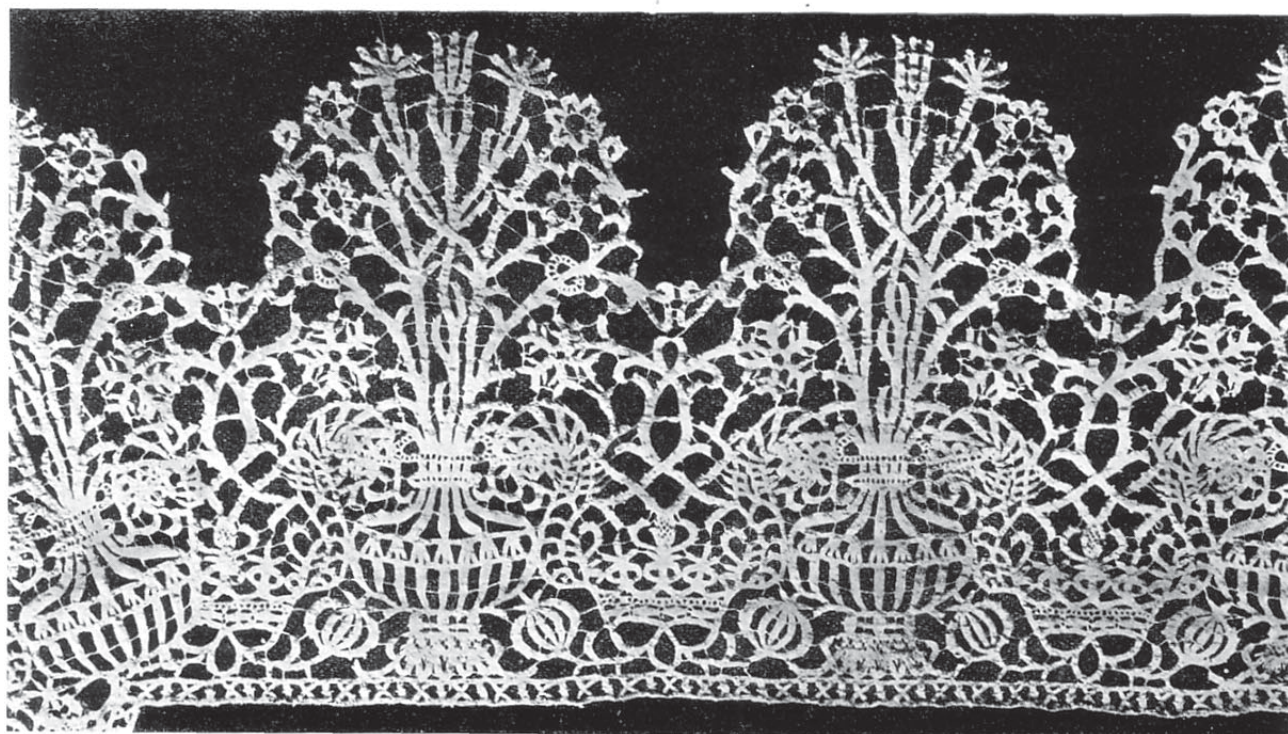
No. 129 — Flemish lace like the Genoese. Correr Museum, Venice.

show Genoese lace with such minute precision, that actually we are able to recognise a bobbin lace made from a *reticello* design in one of his pictures.

There is no need for us to suppose that the lace in Dutch pictures is some local imitation of Genoese lace. Genoese Rose-Point was not so commonly nor so easily copied, as Venetian needle-laces. To a very small extent Flanders and Malta attempted a lace similar to the Genoese and having *armelle*; but the squat, clumsy points in the monotonous Maltese designs and the flatness and opacity of the Flemish examples, besides the differences of thread, make it easy to distinguish them from ours.

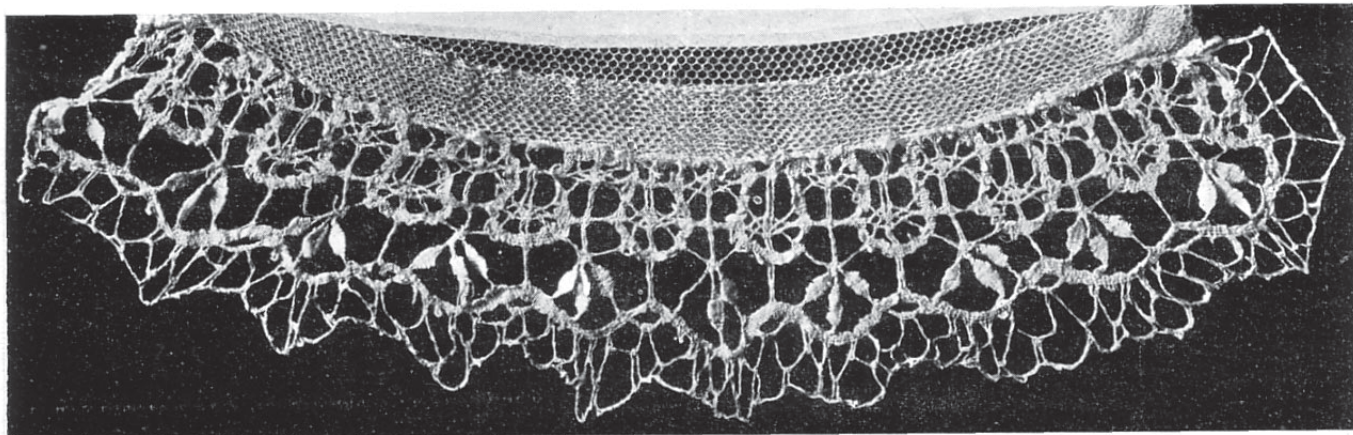
The thread itself is of the utmost importance to the appearance of lace. *Salò* thread, used by us all through the XVII and well into the XVIII century, is much less soft than foreign thread; its consistency is essential to Genoese lace, for by it is gained the peculiar effect of subdued relief.

In opposition to Genoese taste, the Flemish lace-workers' ideal is a lace so light as scarcely to be seen or felt, of no greater consistency than the cobweb by which the legend says it was suggested. In order to work such fragile, tender thread it was necessary to find a damp spot with little light. We hear of Flemish lace-makers sitting in damp cellars with that part of the cushion on which they are employed illuminated by a single ray of light falling from a small aperture



No. 132 — Spanish bobbin-made lace. Museum of Industrial Art, Vienna. From Moritz Dreger, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Spitze*, Vienna, 1910.

cut in the top of the shutter. The splendid roses of Genoa blossomed in the free air under the hot rays of a sun shining on Mediterranean shores; their classic lines tell of happiness, light, and joy pervading life and art and climate. In the satirical poem, *The Revolt of the Trimmings*, this solid and healthy appearance of the laces of Genoa is an excuse for the line « Genoese Point is fat in body »; fortunately for her, not too fat to prevent her going all over the world, as we have seen, and gaining honour and repute far into the XVIII century, when Venetian laces were already past their prime. So late as July 19, 1725, the King of France accorded a subvention to the extent of 12,000 *livres* to a manufacturer of *French Point*, who declared that his journey, « undertaken at the King's request in order



No. 133 — Lace of ivory-tinted silk from the Ligurian coast.
The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

to acquaint himself thoroughly with all that touches the beautiful laces of Genoa, England, and Mechlin had resulted in his acquiring knowledge which would enable him to achieve perfection in his productions. »

In Spain the Genoese matting-stitch is used in bobbin-lace, but the laces of that country have always been so different from others in appearance and design as to exclude any idea of influence or imitation. Nevertheless, we can hardly suppose that mere chance led to twisting the thread in the Genoese manner. Since we know that Spain had the same coloured braids and trimmings that were made in Italy, it is not unreasonable to trace Spanish thread-lace back into the labyrinth of coloured silk and gold work, whose weaving with bobbins must have influenced the workers in the new medium, white thread.

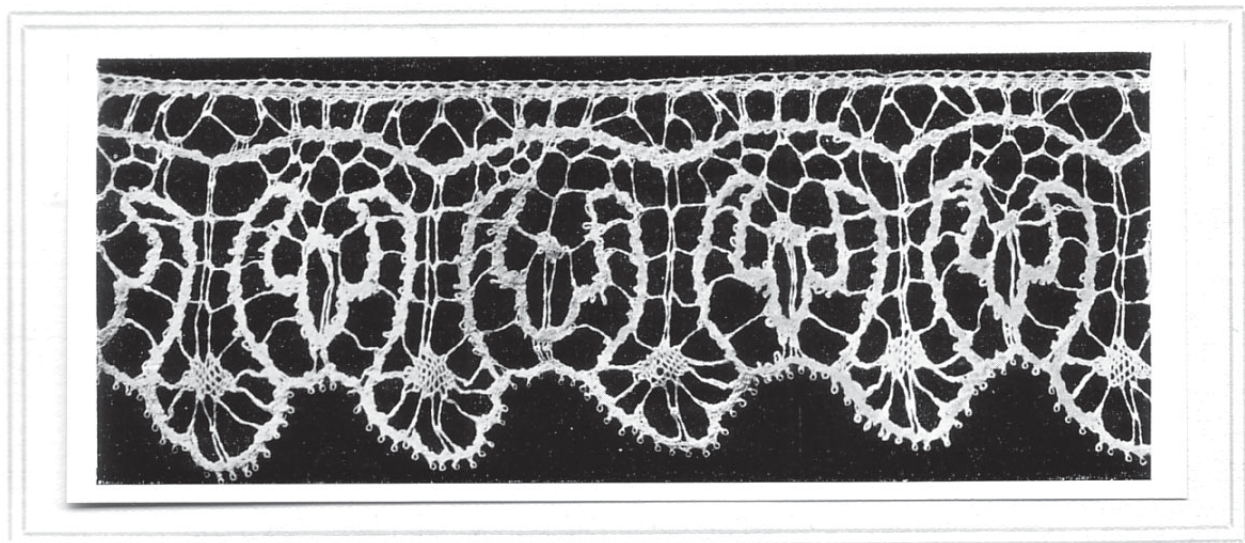
The laces of Spain and Italy have nothing in common beyond the matting-stitch.

There is an admirable sample in the Museum of Decorative Art in Vienna in which the design is a vase of flowers alternating with a coronet, the whole composition having a XVI century air with a hint of something eastern which seems to ally it with Venetian *punto in aria*, but the shortness of the design with its wealth of detail shows that it is not Italian in conception. Its method of execution differs from the Genoese in this way: whereas the Genoese use their matting-stitch to give relief to certain portions of the work, such as the flowers or to the scroll which surrounds the flowers, in Spanish lace it is the sole basis, the very substance of the work. The fine thread which serves to unite the tracery and the flowers

seeks to hide itself (instead of forming the ground as in Italian lace) in order to throw up the principal motive.

Spanish lace has no recognised history. But we know that by the XVI century lace from Spain was prized even by foreigners, for it is frequently mentioned in inventories and sumptuary laws. Somewhat later Cervantes speaks of lace in *Don Quixote* as a flourishing industry among women and girls in Spain: « Sanchica makes lace and earns 8 maravedis a day. » Elsewhere he says that lace is worn in Hell and bobbin-workers will be busy there at their cushions; again « How is it that a child, hardly capable of ruling a dozen bobbins, should dare interrupt a gentleman's story? » Many little towns round Genoa and along the coasts laboured industriously at pillow-lace; and these smaller commercial centres of the XVII century combined in determined efforts to overcome the competition threatened by France when, with inspired patriotism, Colbert signed the death-warrant of Italian laces by transferring to his own country the prosperity they had conferred on their native land; on the Genoese Riviera the small towns of Portofino, Rapallo, Santa Margherita, Chiavari, Albissola, stifling their national pride, heroically set to work to imitate patterns from abroad and followed the prevailing tastes.

Are large pieces of light transparent lace required, easy of manipulation? Something less classical and heavy, less valuable, too, than the great Roses of Genoa? S. Margherita makes a speciality of laces of silk or thread, white, black or ivory-tinted, which seem to be Mechlin laces on net foundations translated into Italian with the design outlined in coarser thread and the varied mesh-work giving a chiaroscuro effect to the design; this is clearly Italian, in spite of its slight French



No. 135 — Silk lace from the Ligurian coast.
Colgate Collection, New York.

accent. It was from Santa Margherita more especially that the broad lace flounces of black silk were sent to Venice in the XVIII century, to trim the hoods, mentioned in the previous chapter.

Thus the bobbin-laces, which had soon been routed at Venice by the successful needle-lace, and had allowed themselves to be conquered at Milan after trifling resistance, never disappeared from Genoa, where they may still be found, though now decadent.

Incomparably gifted in the matter of working with any kind of thread, whether of gold, silver, silk, flax, aloe or nettle (even with the animal-membrane of Bottol) or like Flemish workers, able to manipulate a hundred bobbins, the Genoese women bowed to the new style and the new taste, without losing their individuality completely.

The Genoese may be credited with yet another triumph in lace-making, for they were the first to manufacture large articles in one piece such as mantles and flowing skirts; Liguria produced nets, *blondes*, *guipures* of black silk, and small light laces in the style of Chantilly, Mechlin, and Paris Point well into the XIX century.



N. 136 — Tippet of black Genoese lace. From the picture « The Seraglio » by Loughé, in the National Gallery, London.

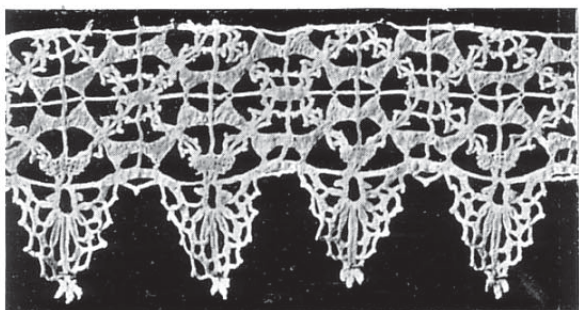
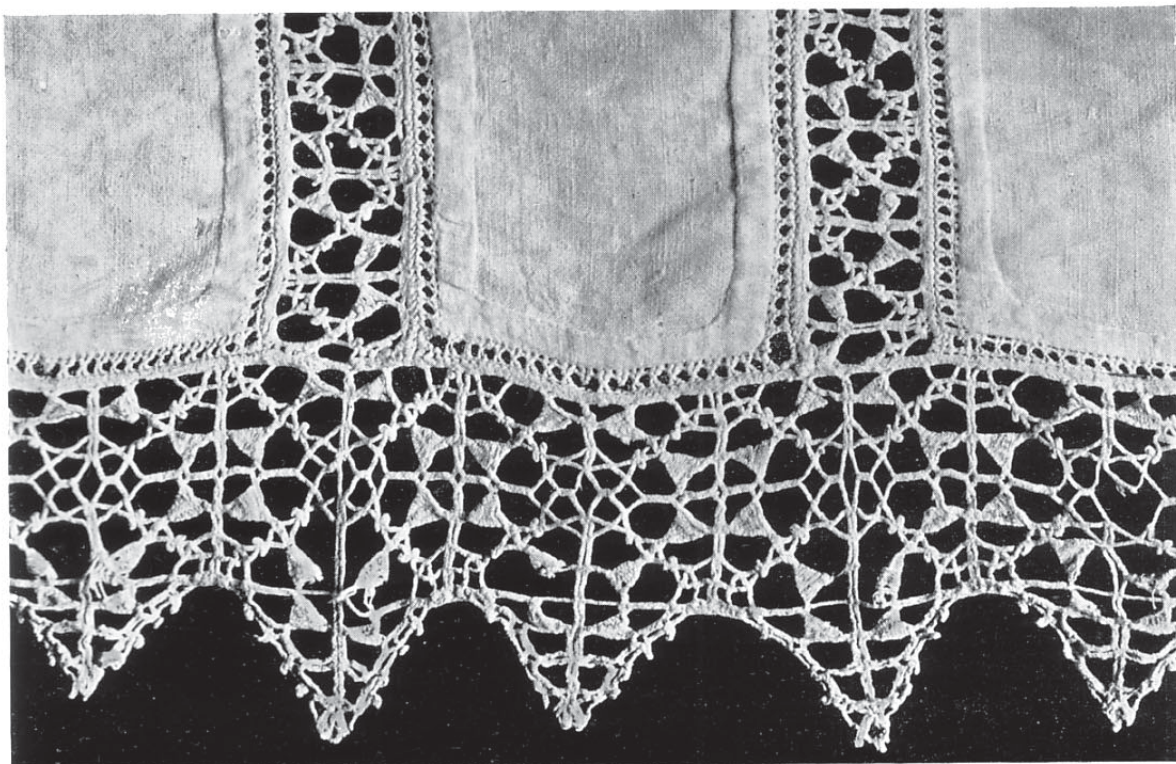
II.

GENOA.

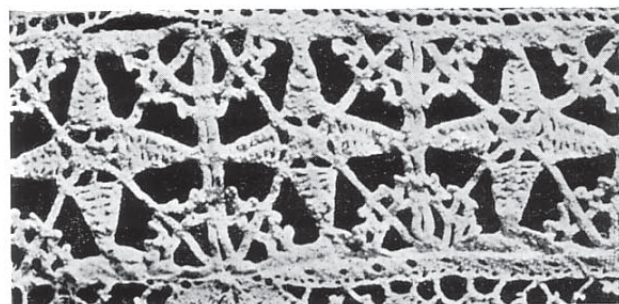
PLATES

GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.

137

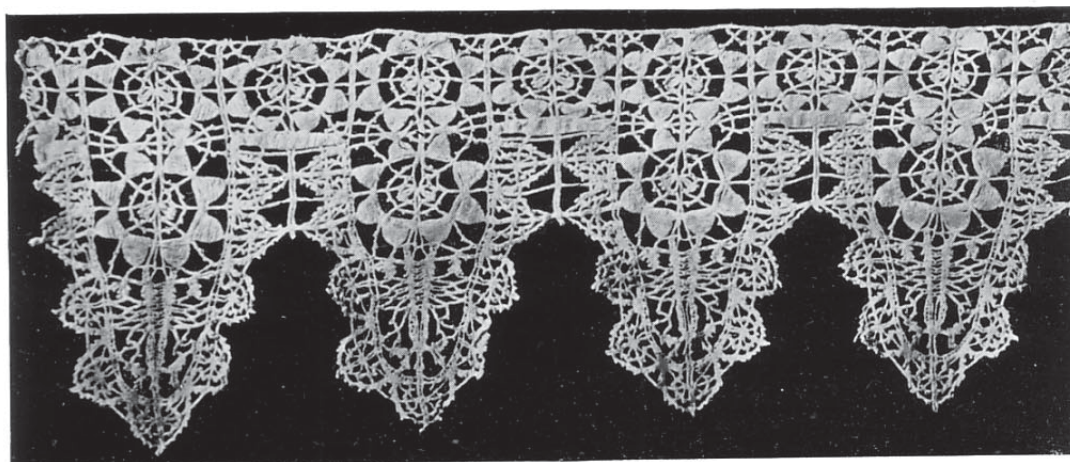


138



139

140



Insertions and edgings from designs intended for *punto tagliato* (cut linen).

The characteristic triangle is made with matting-stitch.

- No. 137 — Bernardini, Macerata.
Nos. 138, 140 — Amari Collection, Florence.
No. 139 — Orlando Cave, Leghorn.

GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.

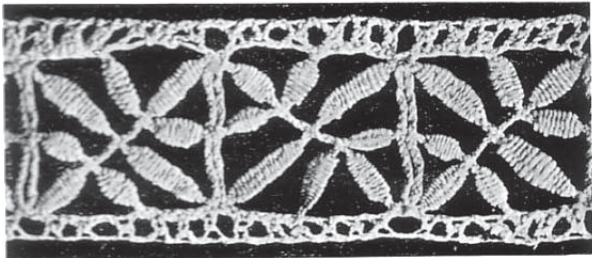


No. 141 — Insertion and edging from a design for *punto tagliato*.

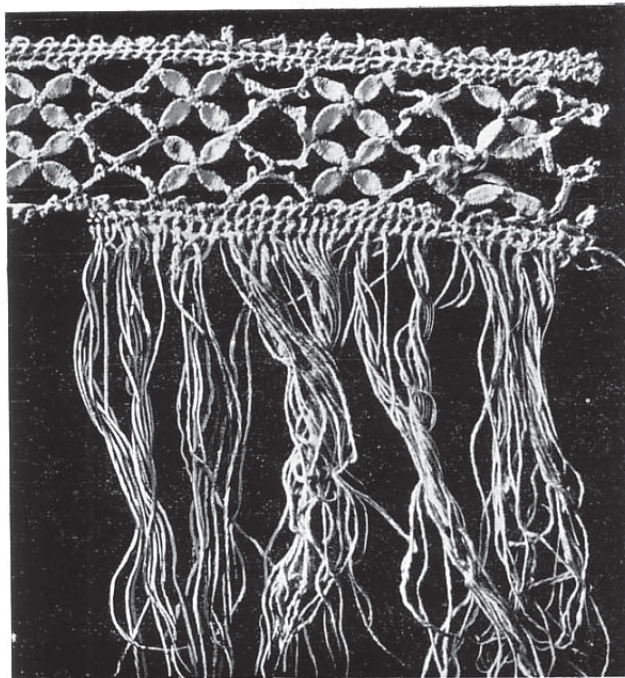
The little seeds in matting-stitch, characteristic of Genoese lace, form the centre of the rose, and ornament and conceal the web, which is often further ornamented with little loops. The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.

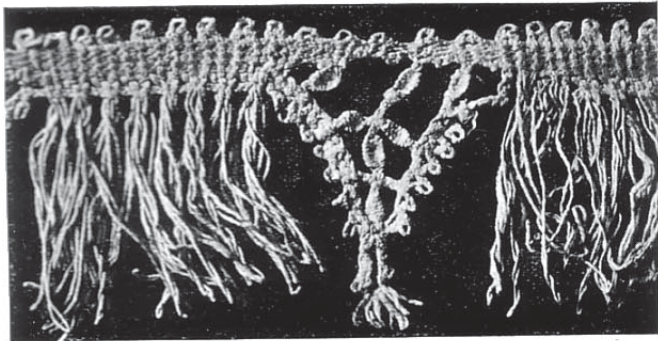
142



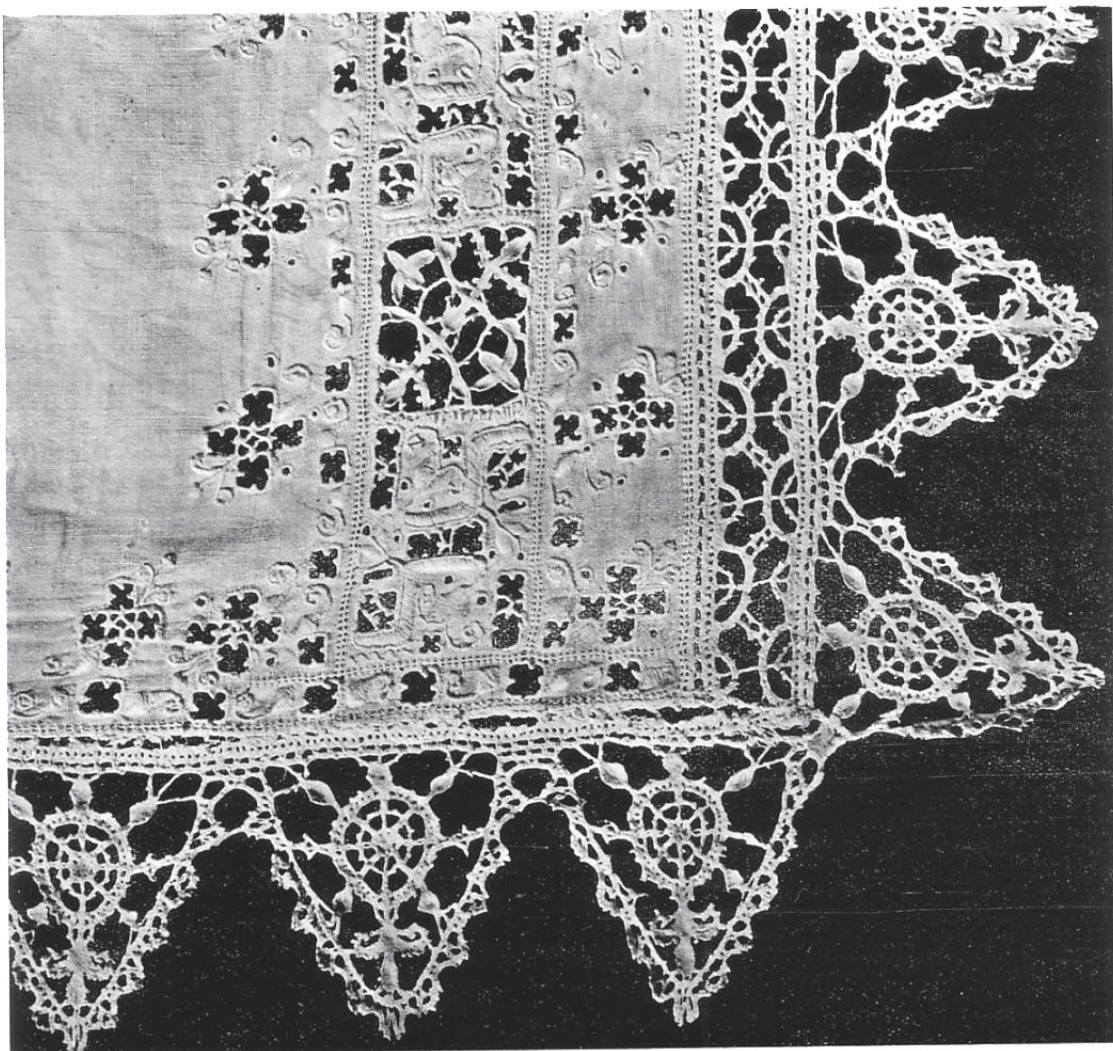
143



144



145.



Insertion, fringes and edging from a *reticello* design.

No. 142 — An olive branch (?).

No. 143 — Fringe and insertion.

No. 144 — Fringe with points at intervals.

No. 145 — Original table-cloth with embroidery and netting. The bobbin-made insertion imitates *reticello* even to the beading which simulates the square stitch of embroidery. The points are beautiful in design, showing a star which terminates in a lily.

The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

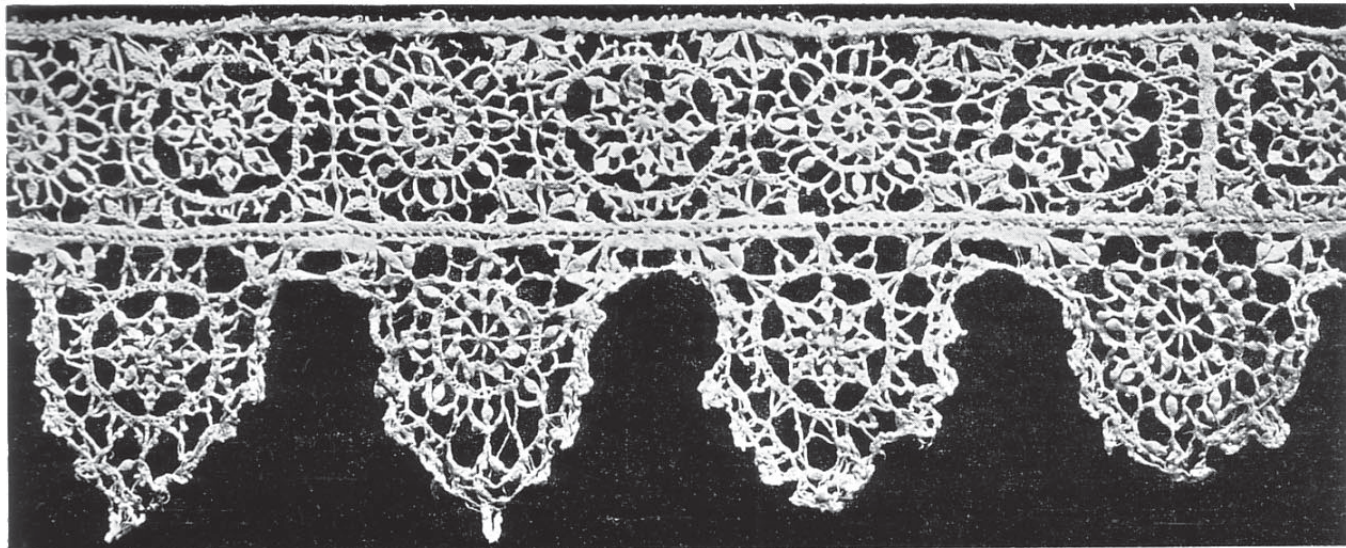
GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.



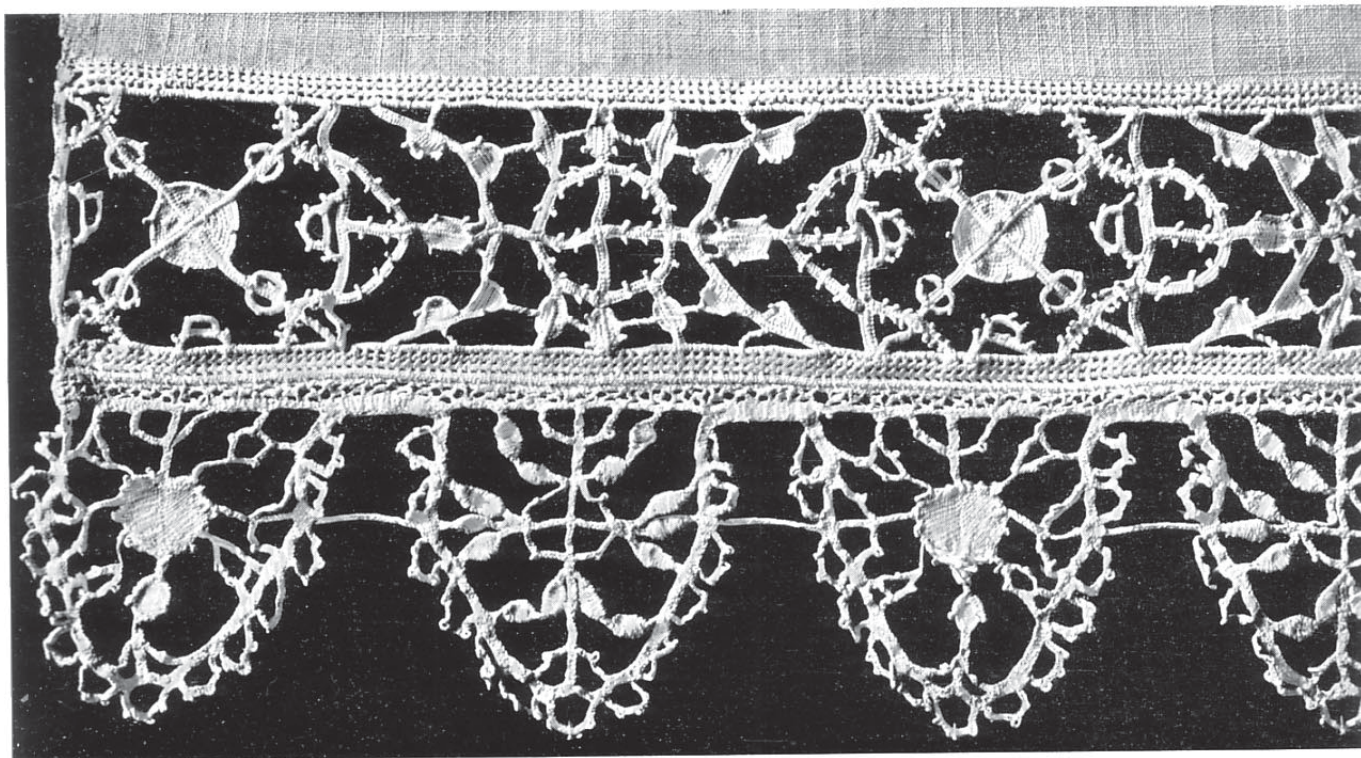
No. 146 — Original table-cloth of white linen, embroidered in coarse thread. The lace-trimming, also of coarse thread is a fine example of Genoese lace of the *reticello* type. The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.

147



148



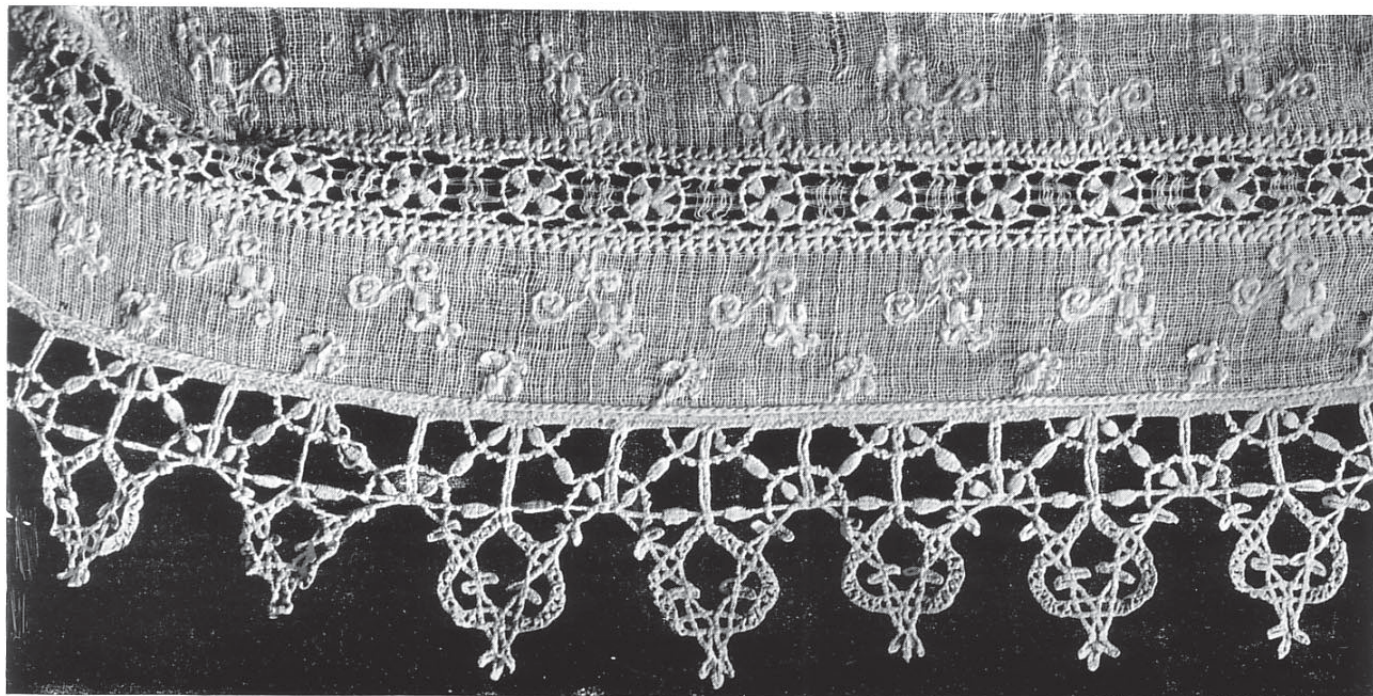
The points show how the bobbin-workers have copied the *reticello* needle lace of the insertion.

No. 147 — Bargagli, Florence.

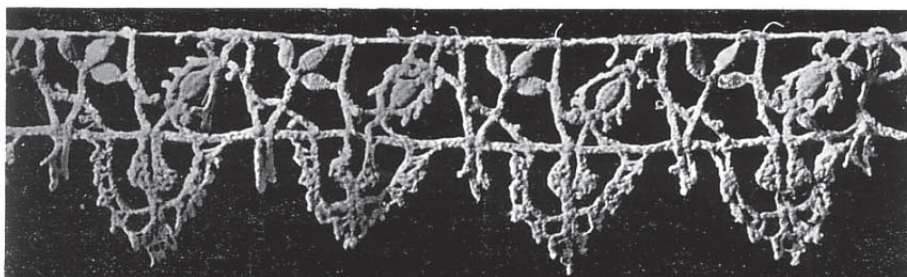
No. 148 — The bobbin-workers are evidently making a determined effort to overcome the great difficulty of clearly tracing the circle in the pattern, which is never blurred in outline in the needle-laces. The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.

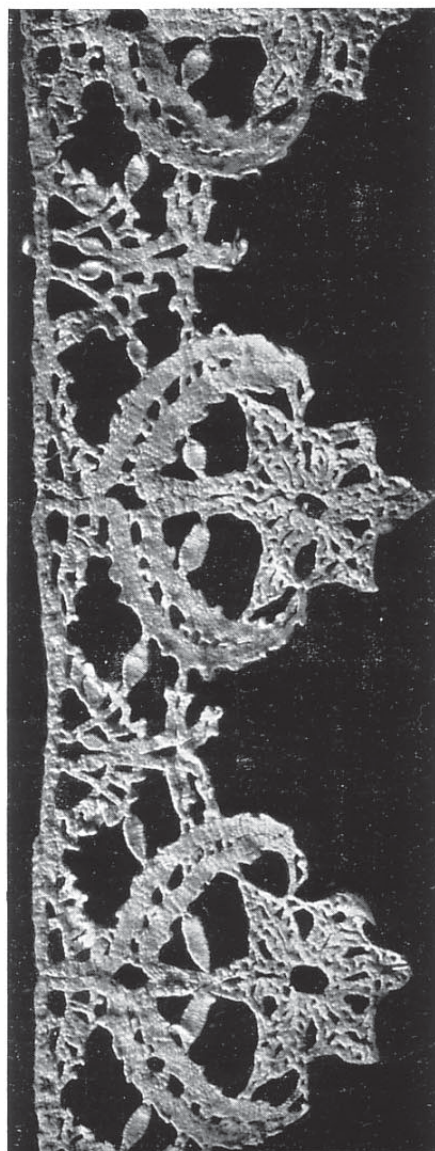
149



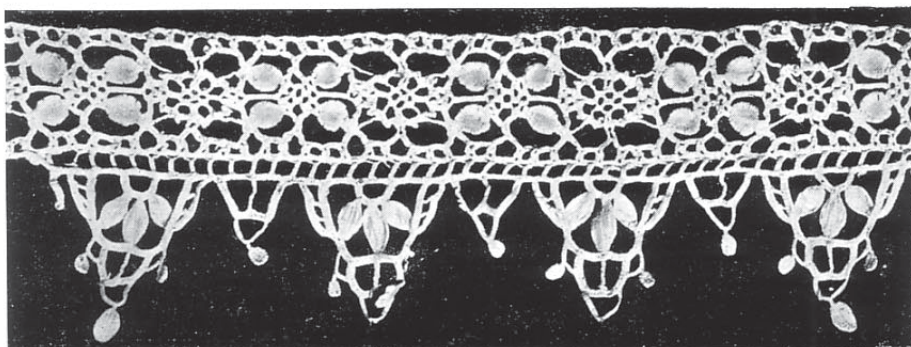
150



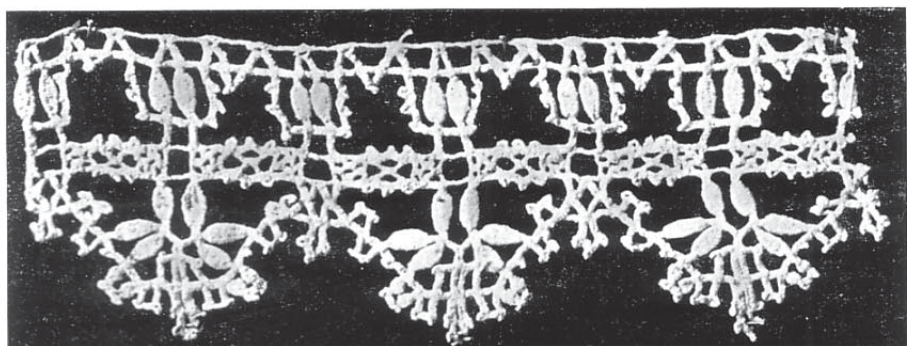
153



151



152



Edgings from designs for *reticello* and *punto in aria*.

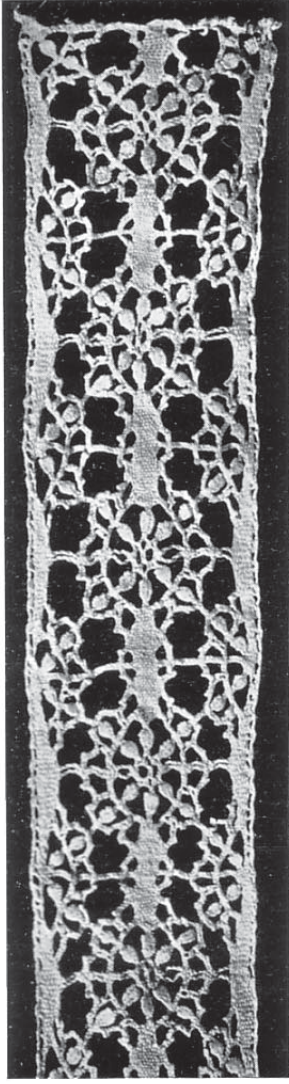
No. 149 -- Alb in Rheims linen with little embroidered motives and *sfilatura*. An insertion running round shows a *reticello* design, while the points on the edging run through hearts. Comm. Tranquilli, Ascoli Piceno.

No. 151 -- Del Carretto, Turin.

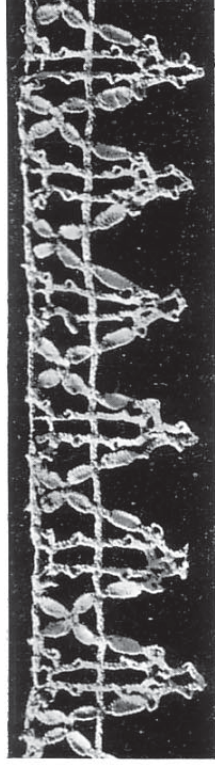
No. 152 -- Amari Collection, Florence.

No. 153 -- Points from a design for *punto in aria* tracing the form of a flower between two leaves. The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

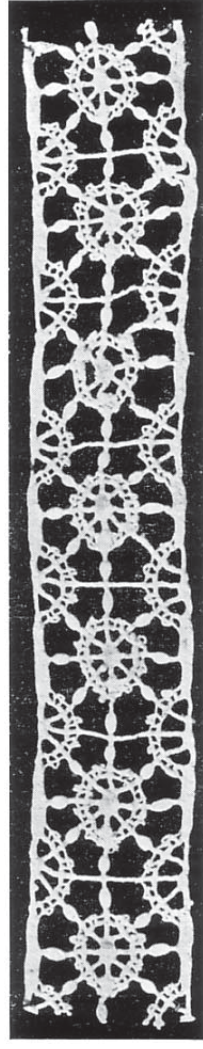
GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.



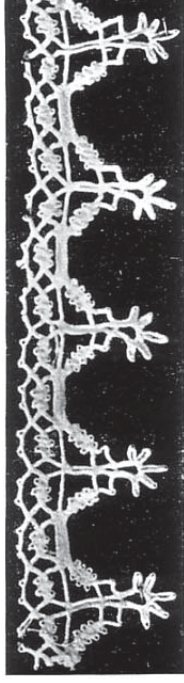
154



158



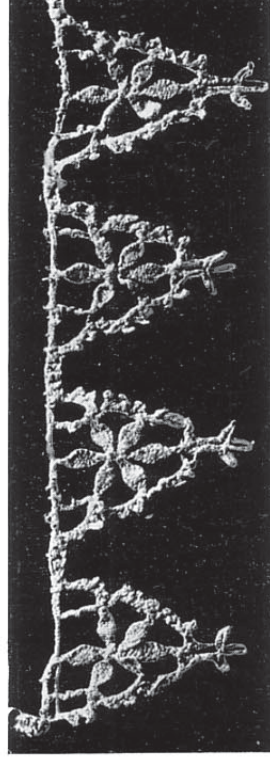
155



159



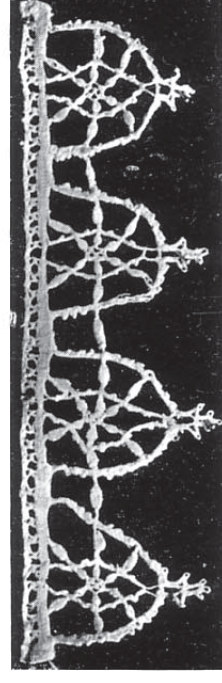
156



160



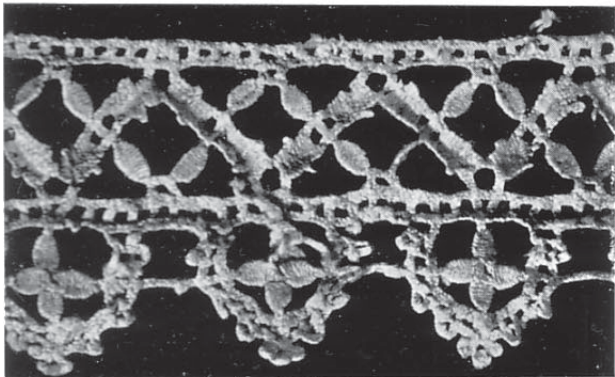
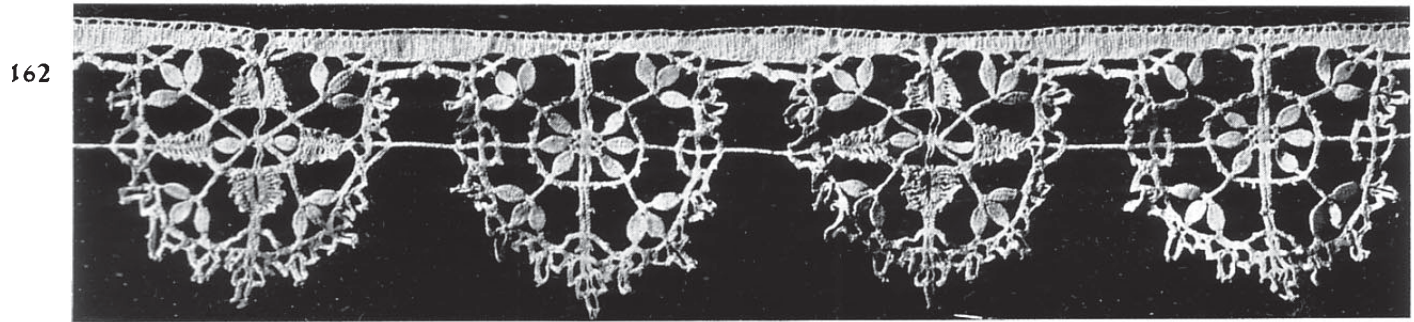
157



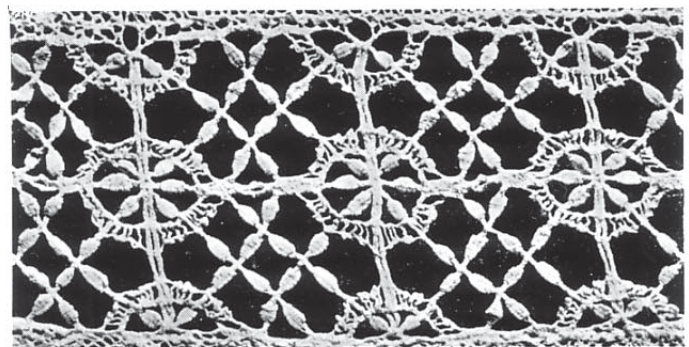
161

Insertion and pointed edging from a *reticello* design.

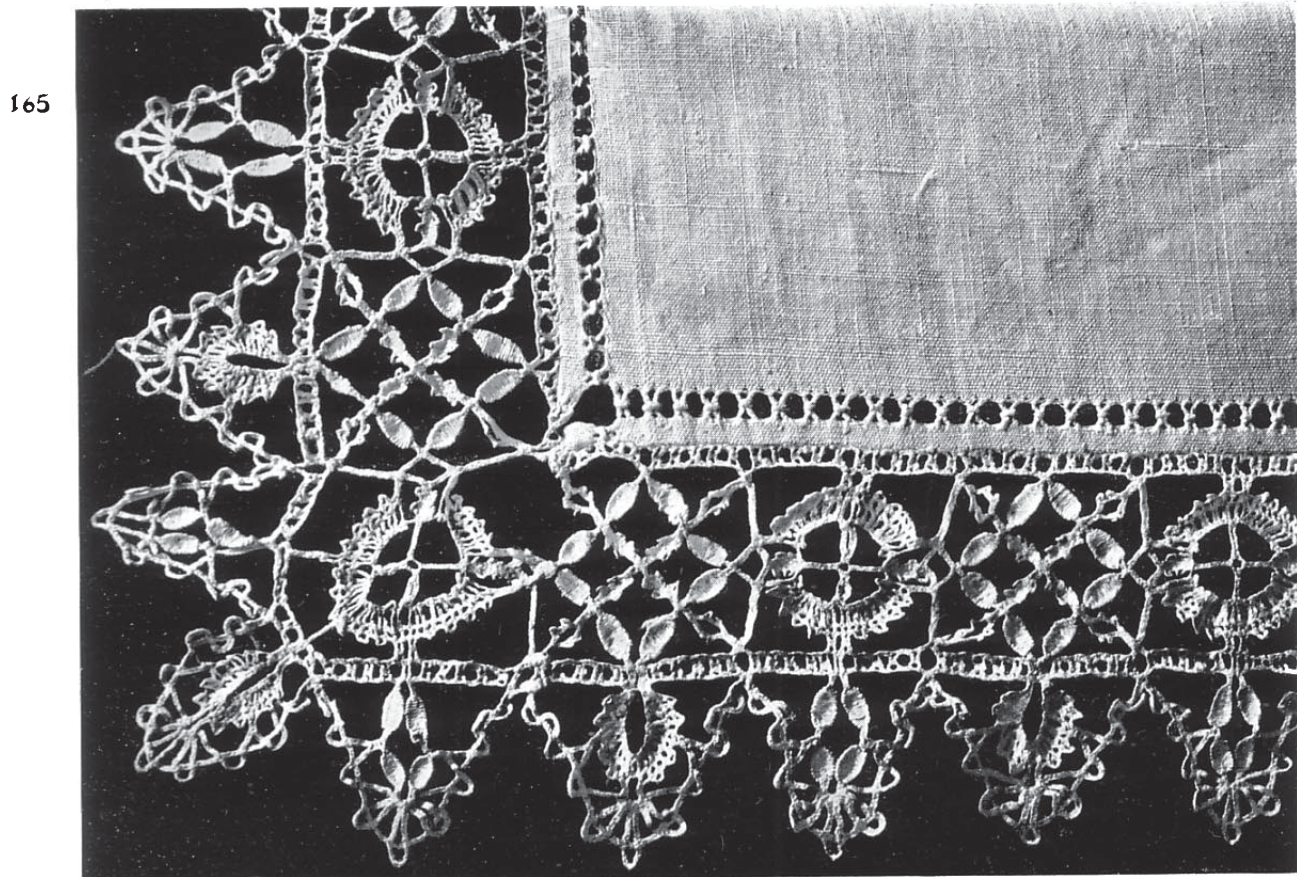
GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.



163



164

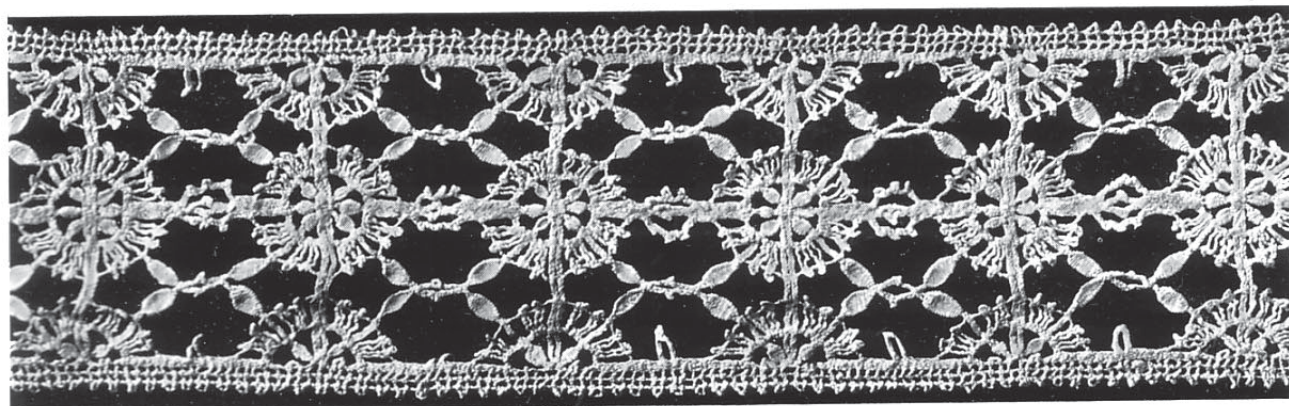


Insertion and pointed edging from a *reticello* design.

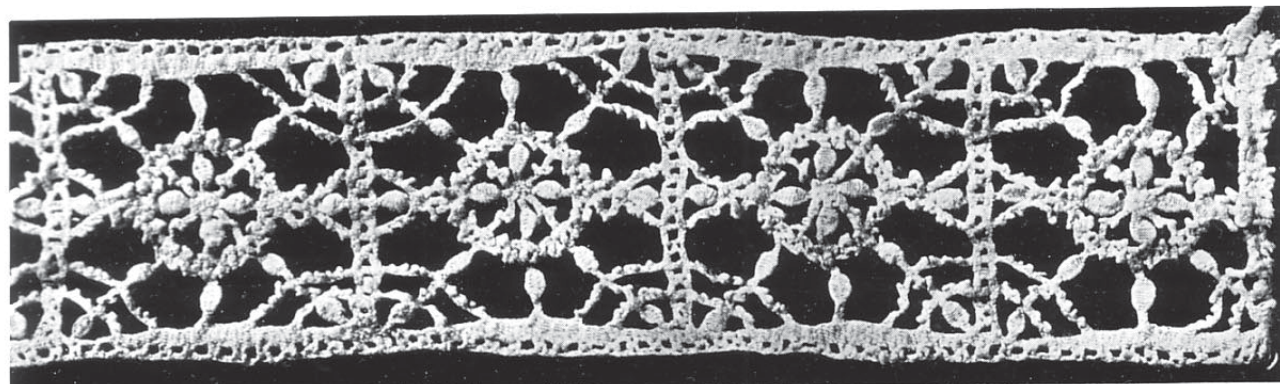
Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

GENOA — LATTER HALF OF XVI CENTURY.

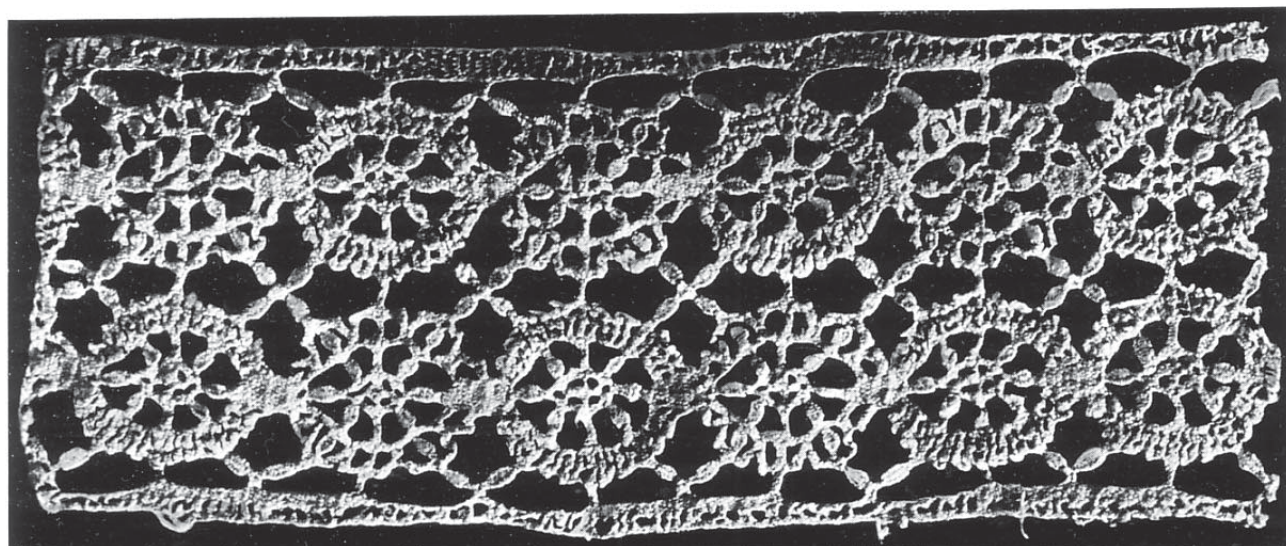
166



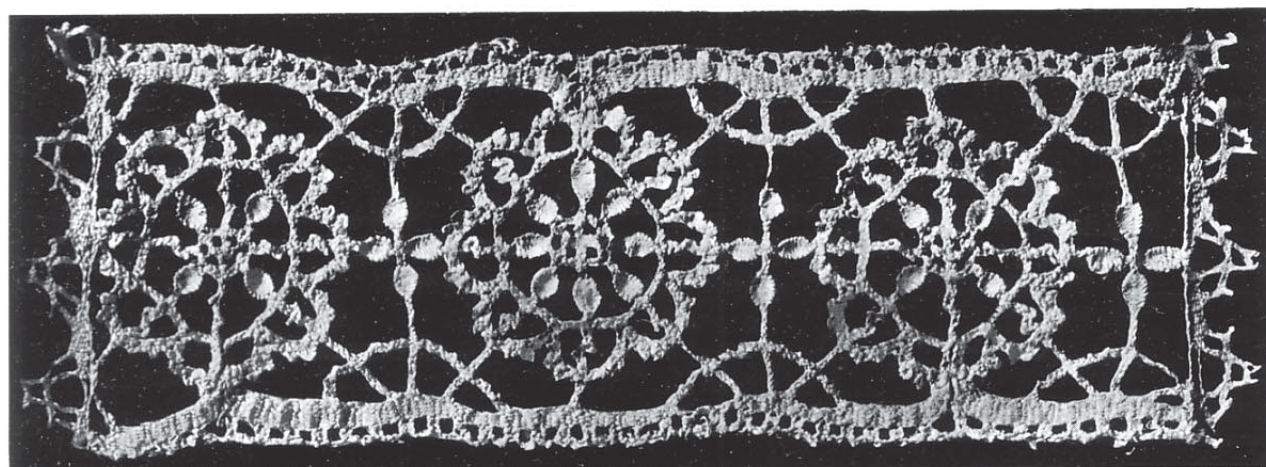
167



168



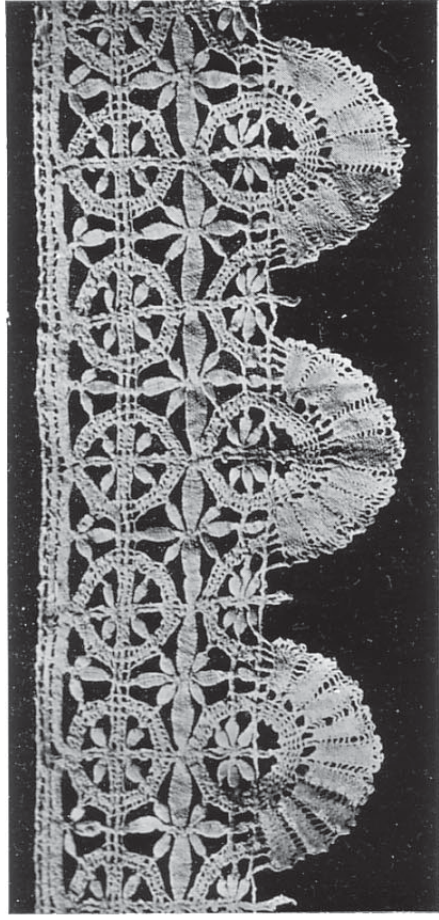
169



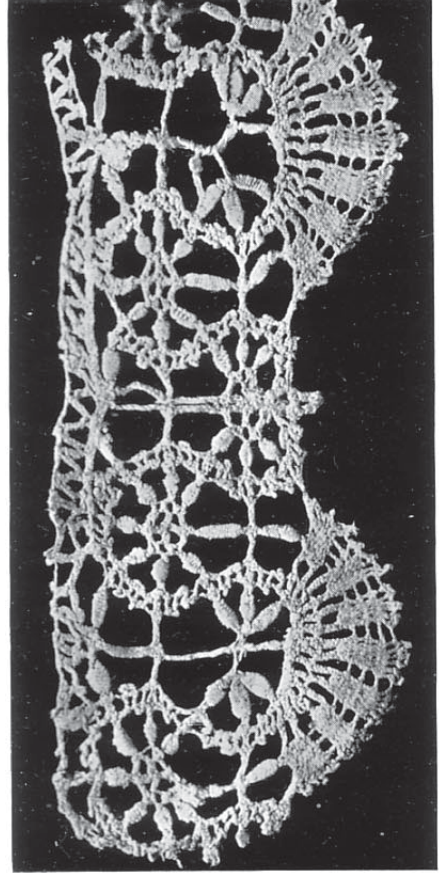
Insertions with variations on a single design for *reticello*.

The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

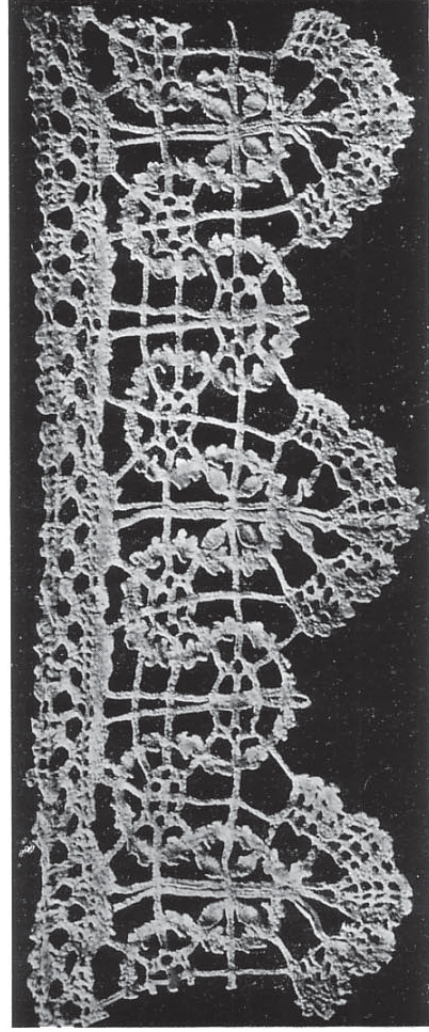
GENOA — FIRST HALF XVII CENTURY.



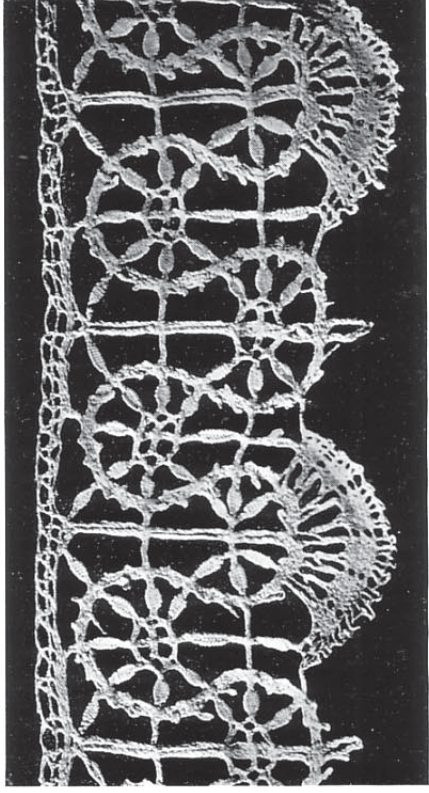
170



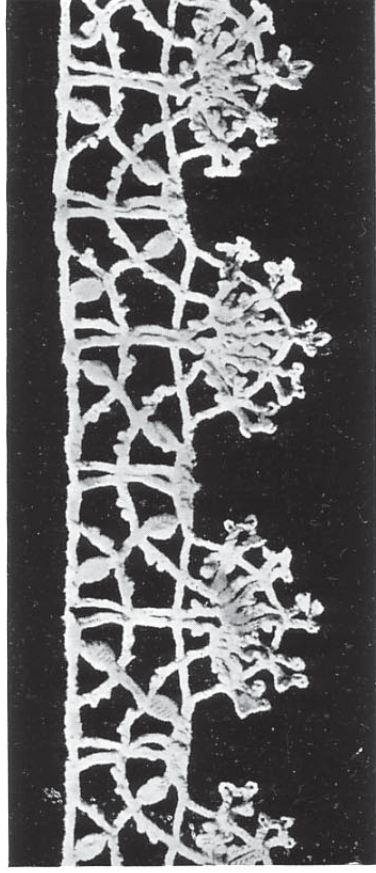
172



171



173



174

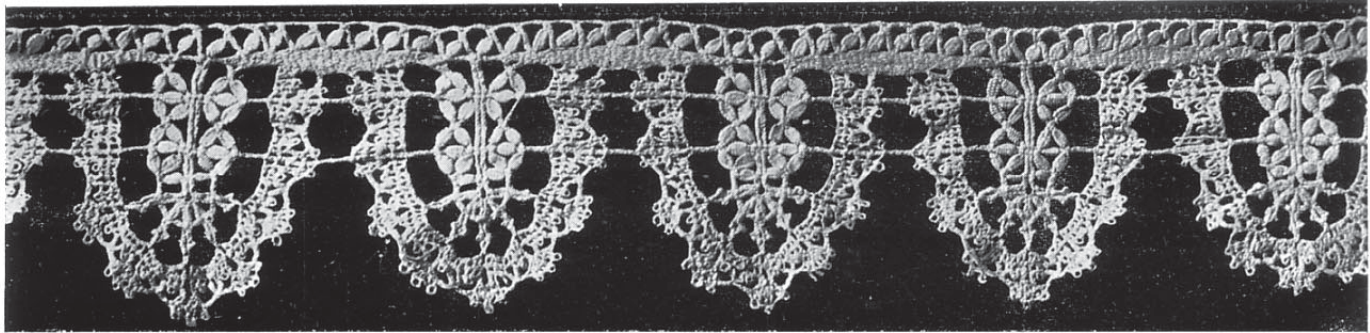
Points called bell-points, on account of their bell-like shape.

No. 170 — Millelire, Genoa.
Nos. 171, 173 — Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.

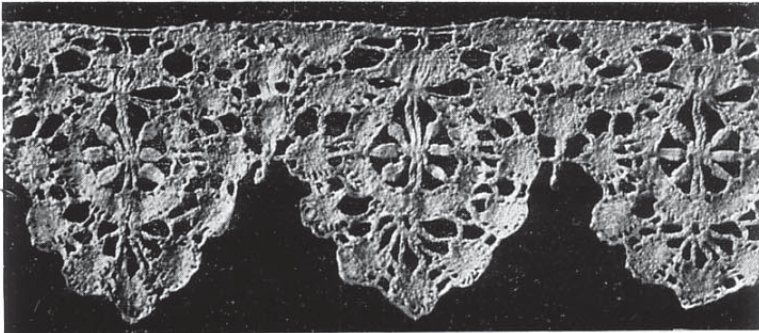
No. 172 — Cluny Museum.
No. 174 — Baldini, Florence.

GENOA — XVII CENTURY.

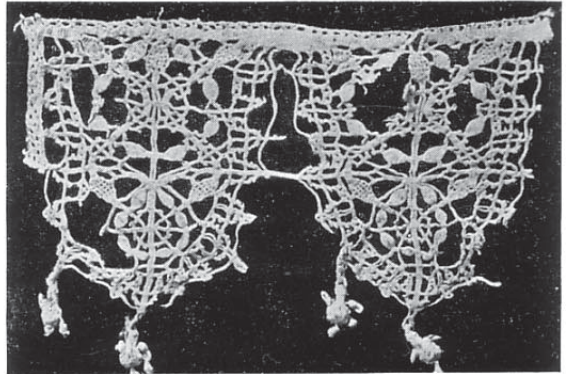
175



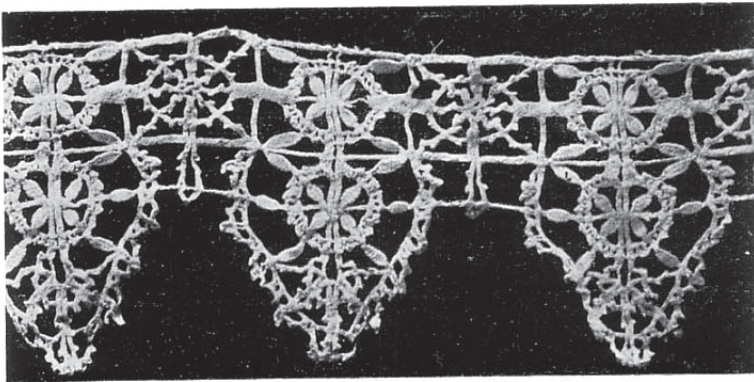
176



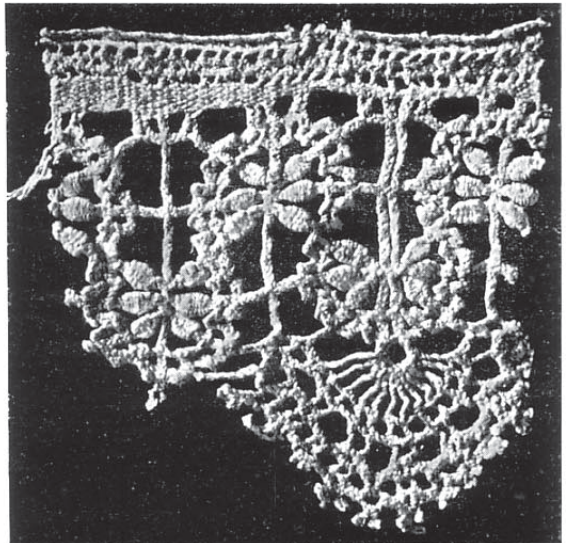
177



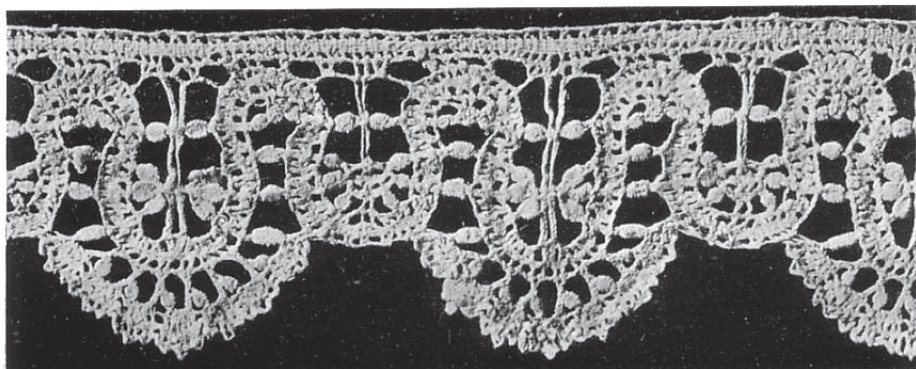
178



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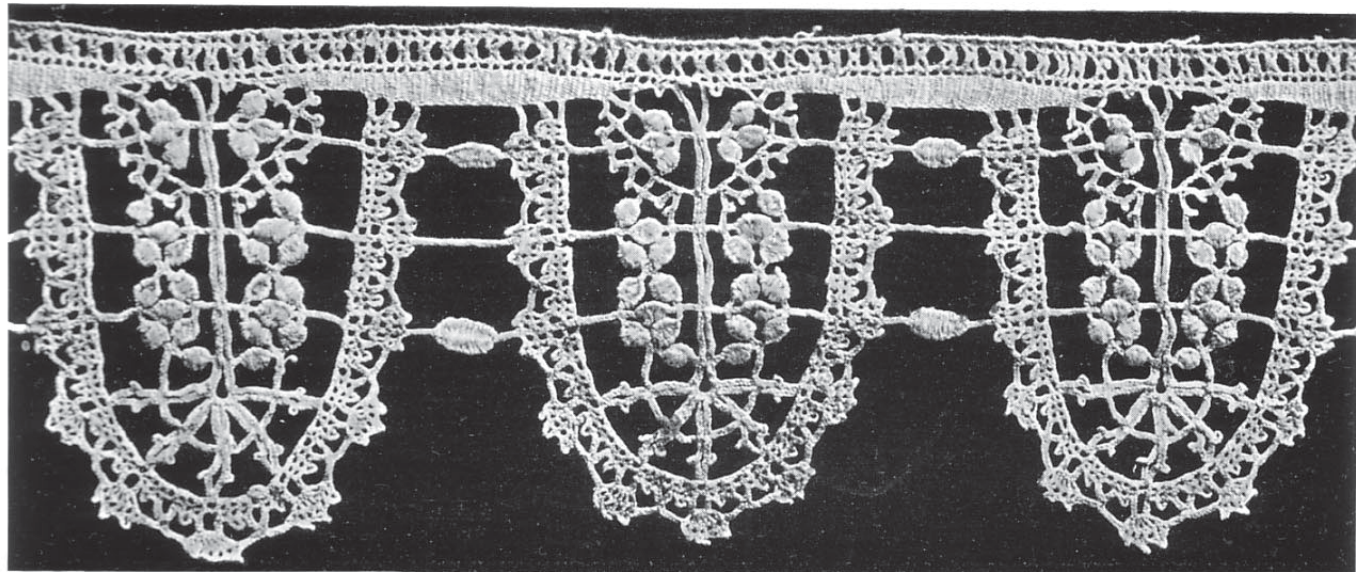


Genoese rose-lace.

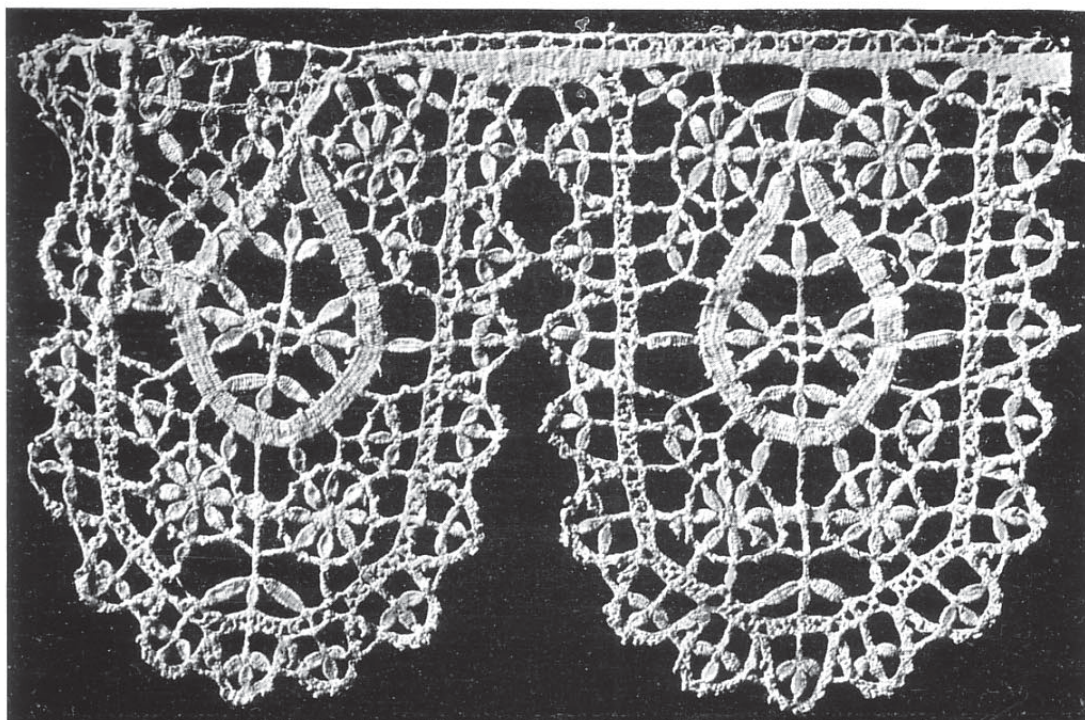
Nos. 175, 176, 178, 179, 180 — Show the same design executed in divers ways. The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.
No. 177 — When made originally, each point must have been composed of three flakes or petals. Correr Museum, Venice.

GENOA — XVII CENTURY.

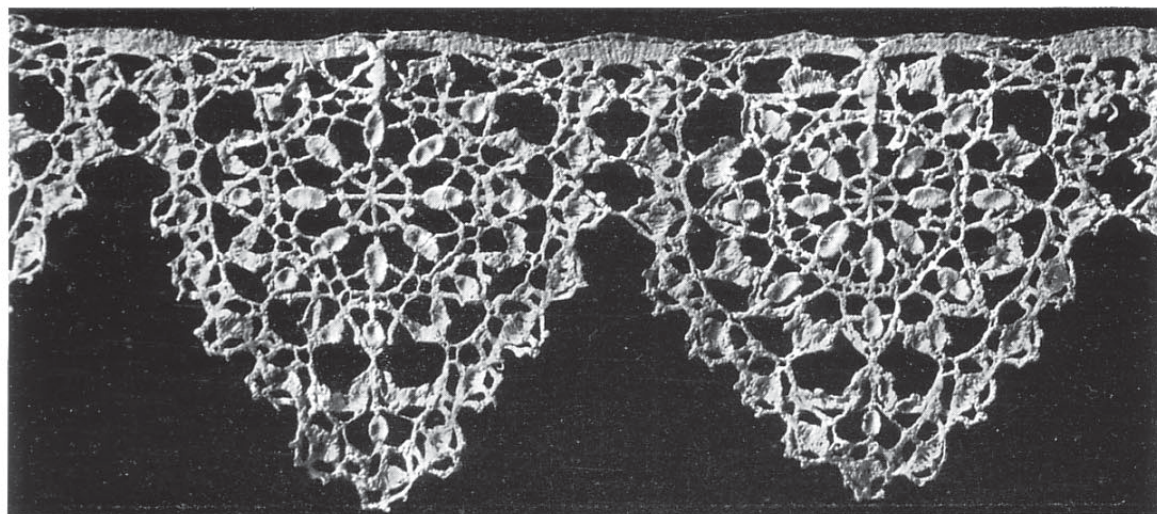
181



182



183



Genoese rose-lace.
The Ida Schiff Collection, Florence.