

No. 111 — XVI century. Border of very fine linen embroidered in curl-stitch, satin-stitch and *reticello*. Pilot, Leghorn.

creased its voids ; by refining its little bars and enlarging its open-work strips it produced designs at once more varied and more precise, and although limiting itself to the reproduction of geometrical forms, it evolved new stitches which make increasing demands on the skill of the embroidress. By this time white needlework had taken an acknowledged place among the fine arts.

Punto tagliato allies itself with charming effect to white embroidery, which is apt to be heavy and uninteresting if its opacity be not relieved and lightened.

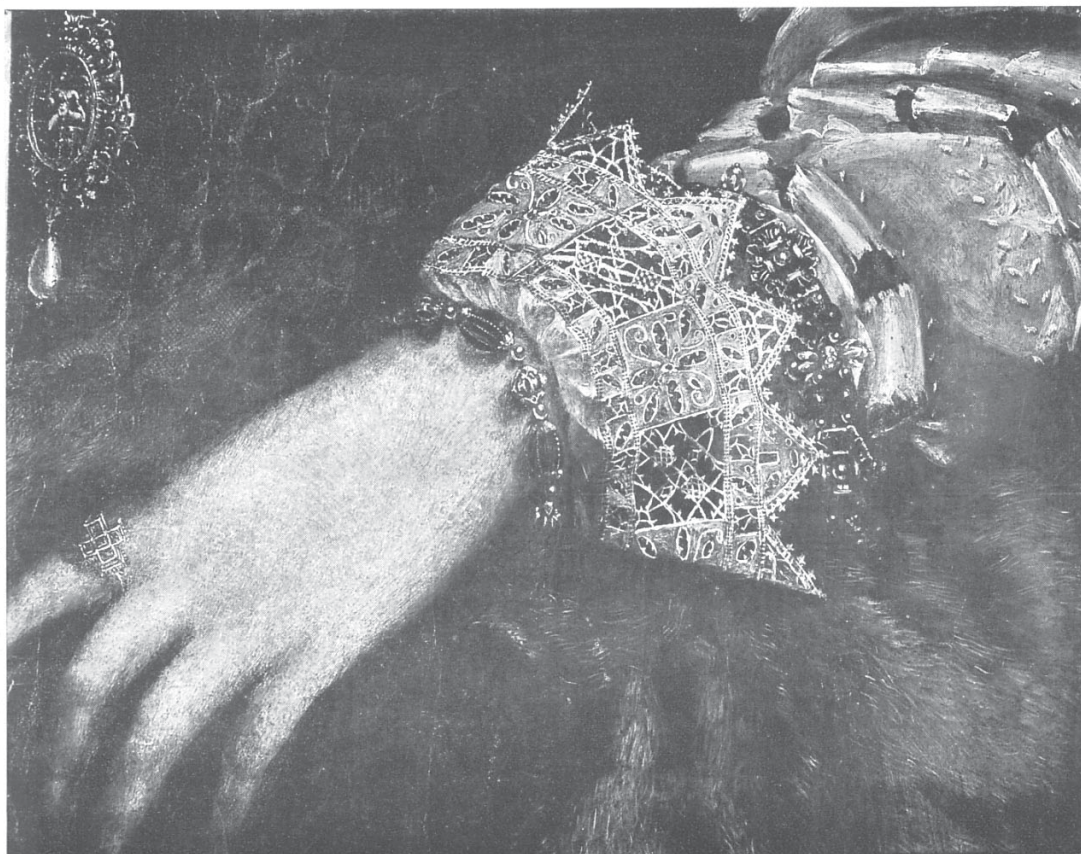
Researches among pictures, which are our best and surest guides, result in establishing the fact that, before the earliest laces appeared, embroidery was associated with *reticello*. In proof of this, we reproduce a portrait by Parmigianino (No. 106) which clearly depicts the pattern and make of the embroidered trimming round the neck-opening. By great good fortune we happened to find two old pieces of work of a design resembling this (Nos. 107, 108), although differing both from it and each other in execution, or we may say, interpretation. It serves to show with what liberty these gifted



No. 112 — XVI century. *Reticello* rose with laurel crown in *punto in aria*. Actual size. Levier, Florence.

women-workers chose their stitches and distributed their voids, perforations, and reliefs (which take the place of colour in these embroideries), investing them with a personal note which gives them dignity.

Bassano, Paul Veronese, Paris Bordone, and later on, Allori delighted to repre-



No. 113 — Cuff in pierced linen and *reticello*.
Detail from Gozzadini portrait, No. 110.

sent beautiful perforated white embroideries with meticulous care; not by accident, certainly, did Allori adorn his Madonna's shawl with the admirable embroidery shown in No. 109. All the most complicated stitches unite in these embroideries, which are perhaps the master-pieces of needle and bobbin laces. The insertion No. 111 is worthy of close examination. Satin-stitch flowers end in a short curl-stitch; the little squares between the flowers are of *punto tagliato* and drawn thread, while the



No. 114 — High collar with insertion and edging of *reticello*.
Portrait of Maria Capponi-Pecori. Uffizi, Florence. (Photo. Alinari).



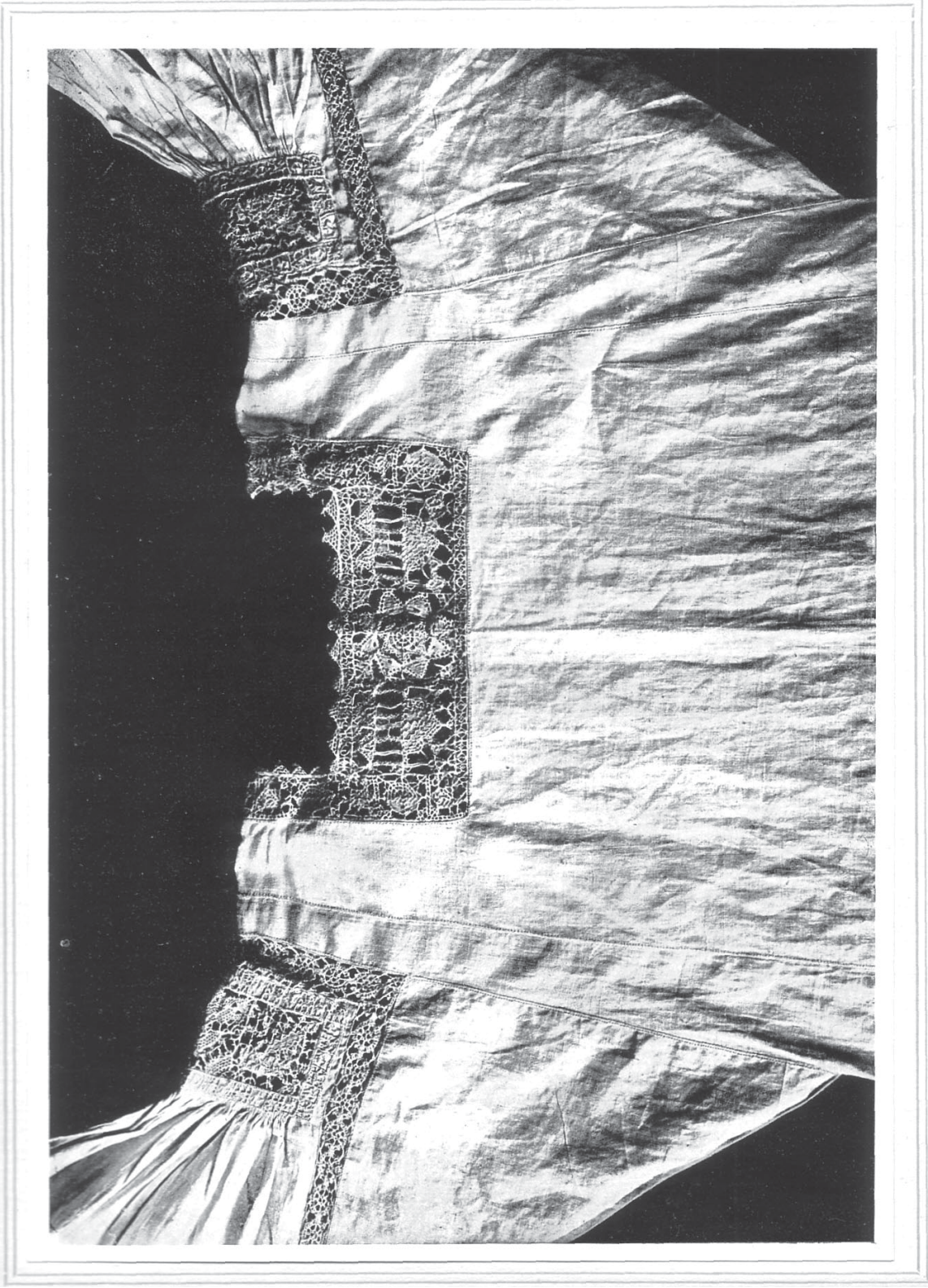
No. 115 — Ruff with *reticello*.
Portrait of Louis XIII. 1612. Uffizi, Florence.

diagonal line of separation is in *reticello*, and the horizontal one is in delicate *sfilatura* caught and held in the centre by a kind of bow of button-hole stitch most effective in its relief.

Combinations such as these become more and more intricate and varied. Filet, embroidery, bobbin-work and macramé were all associated with *reticello*; all articles in white linen were vehicles for new and sumptuous needlework. The women must have laboured with an unremitting energy bordering on frenzy. If one remembers that *reticello* was made almost wholly at Venice and by Venetians in the second half of the XVI century and in the first few years of the XVII (by 1625 laces had already changed in style), and thinks of the quantities of this early kind still to be met with in museums all over the world, and in collections both public and private, in the ward-



No. 116 — XVI century. Ornament for shirt in *reticello*, satin and curl stitch: taken from old sampler. Tommassini, Rome.



No. 117 — XVII century. Original shirt with neck and shoulder ornaments in *reticello*. The smaller insertions are bobbin-made (Abruzzi). Chieti Exhibition, 1906.

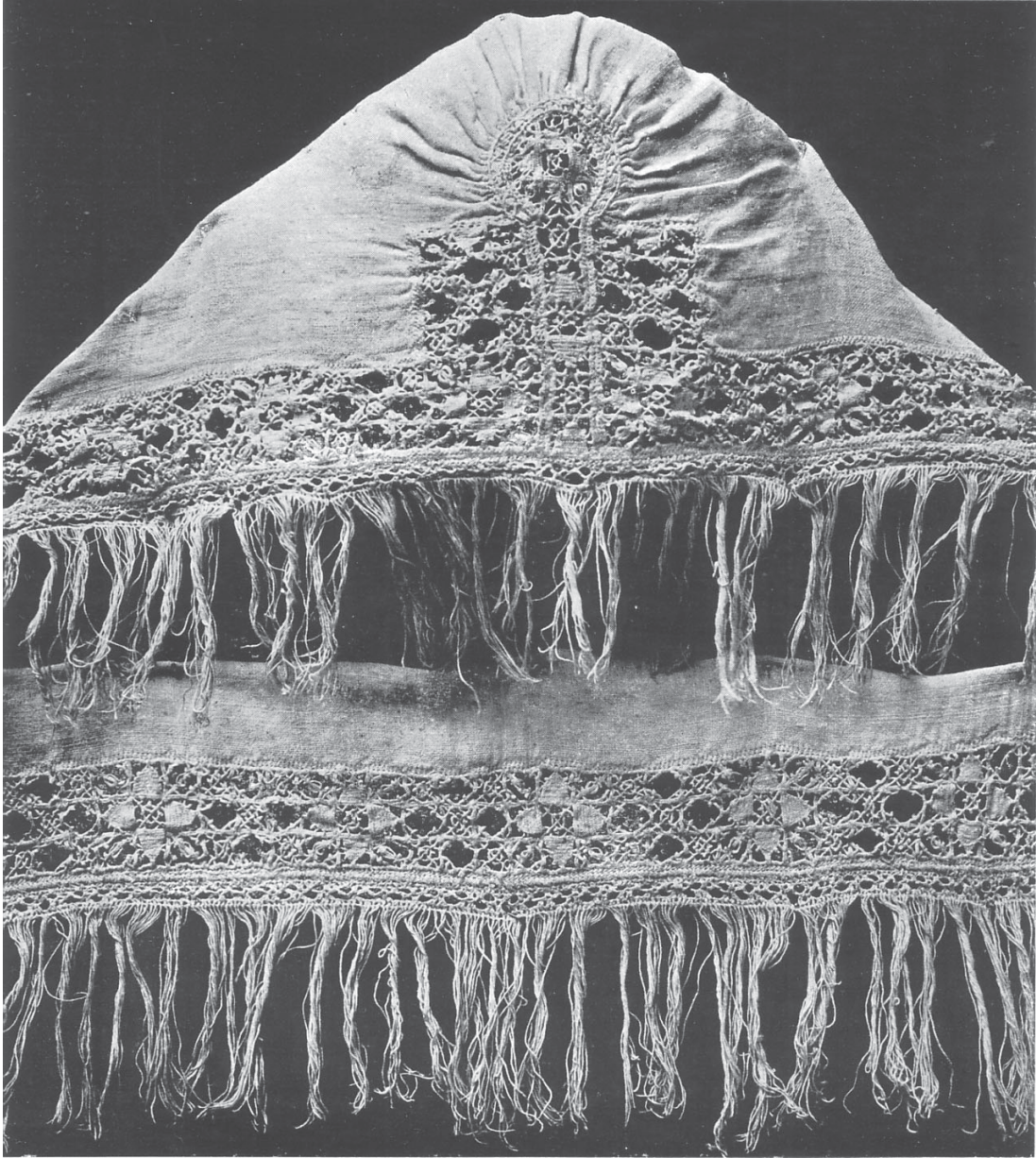
robes of ladies and the shops of dealers, remembering further that full three centuries have been busy in their destructive action, that innumerable specimens must have perished in fires, must have been buried with the dead, have been injured and lost, one is amazed and almost incredulous. Everyone, it seems, must have taken up the new work!

Little is known of the life of Venetian women in the XVI century. The pictures of Titian and Paul Veronese, in which we see their sumptuous extravagance of dress, show us more of them than do the history or artistic records of their city. We know that the greater part of their day was spent in bleaching their hair in the sun, and that the care of their beauty occupied most of their thoughts night and day, even to the sacrifice of health, time, and leisure. Yet the Books of Designs for lace are dedicated to *those noble and virtuous ladies who delight in needle-work*, while Vecellio's *Corona* bears this inscription: *Nobody can be more worthy of this than your Highness, with your perfect knowledge of every kind of stitch and the ardour you show in teaching them to the ladies of your house, that receptacle for virtuous young women.* And the lady who is so expert with her needle is no less a personage than the wife of the Procurator of the Republic!

Indeed the marvellous luxury of these white embroideries and laces during the latter part of the XV century, and the skill and time they must have demanded, lead one to suppose that the art was practised purely for its own sake; for a labour of such sumptuous and minute delicacy was in fact a kind of idleness, impossible to conceive save as welcome occupation in the seclusion of the cloister, and the long empty hours of creatures with nothing to do. Perhaps this was the one thing at which the fair Venetians of the XVI century worked.

Undoubtedly they were encouraged by the splendid results of their industry, which not only served to embellish their magnificent garments and enhance their beauty, but became objects for the admiring study of the most famous painters, who introduced them into their portraits and pictures. A visit to the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries suffices to show us the use and abuse of *reticello* during the latter half of the XVI and the opening years of the XVII century. Huge collars wired to stand up behind the head, enormous starched capes, collars, stomachers, cuffs, trimmings, and insertions contrast strangely with the entire absence of lace in the art of preceding years.

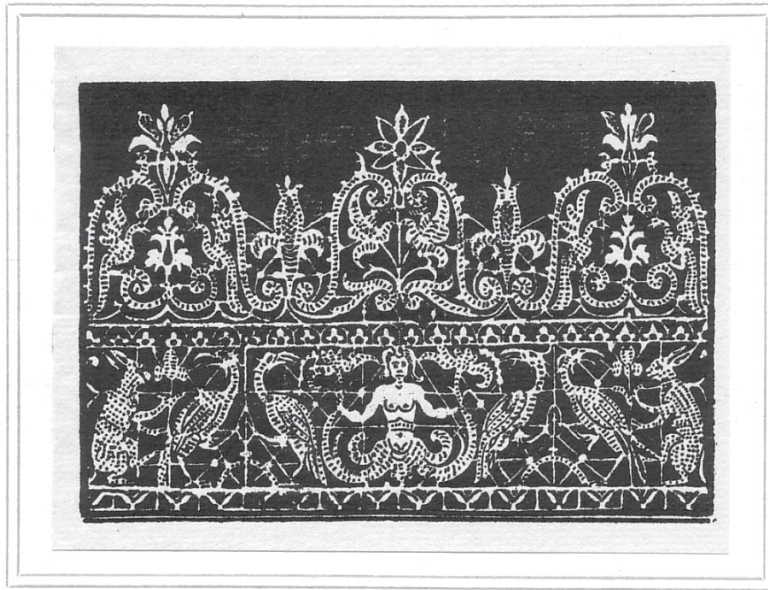
As time went on, the humbler folk acquired the habit of wearing lace; an echo of the new feminine art penetrated to the fastnesses of the Abruzzian mountains, whose women set themselves to make *reticello* for the bridal shift, (No. 117), for the coarse hood of the bridegroom, and the sacred objects for the « laying-out » of the dead: sheets, a pillow, and the little napkin for Extreme Unction of which mention has been made already.



No 118 — XVI century. Abruzzian Hood with *reticello* insertion.
The fringe is bobbin-made. Original composition.
Ciccolini, Macerata.



Even towards the middle of the XVI century, when designs for *punto in aria* were published with considerable frequency, *reticello* did not lose its place in the public estimation, but was improved almost out of recognition; to insertions of greater or lesser width were added edgings and points of *reticello* in conjunction with the most superb *punto in aria*.



No. 119 — From the *Corona delle Nobili et virtuose Donne* of Cesare Vecellio. Venice, 1591.

Whilst bobbin-lace — which is the younger sister of needle-lace — imitates *reticello* and rivals it in finish and quality, the latter makes occasional efforts to escape from the trammels of stiff geometrical patterns, and to form little animals, flowers, and scrolls, within its square. The stitches are nearly always those seen in embroidery, with some few in addition; matting-stitch for the small bars, button-holing for the fillings, perforations, little cords, and *picots* which give greater lightness to the outlines and confer grace and richness on the work.

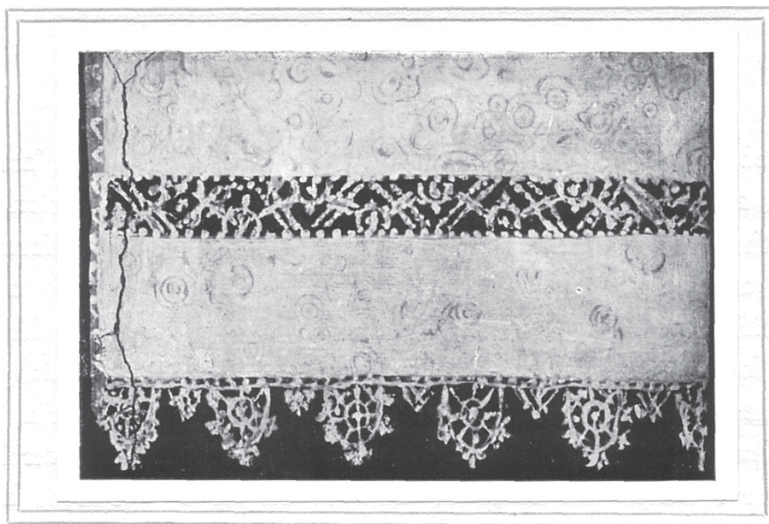
With a few trifling alterations, this *reticello* was diffused all over Italy during the XVI century. Under the name of *Cartiglia* exquisite specimens are found in the Neapolitan district and in the Marches. It seems that this form of lace-work has never been abandoned completely at Siena, for in 1862 there still lived one

Francesca Bulgarini, who left memorials of her skill in a series of laces of the very finest *reticello*, lighter and somewhat more monotonous in execution than the antique examples, and known to the trade as Siena Point.

More strange and exotic are the other names frequently given to *reticello*: Gothic, or Greek or Spanish. *Gothic* perhaps comes from the pattern; *Greek* is most likely derived from the fact that much of this lace was discovered by the English in the Ionian Islands, at least this in the acute deduction of Miss Jourdain in the Burlington Magazine of 1904; she supposes the laces were found in the tombs of Venetians who had been buried in Greece in the time of the Venetian wars and domination. They were called *Greek* then, became they were *Venetian*, and *Spanish* because they were made by Venetians nuns in the convents of Spain!

Indeed, the Spanish patterns of the XVII century are signed with Venetian names.

Countess Lina Cavazza (fortunate and courageous rival of the Venetian ladies of the XVI century), who revived *reticello*-making in Bologna, and imposed her wares on European fashion, asserts that she has come across several stitches differing from our own in Spanish laces. This may be explained by the fact that handicrafts are like people who emigrate; after a time they adapt themselves to their surroundings, are modified a little, and seek to conform themselves to their new country. But even if there should be certain slight differences of stitch in the Venetian laces made in Spain, this does not justify the term Spanish Point as applied to the lace designed by Vecellio, Guadagnino, or Zoppino, and executed or imported by Italian women.



No. 120 — Altar Cloth with *reticello* insertion and lace. —
From fresco by Poccetti (end of XVI century).
Querceto Church, San Gemignano

RETICELLO.



PLATES.

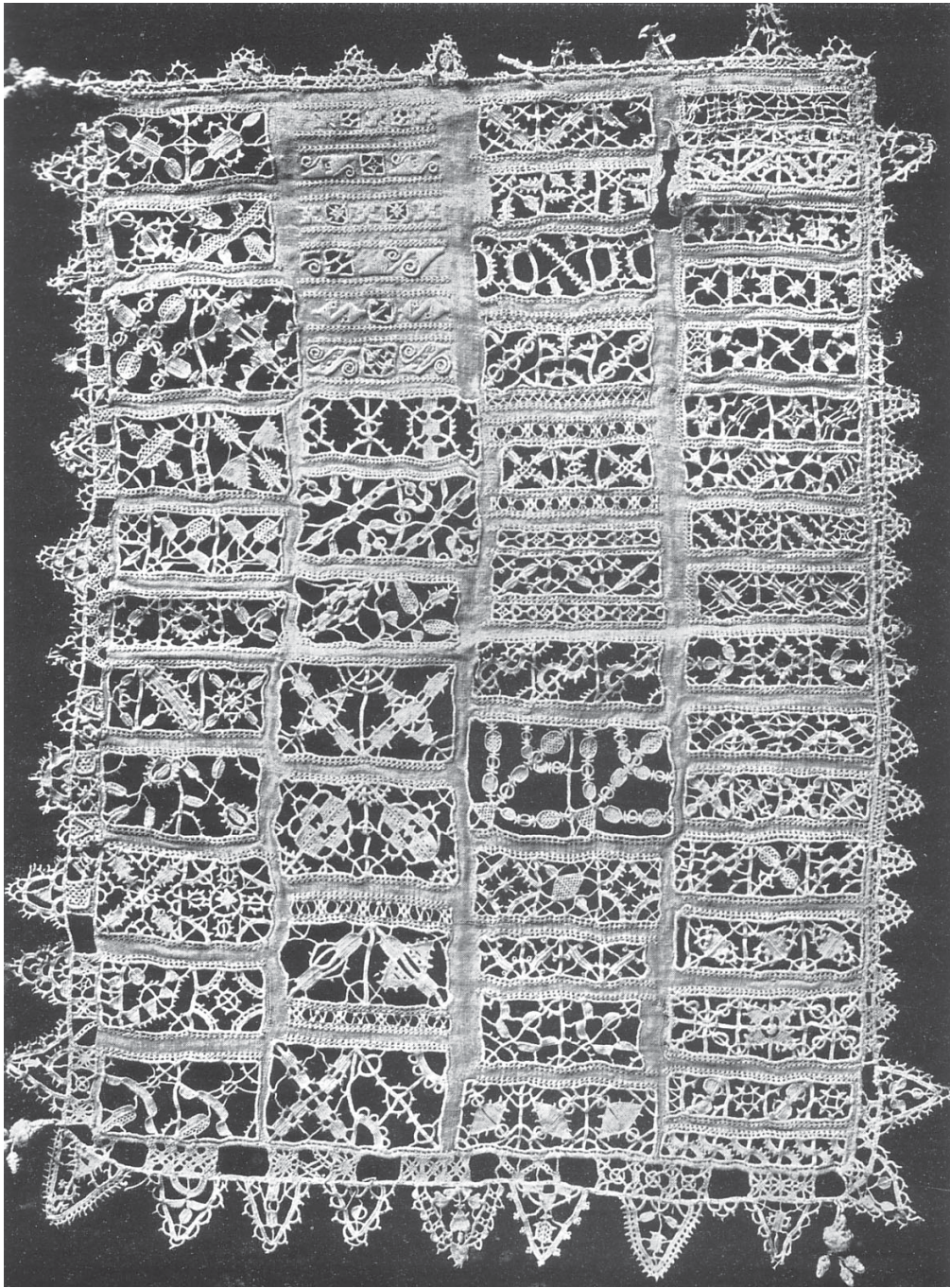
RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.



No. 121 — Sampler signed « This laciis is by Sister Margherita daughter of Giovanbattista Gianfigliazzi » in Gothic letters in double cross-stitch. Samples of embroidery: short-stitch, herring-bone-stitch, satin, and curl stitches. Of lace-work: *reticello*, macramé, and ivory-stitch.

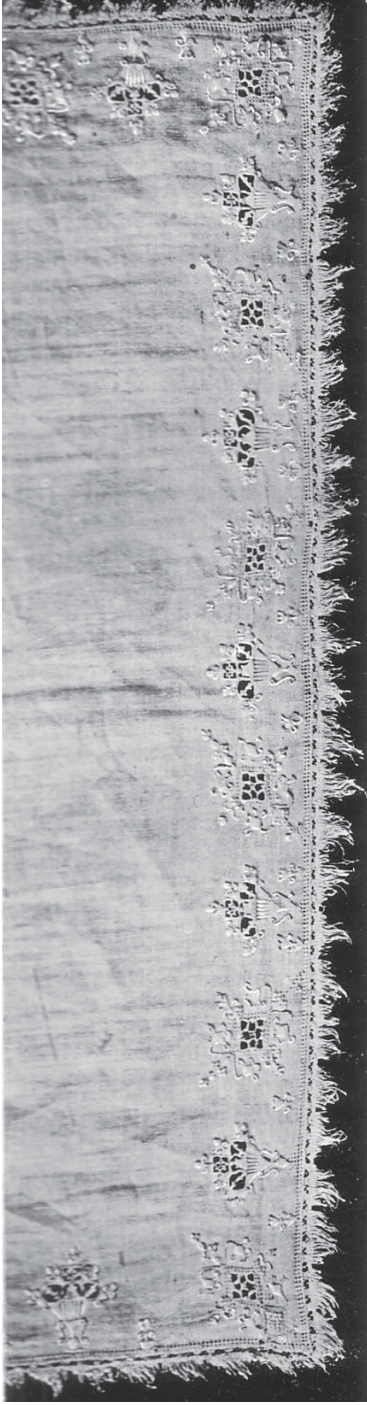
Bargagli, Florence.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY,



No. 122 — Sampler of *reticello* insertions and edgings: with six little strips in curl and satin stitch.

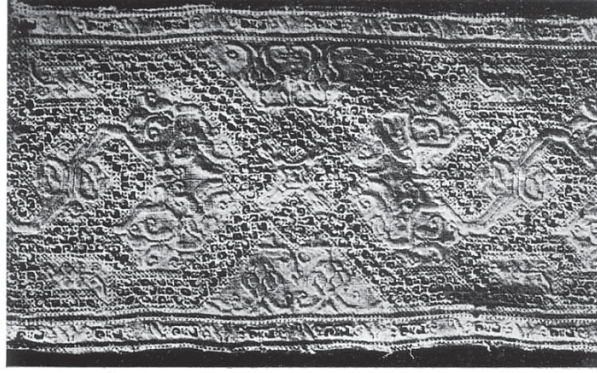
Perugia Exhibition, 1907.



123



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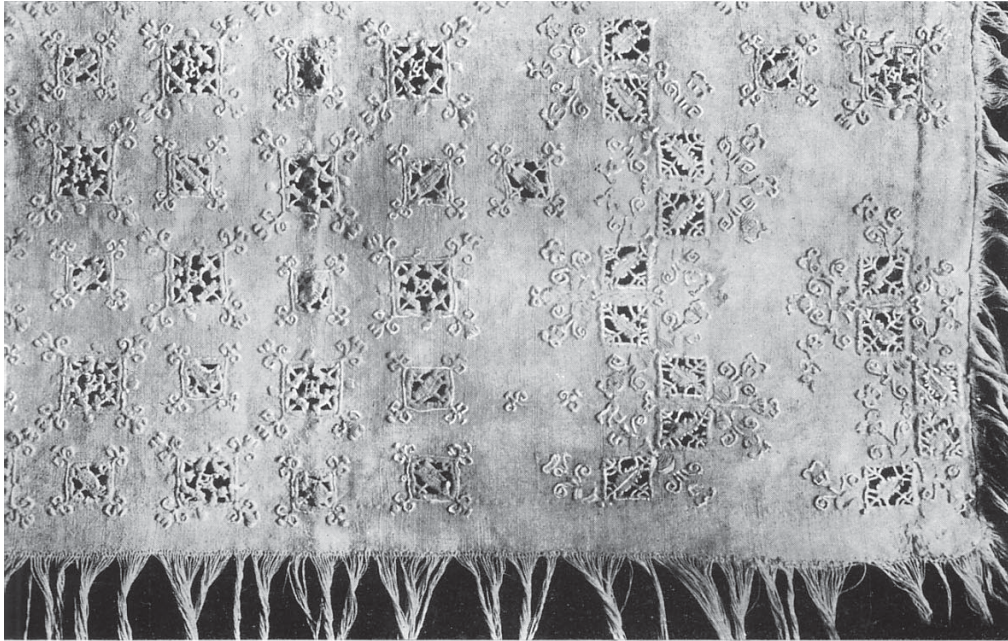


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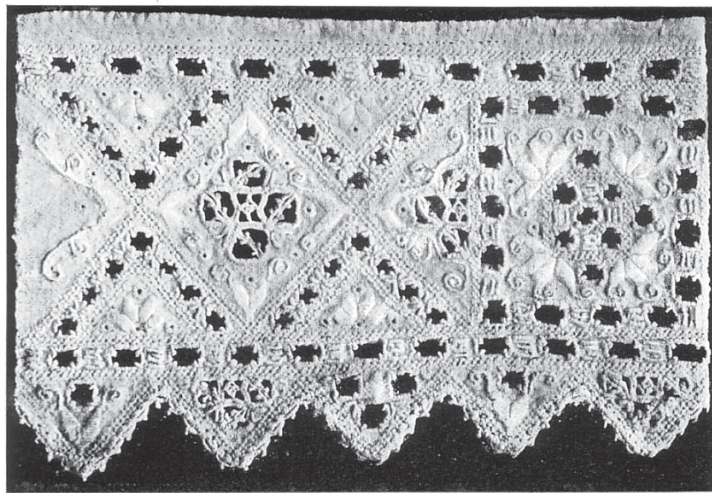
Embroideries with drawn thread and *reticello*.

No. 123 — Tablecloth embroidered in satin and curl stitch with *reticello*; Baldini, Florence. No. 124 — Insertion in satin-stitch, cut linen and *reticello*. Aghib, Leghorn.
No. 125 — Another insertion in satin-stitch and drawn thread. Pílot, Leghorn.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.



126



127



128

Embroidery, cut linen and *reticello*.

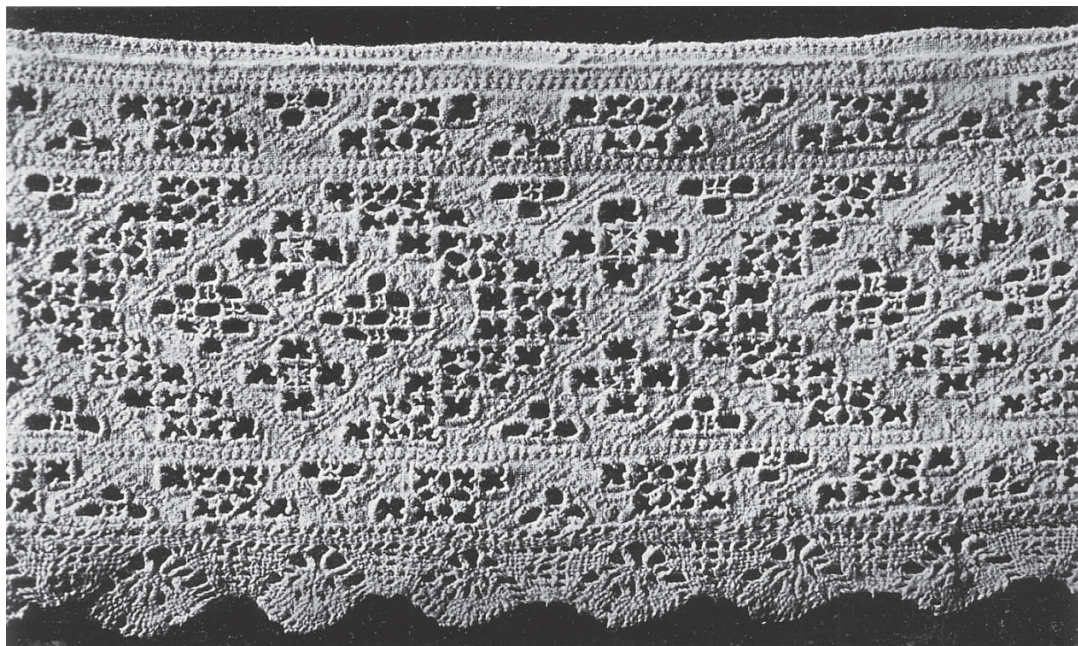
No. 126 — Tablecloth embroidered in curl-stitch with *reticello* work. Two different designs. Bernardini, Macerata.

No. 127 — Fragment of sampler, curl and satin stitch, and cut linen. Pajno, Palermo.

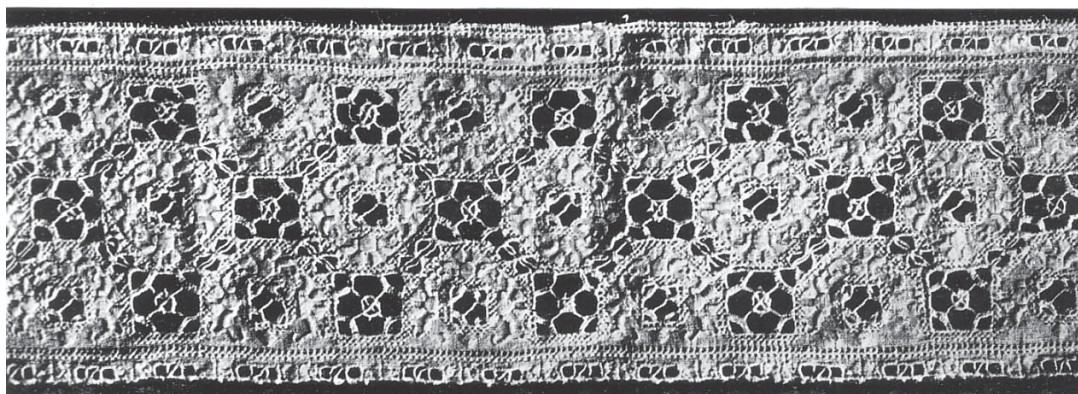
No. 128 — Insertion of curl-stitch, *reticello* and cut linen. Pajno, Palermo.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.

129



130



131



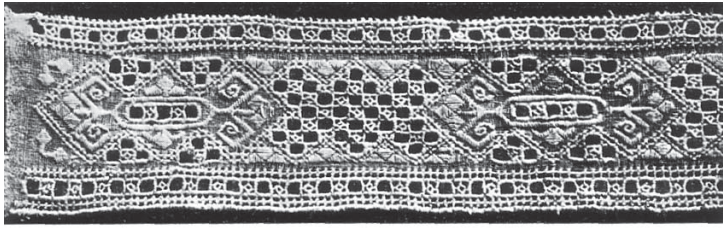
No 129 — Insertion in *reticello* and cut linen. Amari, Florence.

No. 130 — Another insertion in satin-stitch and *reticello*. Pilot, Leghorn.

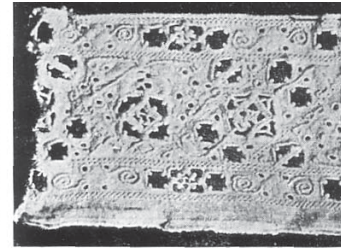
No. 131 — Another insertion in curl and satin stitch and *reticello*. Pilot, Leghorn.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.

132



133



134



Embroidery, cut linen, and *reticello*.

No. 132 -- Insertion in satin-stitch and cut linen. Pilot, Leghorn.

No. 133 -- Insertion in curl and satin stitch and *reticello*. Carretto, Turin.

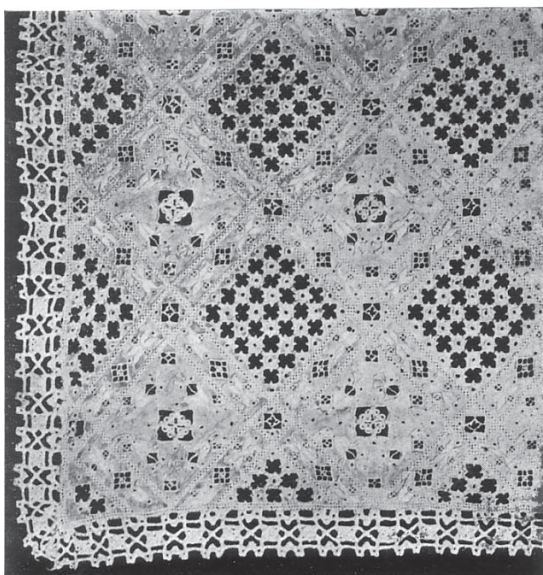
No. 134 -- Towel. Original composition. Curl and satin-stitch and *reticello*; the insertion is bobbin-made. Tranquilli, Ascoli Piceno.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.

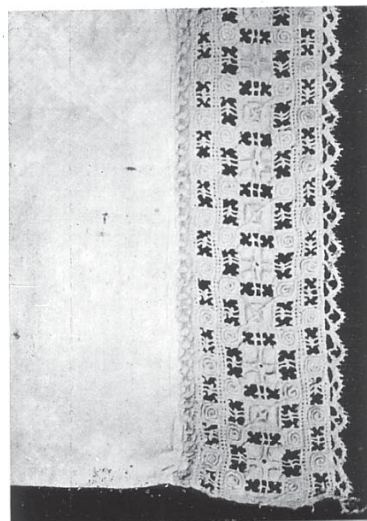
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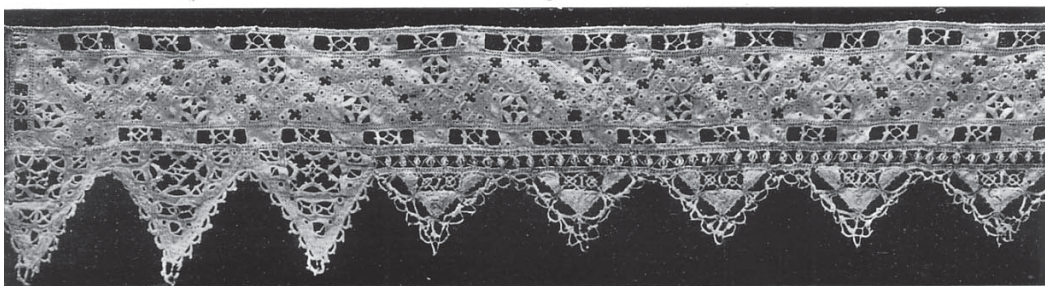
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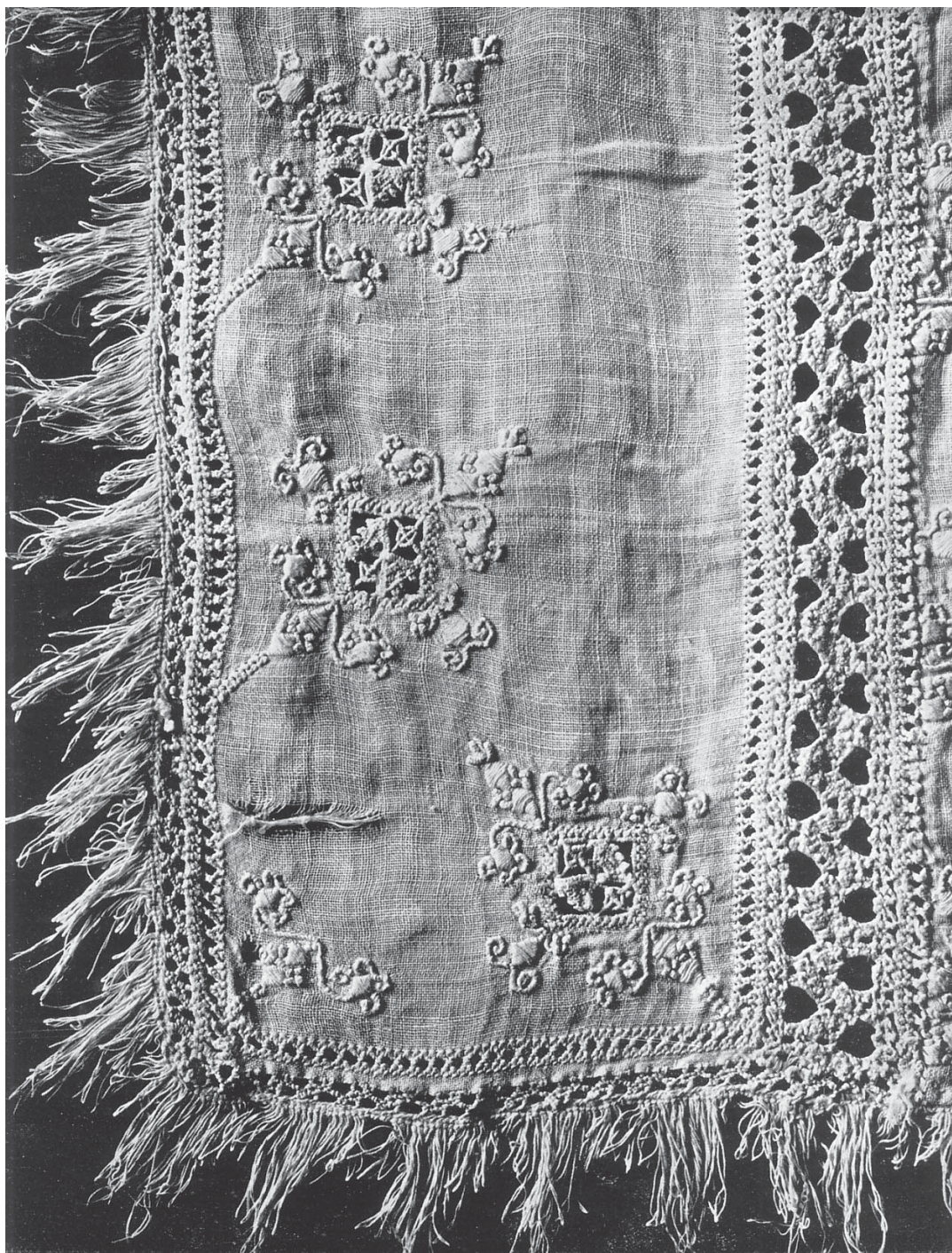
138



Embroidery of cut linen and *reticello*.

- No. 135 — Insertion in curl and satin stitch, *reticello* and cut linen. Carretto, Turin.
- No. 136 — Tablecloth with embroidery in curl and satin stitch and *reticello*. Carretto, Turin.
- No. 137 — Border in curl and satin stitch and *reticello*. Carretto, Turin.
- No. 138 — Insertion and points in cut linen, pierced linen and *reticello*. Rucellai, Florence.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.

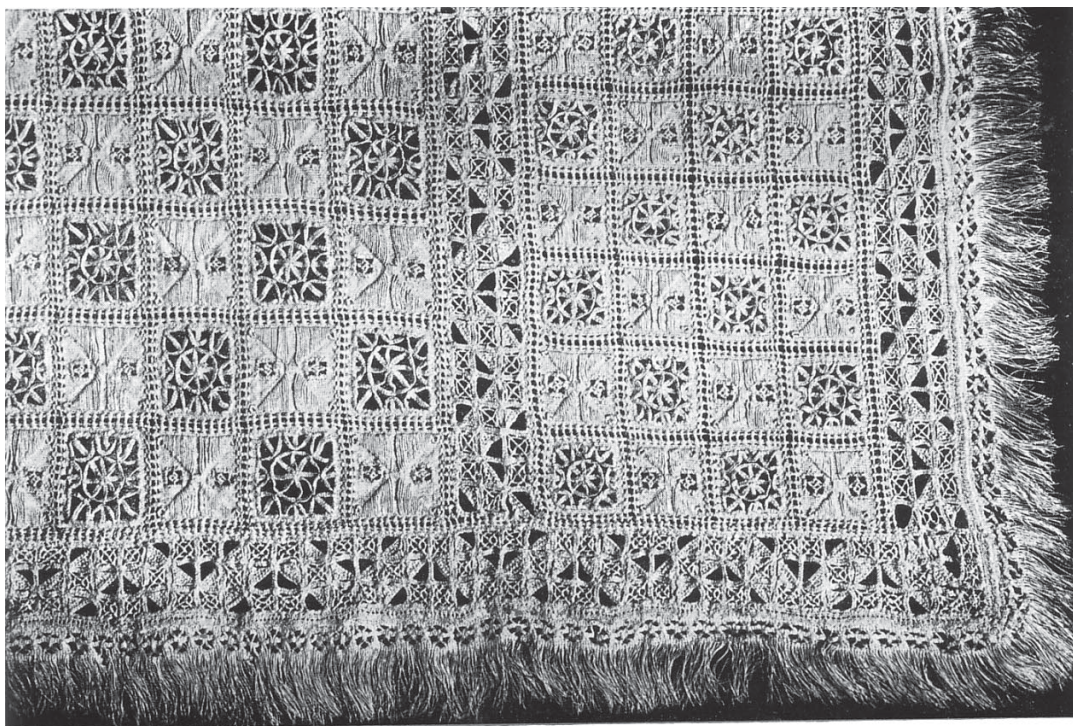


No. 139 — Embroidery and *reticello*. Tablecloth with coarse embroidery in curl and satin stitch and *reticello*. The larger insertion is bobbin-made, the smaller is in ivory stitch. Original composition.

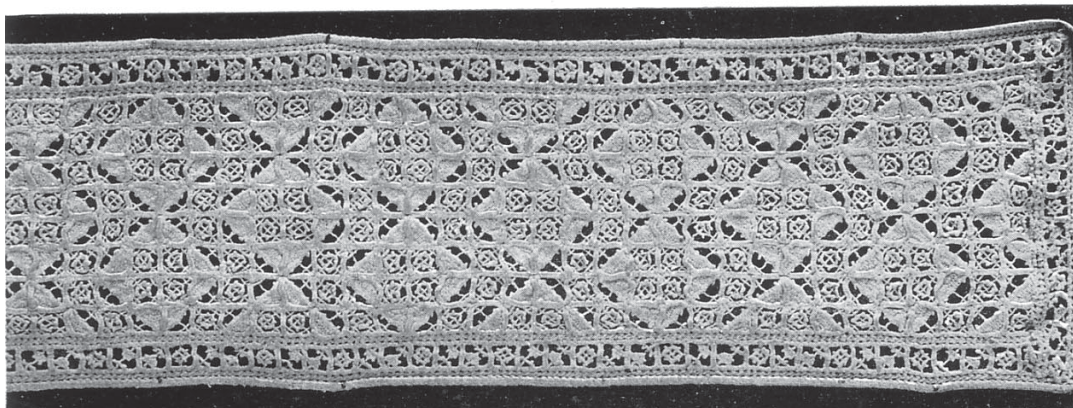
Tranquilli, Ascoli Piceno.

RETICELLO — XVI CENTURY.

140



141



No. 140 — Table-cover in satin stitch and *reticello*. Insertion in cut linen. Ristori, Florence.

No. 141 — Insertion in cut linen. Baldini, Florence.