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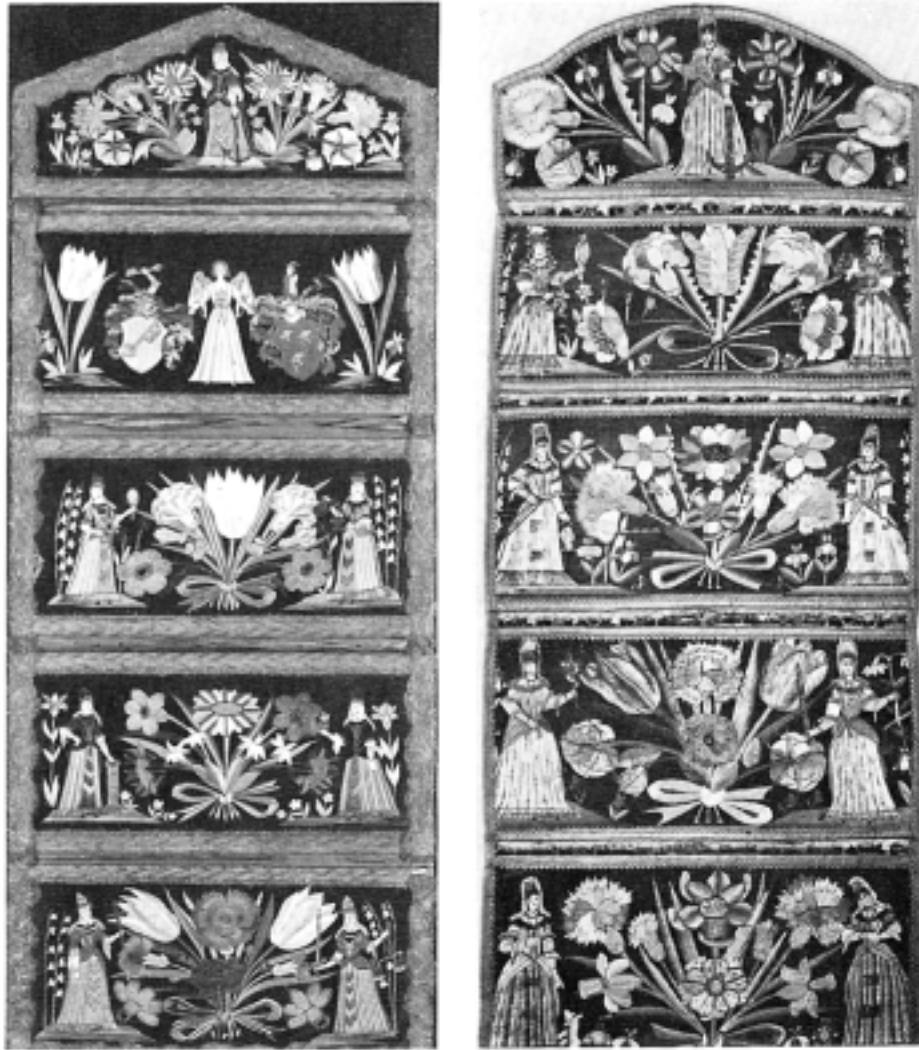
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WALL POCKETS FROM THE ENGADINE AND SOME
REMARKS ABOUT SWISS EMBROIDERY IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By JENNY SCHNEIDER

WALL-POCKETS were commonly known over large parts of Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They apparently belonged to a well-furnished living room in those times,—not only pleasant to look at, but also very convenient for putting away all sorts of smaller accessories. Wall-pockets have three or four compartments, all rather flat, which probably were used mainly for letters and notes. As the German as well as the Swiss name is not wall-pocket, but comb-pocket, we think that these served also in ladies' dressing rooms, perhaps as some sort of beauty-case to hold various little fashionable trimmings. Looking at the huge number of wall-pockets still existing in collections and museums all over the world, we find them made of different materials—wool, silk, linen and leather. Most of them are embroidered. Here again all sorts of materials and threads can be found, even applied work with gold and silver threads and spangles, pearls and different glass beads imitating garnets and precious stones. The especially fine Italian example in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is made of silk embroidered with silk floss and metal thread, trimmed with metal spangles and metal lace.¹

It is our intention to present here some very typical Swiss wall-pockets, all very much alike and all doubtless coming from the same valley, the Engadine, an upland valley in the canton of Grisons, nowadays famous for its great resort, San Moritz. This is a part of Switzerland where bright colours are found on everything, more so than in other districts. As we shall see, not only furniture but also the national dress worn at special occasions was extremely brilliant. The Engadine wall-pockets had three or four pockets, most of them made of a dark material, wool or silk, embroidered with polychrome silks. The coats-of-arms of the owners as well as the date are sometimes on the top pocket, very rarely the initials of the embroideress. The pockets are lined with plain or raw linen, but often also with a printed fabric. We find quite nice decorations such as stripes or little flowers on these linings. Furthermore, the pockets are often bound with a red silk ribbon, and now and then, even with silver or gold lace.



I. Wall-pocket, Swiss, 18th century, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
II. Wall-pocket, Swiss, 18th century, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

The most beautiful specimen I have ever seen is a wall-pocket in the textile collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (pl. I). It is also one of the largest, measuring 106 cm. in length and 44 cm. in width. There are four pockets and a triangular panel at the top. All is in black taffeta embroidered with polychrome silks and metal thread. The edges are richly bound with metal lace. The composition of each panel is according to a certain pattern and always the same: flowers in the center flanked by allegorical figures. From a series of Virtues, these appear from bottom to top:

- 1) left: Faith (*Fides*)—woman with book and cross
right: Justice (*Justitia*)—woman with sword and balance
- 2) left: Strength (*Fortitudo*)—woman with column
right: Mercy (*Caritas*)—woman with burning heart
- 3) left: Prudence (*Prudentia*)—woman with snake and mirror
right: Temperance (*Temperantia*)—woman with jug and cup
- 4) Angel holding coats-of-arms, one in each hand
- 5) Hope (*Spes*)—woman with anchor.

On panels 1, 2, and 3, enormous flowers, bound together by two-coloured ribbons, fill the center, whilst at the outside, near the applied metal lace edging, slender flowers like little trees complete the composition. In panel 4, there are two gigantic tulips next to smaller pansies. The top panel is filled with roses, pansies, anemones, forget-me-nots and at least four carnations. Carnations are also on some of the other panels. They are typical of the embroideries of the Grisons and are to be found on every embroidery from there.

The Swiss National Museum in Zurich has in its collections nearly the same pocket (pl. II).² On comparing it carefully with the wall-pocket in Philadelphia, one cannot doubt that the same embroideress made both of them. Again this is made of four panels and a top-piece with the same figure of Hope holding an anchor. The edges are bound with a red silk ribbon, and the reverse is lined with a red and black printed cotton. We see from bottom to top:

- 1) left: Patience (*Patientia*)—woman with lamb
right: unknown allegorical figure with no attribute
- 2) left: Faith (*Fides*)—woman with snake wound around a cross
right: Justice (*Justitia*)—woman with sword and balance
- 3) left: woman with glass vase or jug. In the white lines for the embroidery still visible, we recognize some sort of a pillar.

Apparently the woman was intended to be Strength (*Fortitudo*).

right: unknown allegorical figure of woman with no attribute, perhaps Mercy (*Caritas*).

4) left: Prudence (*Prudentia*)—woman with snake and mirror

right: Temperance (*Temperantia*)—woman with jug and cup

5) Hope (*Spes*)—woman with anchor.

The allegorical figures on both pockets are so very much alike that they must have been copied from the same engraving, perhaps a series of prints up to now unknown to us. In any case, the women, dressed in the elegant fashion of about 1685-1715, all wear the famous so-called *fontange*. This means that their hair is arranged in the style of those years. The idea of the *fontange* came from France, and all elegant ladies had to wear highly mounted hair stiffened and kept in shape by special thread constructions. With this went a sumptuous dress with some sort of a mantle gathered up in front to show the beautiful dress. Sleeves, of medium length, had lots of ribbons above the elbow as well as ruffles (*manchettes*) of lace, the so-called *engageantes*. The waist was very small and often closed over an embroidered stomacher. A 50-cm.-long steel like a fishbone extended downward from the breast in front to give the figure a stiff and immovable support. The mantle was gathered up at the hips and drawn backward, whilst the dress showed horizontally applied fringes and ribbons. The neck emerged from a wide collar so that gold and silver chains could be seen. We doubt whether in Switzerland anyone really used to wear the dress described above. It is more likely that the embroideress portraying the lady on the wall-pocket took her ideas from prints and books and not from real life. We may suppose that the embroideress even had the same sheets in front of her when she did the two separate wall-pockets, because panel 1 of the pocket in Philadelphia with Faith and Justice is exactly the same as panel 2 in Zurich. The same holds true for panel 3 in Philadelphia and panel 4 in Zurich with Prudence and Temperance. And last, there is a striking resemblance between the figures of Hope in the top panels, standing on a little hill, carrying the heavy anchor in her left hand and pointing with the other hand towards the flower.

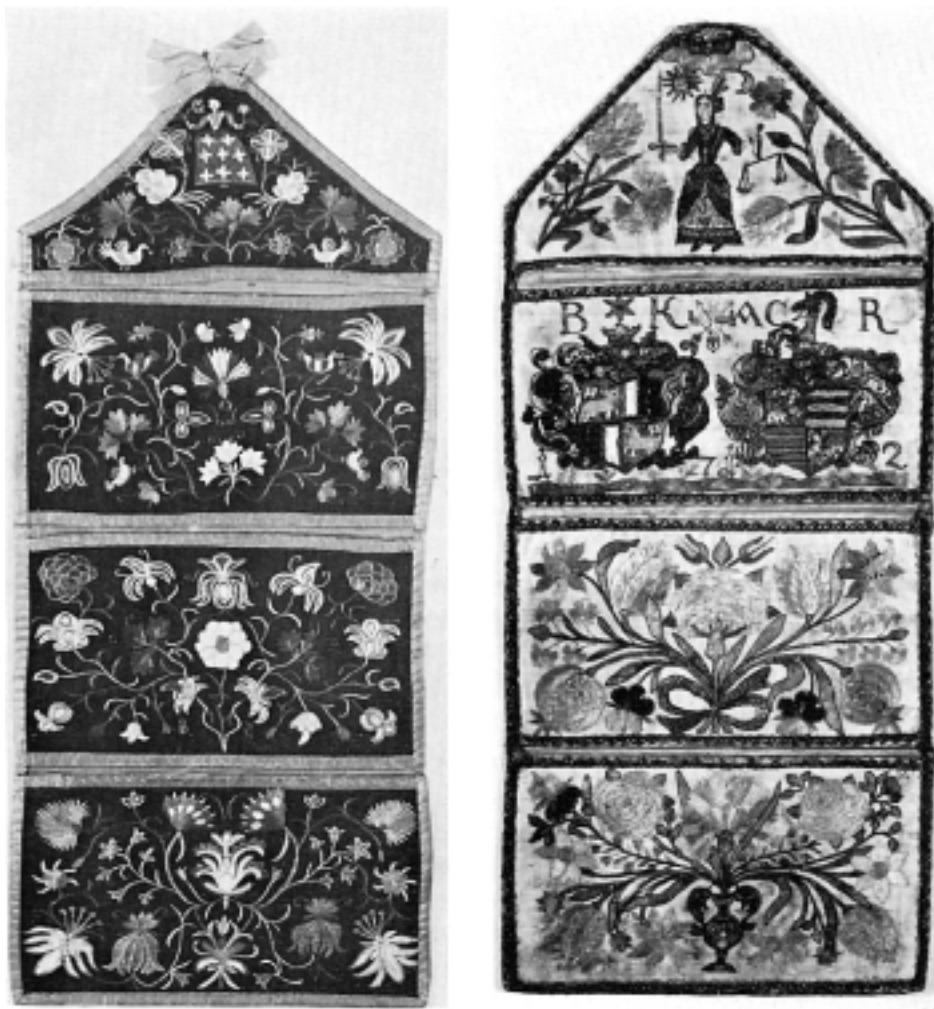
A comparison between the different bouquets of flowers again shows so much correspondence that we must believe that the embroideress worked with the help of prints; for instance, those in the *Florilegium Renovatum* by Johann Theodor de Bry, 1641, or the pages from the *Florilegium* by Emanuel Sweerts. Anyway, carnations were highly fa-



III. Loose panel of wall-pocket, Swiss, 18th century, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

voured, also tulips, daffodils, anemones, pansies and roses. On both pockets the bouquets are bound together by a ribbon bow of polychrome silk. Typical is the effect made with a light and a dark shade. Next to the enormous flowers there are small pansies just to fill the gaps. And on both pockets are huge lilies-of-the-valley next to the female figures. Even minor details correspond exactly; for instance, on the top panel the roses seen from the back, and then those dark and light striped anemones with the petals curled at the tips. One can go on mentioning all sorts of details as proof that the same prints were sources, not only for the figures but also for the flowers.

The technique used by the embroideress was as follows: first, a drawing was made in white ink on the black taffeta. Then came the silk embroidery in satin stitch. Details such as the hair, the curls of the lamb and the hearts of the flowers are in knot stitch. For jewelry and belts metal thread was couched down. Each panel was embroidered separately before the whole pocket was put together. Fortunately the Swiss National Museum in Zurich has a single panel illustrating this (pl. III).³ Black taffeta laid over linen is embroidered with polychrome silk. On the right half the outlines of the design in white ink are clearly to be seen, as the embroideress had not filled in all the outlines. Again she used the same



IV. Wall-pocket, Swiss, 18th century, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

V. Wall-pocket, Swiss, 1712, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

print for Hope, the elegant lady of the 1690's, holding the anchor and pointing at the anemone with the curled petals. Red and red and white carnations as well as the roses seen from the back are here again.

The wall-pockets described above are not dated, but we think that they were embroidered during the first half of the 18th century, more precisely around 1710-1730. The Rätisches Museum at Coire (Chur), the main town of the Grisons, has among its collections several interesting wall-pockets, although they are not as beautiful as those in Philadelphia and Zurich. One example in black wool has flowers in appliqué instead of silk embroidery. Another with roses, tulips and carnations is dated as late as 1774. Another comb-pocket, now in the Swiss National Museum, must have been embroidered around these years (pl. IV).⁴ It is the simpler type with only three pockets, but again of black taffeta bound with red silk ribbon and covered all over with polychrome silk embroidery. The flowers on all panels are bright and decorative but not at all naturalistic. Besides the carnations, hardly any of the flowers can be identified. The symmetrically arranged bouquet in the center has been replaced by slender scrolling branches, symmetrically spaced flowers of various kinds set among them. Several little birds are to be seen, and in the top panel, an amusingly proportioned woman with a flower in each hand shows nothing of the elegance of those fashionable ladies we have seen before. At the bottom of the second pocket the embroideress has signed her work by embroidering her initials *B Z* in silver thread. This is very rare and has not been found on other pockets so far.

There is another pocket in the Swiss National Museum consisting of three panels embroidered with polychrome silk originally on white taffeta. This has worn off, so that the white lining shows—not too bad a contrast with the embroidery (pl. V).⁵ The trimming is made of silver lace set on a now completely faded silk ribbon, once of a bright pinkish red. The reverse is a plain pink cotton. The composition of the panels is the usual one we have seen before. Again the middle is clearly marked, in the bottom panel by a vase of flowers and in the middle panel by some sort of a bouquet tied with a large ribbon bow. The flowers too we have met before: carnations, tulips, roses and rosebuds, daffodils, forget-me-nots and pansies, whilst the pomegranates on panel 2 are new to us. At the bottom a rather well-drawn little vase gathers the different flowers together within its narrow mouth. The decoration of the vase bespeaks the humorous imagination of the embroideress, for she gave it a human face which even sticks out its tongue! The top panel again contains a single female figure amidst all sorts of flowers. Now it is not



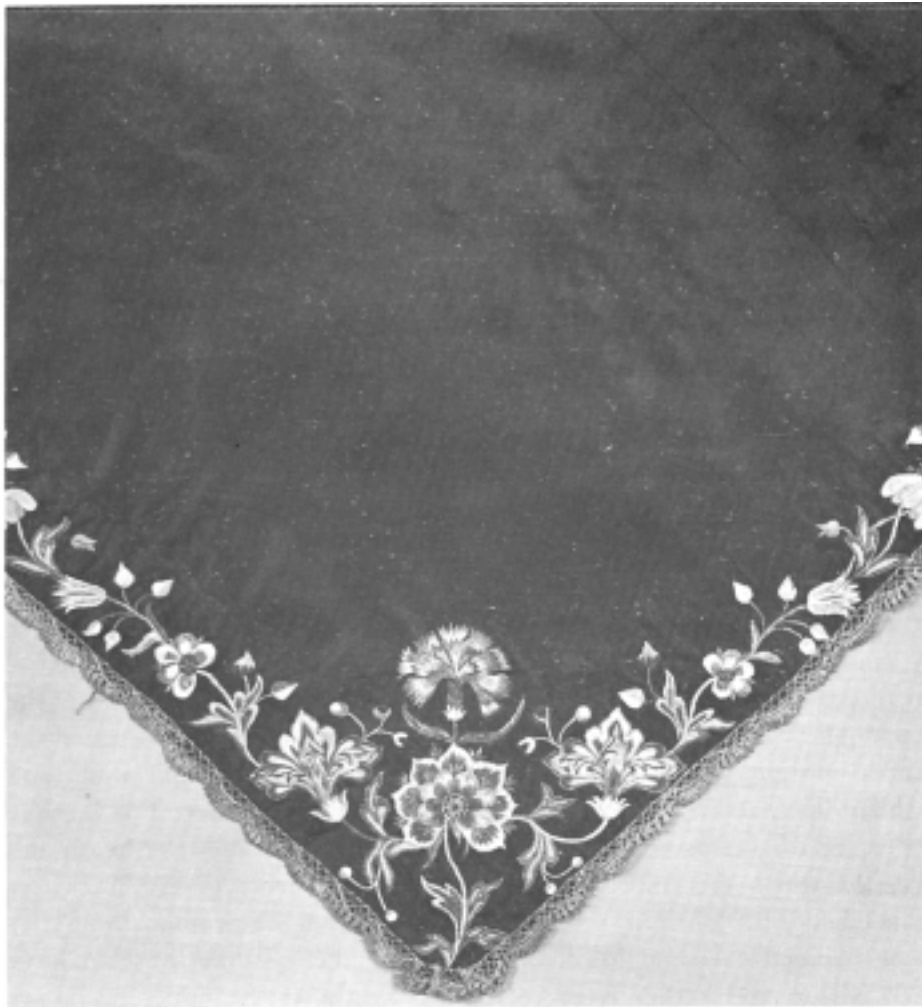
VI. Stomacher, Swiss, 18th century, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

the allegorical figure of Hope, but Justice holding sword and balance. Her dress is doubtless influenced by the French fashion. Over her a shining sun and a ribbon of clouds mark landscape and sky.

Very important is the panel below this with the coat-of-arms of husband and wife who had this pocket in their household. Probably it was made for a special occasion. Next to the coat-of-arms are their initials. *B K* refers to Bernhard Koehl, a very important citizen of Coire (Chur), who was burgomaster six times from 1690 onwards. His wife's surname was Reydt, the initials of her Christian name *A C* probably stand for Anna Catherina. Her family too was very active in politics. Male members of the Reydt family had also been burgomasters of Coire (Chur). As the pocket is dated 1712, it cannot have been made as a wedding present. More likely it may have commemorated a wedding anniversary. Comparing this pocket with those discussed earlier in the article, we find many details corresponding in technique, composition and style of embroidery. Bernhard Koehl's pocket with its coat-of-arms definitely related to the town of Coire (Chur) illustrates the slight difference between wall-pockets of Coire and those of the Engadine valley, which always had to have a black taffeta ground, whilst others made outside that district were free in the choice of the ground material.

The typical technique of embroidering in the Engadine valley, which we described above is used not only on wall-pockets but also on objects of feminine costume from that neighborhood. There are wonderful bodices of black velvet or wool embroidered all over with the different flowers we have seen before. Of course there are always carnations. This flower is still today the typical flower of the Engadine. We see it growing in small-size gardens and spots well protected against the blowing wind. Looking up at the windows behind the beautiful wrought iron lattices, we often see bunches of carnations pouring out into the sun. In connection with the bodices come loose sleeves, embroidered cuffs, little caps and leather gloves. The gloves are made from lambskin with the fur inside. The outside is painted dark brown or black and embroidered with silver thread. The cut of the bodice has a trilobed ending at the back, unlike all other bodices in Switzerland.

A stomacher in the Swiss National Museum (pl. VI) is a real beauty.⁶ The triangular panel is embroidered with polychrome silks in long and short stitch (*streech-stitch*) on black silk tabby. Looking more carefully at this taffeta ground, we see that the embroideress did not take plain black silk, but probably being a good housewife and not wanting to waste anything, she took a bit of black silk with some white brocaded flowers on it. Very cleverly she succeeded in covering these by embroidering over them or by including them in the embroidered flower arrangement. Three of them can be seen clearly, whilst the fourth shows only in part, being nearly covered by the left wing of the central motive. Another one appears at the top of the right wing, and a third down at the left near the bottom of the stomacher. The lacelike character of this brocaded flower differs from the somewhat heavy impression which the embroidered flowers and branches give. The whole stomacher is very bright in colour with much red. The composition tries to be symmetrical. The flowers are more ornamental than those we have seen before and rather hard to identify; only at the upper seam are pansies and carnations recognizable. The reverse of the stomacher is lined with unbleached raw linen. An ingenious system of wooden sticks gives shape and stiffness. We have found among all our bodices and stomachers from the Swiss mountain valleys that, instead of whalebone, wood has always been used. Of course whalebone was hard to get and far too expensive, so that skilful hands copied the whalebone stays in wood, a material which was cheap and near at hand.



VII. Scarf, Swiss, 18th century, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

A final accessory of the Engadine costume is a triangular kerchief (pl. VII),⁷—again of black taffeta with two borders embroidered with polychrome silks. The embroideress used the same flowers here as on the wall-pockets, with the red and white carnations again in an important place in the center. It is interesting to note that many gold threads are used in the kerchiefs. One does not actually notice them, but they form the outlines of several flowers as well as their hearts, and sometimes they fill small leaves. Among these black taffeta kerchiefs, we meet now and then with gauzy ones in bright colours with the same polychrome embroidered flower edges. Although the ground material is most delicate, many more silver and gold threads were used on these than on the black kerchiefs.

As a whole, the costume of the women and young girls of the Engadine is marvelously colourful. The kerchiefs contrast beautifully with the bright red woolen dress, the white linen collar and the tiny black velvet cap. The young men wear top hats with black or red coats. It is a brilliant scene on feast days and wedding days when these costumes are worn with their radiant red and many multicolored embroidered accessories in the white snow landscape under a deep blue sky in the sparkling sunlight. Folklore in general and the national dress with its accompanying embroidery develop a very special character in the Engadine.

NOTES

1. The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club, Volume 49, 1965-1966, p. 35, plate 18.
2. LM 7639, 76 x 31 cm
3. LM 7642, 11 x 32 cm
4. LM 7640, 65 x 29 cm
5. LM 4463, 70 x 31 cm
6. LM 12724, 28 x 23 cm
7. LM 7622, 133 x 85 x 85 cm

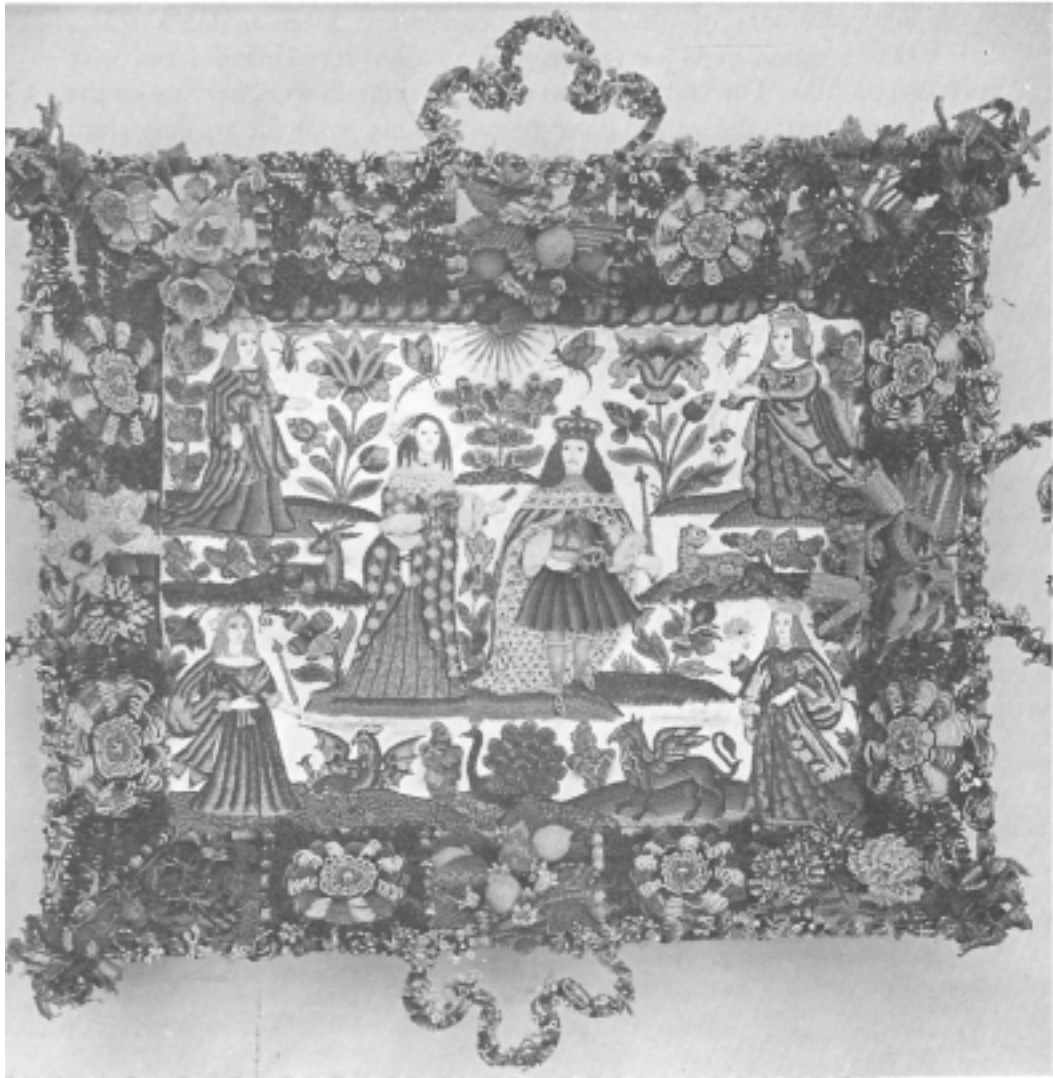


PLATE I

Beadwork basket: king and queen with attendants. Beadwork, some parts in relief (stumpwork), other parts worked on wire. English, third quarter of the XVII century. Gift of Mrs. Thomas J. Watson, 1939 (Jeannete K. Watson), The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 7" x 31½" x 27"

BEADS AND BUGLES

By JOAN EDWARDS

THE bright, shining little beads used for embroidery are made by the simple process of passing long thin canes (Italian *canna*) or hollow rods of glass through a chopping machine. Colour is sometimes added to the molten glass before the canes are drawn or else the beads are dyed, enamelled or colour-lined after manufacture. The machine can be adjusted to produce either small, round, seed-like beads which are known in the trade as *rocaille* (French *rococo* and *rocaille*) or long, cylindrical, tube-shaped beads called bugles (etymology unknown). Unlike most of the other materials used for embroidery, beads are virtually indestructible; the fabric to which they are attached wears and disintegrates, the thread frays and vanishes, but the beads survive burial in the ground for long periods of time, immersion in water, or constant exposures to extremes of heat and cold. It is interesting to note, therefore, that although beads and bugles have been used together on dress and on embroideries for many centuries, the words themselves do not appear together in literature until the mid-nineteenth century, when, in 1854 Godey introduced the readers of his *Lady's Book* to what he described as "The New Bead and Bugle Work . . . a graceful and pretty employment for the fingers which anyone with ordinary taste will have no difficulty in doing." The articles appeared also in London in *The Elegant Arts for Ladies Series* and consisted of instructions for arranging both round and cylindrical beads in rather uninspired border patterns for use on dresses and outdoor garments, and also for twisting them together on wires into "sprays and flowers for the decoration of ball dresses or for wearing in the hair."¹ The idea was, however, hardly a novelty and there is ample evidence on the surviving beaded baskets of the Stuart period alone (pl. I), to prove that beads and bugles had been used for wire constructions two hundred years before this time. In 1579, however, Spenser seems to be describing the use of bugles *without beads* for some sort of raised embroidery when he wrote

I wonne her with a gyrdle of gelt
Emboſt with buegle about the belt;²

and the household accounts and inventories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries record the existence of clothing which has been trimmed with bugles, pipes, graines, oes, spangles and pearls, but not with beads.

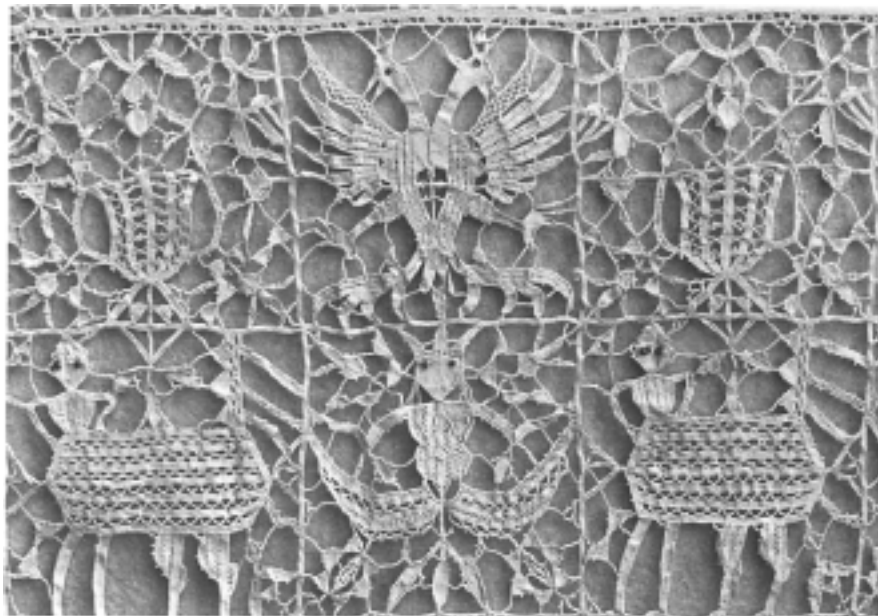


PLATE II

Cover: cut work and punto in aria; black bead-eyed figures. Spanish or Italian, ca. 1600. Gift of Mrs. Edward Luckmeyer, 1908, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 35" x 21½"

Documents preserved in the library of the Custom House in London show that between 1696 and 1776 beads and bugles were regarded by the customs officers as two quite distinct commodities which they listed separately in their immaculately kept records of imports and exports, as well as in their rate books or tables on which the rate of duty to be charged on 'goods of foreign merchandise' was calculated. Beads, we discover from this source, were made from a variety of materials such as wood, bone, jasper, jet, amber, coral, crystal, and so forth, each of which was valued differently in the rate books; and also they were imported by the gross or thousand, the implication being that they were large enough to be counted easily. Bugles, on the contrary, were imported by the pound, and without exception, the material from which they were made is not recorded; it was presumably, therefore, always the same. They were, however, classified under three different headings—Great Bugles, Small Bugles and Lace Bugle—and each of these attracted a different rate of duty. From this we may perhaps understand that though the duty on bugles was calculated on quantity, the duty on beads depended on the value of the material from which they were made.

The word bead is peculiar to the English language and comes from the Anglo-Saxon *bede*, to pray. It is unknown in, for example, France where a bead is called *perle* or *perle de verre*; in Germany where *glas-*

perle is used; in Italy where it becomes *perla*, and so on. Clearly, if commercial chaos was to be avoided, a trade name such as *rocaille* was essential. It is easy also to see how in English the meaning of the word *bede* came to be extended from the prayers themselves to the small, round balls "threaded for convenience of a string"³ on which the prayers were counted, thus agreeing with Dr. Johnson's assertion in his dictionary of 1775 that beads were "used by the Romanists to number prayers." Prayer beads were necessarily large enough to be counted, they were also made from a wide variety of differently valued materials, and so it may well be that the majority of beads listed in the import figures were intended for sale by the paternostriers or rosary-makers who, from the earliest times, had plied their trade in the vicinity of the great medieval cathedrals and churches, and had, therefore, no connection whatever with bead embroidery or beadwork.

References to the export of beads are extremely rare, but bugles—especially Great Bugles—were imported and exported in very large quantities indeed through London and the other coastal ports, referred to in the records as "Out-Ports." They came from Venice, Italy, Holland, and Germany and were despatched to Africa, to the Canaries, to the English Colonies in North America, and to the Sugar Plantations of the West Indies. That they were not used in England but were, at the same time, of immense commercial importance is shown in a Parliamentary Act of 1765⁴ the purpose of which was to facilitate the movement from one port to another, of goods imported from abroad but not intended for home consumption, to suit the convenience of the merchants and the sailing of their ships. The merchandise referred to included "such Coarse Printed Callicoes and other goods of the Product and Manufacture of the East Indies, or other places beyond the Cape of Good Hope, as are prohibited to be used or worn in Great Britain . . . and for encouraging the Importation of Bugles into this Kingdom, for the better Supply of the Export Trade thereof . . ." In search for a possible origin for the word "bugle" the idea has been put forward, apparently because of this reference to 'callicoe,' that it may have been some kind of fabric, but as it does not appear in the carefully itemized lists of materials from silks to hessians which were kept by the customs officers, the suggestion cannot be supported. One might more justifiably express the opinion that bugles were actually trade beads, and that the term itself, like *rocaille*, was originally a technical or trade name. If

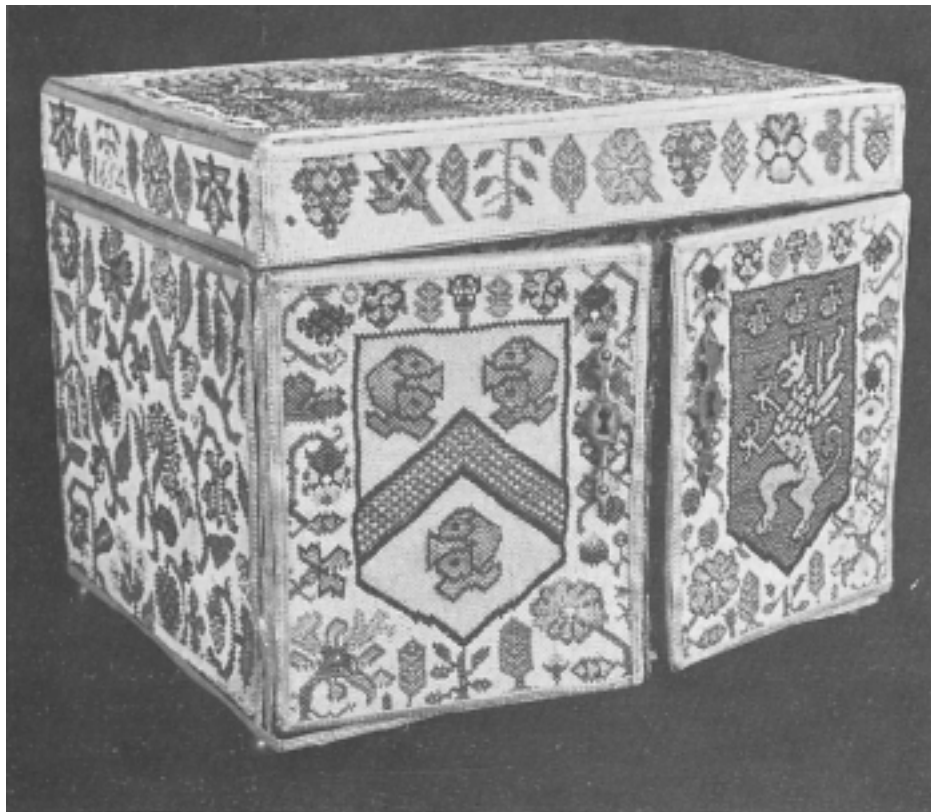


PLATE III

Beadwork casket: arms of Basnet and Dand families on doors, dated 1654 on side of cover. English, Coventry. Gift of Mrs. S. Suydam Cutting, The Cooper Union Museum. 9" x 11" x 8½"

this is so, it means also that bugles were not always exclusively long and tube-shaped as in modern use of the word but were originally of many different shapes and sizes.

The largest of the trade beads, presumably the Great Bugles, were extremely handsome; each was individually made by hand. The method involved is illustrated in an eighteenth-century manuscript in the Correr Library in Venice which shows a *perlina*, the name by which the makers of *conterie* or trade beads were known, seated at her work bench melting what appears to be a short rod of solid glass in a flame which she is controlling by means of a pair of bellows. The beads she has already formed have been placed in a dish beside her; they are not small and are few in number. There is also a drawing of another Venetian craftsman, a *margaritaro*, who is shown chopping up a bundle of long thin glass rods into very small beads which fall in a cascade into a basket on the floor; it would be very difficult to count them. The method is identical with that used today in the manufacture of embroidery beads; by it, long or round beads are produced as required.

Florio in his dictionary *Queen Anna's World of Words* (1598) defines *margaritaro* as "one that pierceth or boreth pearls; a maker of bugles"—but apparently not very big ones because of their association with pearls, and Dr. Johnson, who defines bugle as "a shining bead of black glass," illustrates this with a quotation from one of the Shakespearean sonnets:

'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, or your cheek of cream,
That can entame my spirits to your worship.'

It seems unlikely that in this context he is thinking of "bugle" as anything except round, although he does not specifically say this; and he may also have been describing the bugle made by the *margaritaro*, although this was not necessarily always black.

Minute black glass beads were, however, used by Italian lacemakers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for marking the eyes of the figures, insects, animals, and birds which were often included in their patterns for *punto in aria* (pl. II); but although Dr. Johnson would have called these bugles, and the customs officers might have assessed them for duty as Lace Bugle, they were totally dissimilar from the beads used for the same purpose by Tudor and Stuart embroiderers, as



PLATE IV

Pin cushion: blue cotton with applied decoration of glass beads and bugles. English (?), mid-XIX century. Anonymous Gift, 1949, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 9½" x 7" x 3¾"

well as for their heavily beaded baskets, mirror frames, pictures and ornaments (pl. III). These were comparatively coarse, garishly coloured, and almost exactly the same as the smaller of the trade beads which were used with such effect by Africans and North American Indians and Pacific islanders for both embroidery and beadwork. Possibly the customs officers knew them as Small Bugle; they were certainly round as well as long.

It was, of course, inevitable that confusion between beads and bugles would ultimately occur, especially as the value and purpose of trade beads declined. In 1810 Thomas Mortimer in his *Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* is clearly on uneasy ground and although he defines bugles as "small glass beads of which large quantities are exported to Africa and there bartered on the Coast for slaves, ivory, gums, etc." he plainly thinks of them primarily as "beads." But beads he tells us are "coloured with manganese," and manganese added to molten glass turns it black; his beads are thus Dr. Johnson's bugles.

The muddle being by now complete, it is no wonder that the enterprising Godey felt able to introduce his readers to what he took to be a new and interesting craft, called "Bead and Bugle Work" (pl. IV).

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2. Spenser, E. *Shepherds Kalendar*, February 1. 66.
3. *Oxford English Dictionary*.
4. Parliament beginning 19th May, 1761 to 17th December, 1765.

THE CONSTANT UNICORN

By LOIS CLARKE

THE unicorn is the doubtful beast that rarely appears to mankind, being the emblem of perfect good. In China he showed himself at the time of Confucius' birth, but not since, because people have become too degenerate. The Chinese call him the *ch'i-lin*, and he is the fourth member in their category of supernatural, or intellectual beasts. In the Bible he is mentioned clearly seven times as having great strength, moral as well as physical, though centuries later he was considered a small animal, surprisingly fierce and swift, gentle only with a maiden. This led to the unicorn becoming in Christian legend the symbol of purity.

Through these many centuries, in all forms of art, he has been depicted in many ways. He fascinates all and interests always the designer and the craftsman. To quote Rilke, "Because they loved it, a pure creature happened."

Among the oldest representations of the unicorn is the decoration on a gold vase found south of the Caspian Sea, dating from the first millennium B.C. Another is a painting on papyrus in the British Museum depicting the unicorn playing a game of draughts with a lion. The world of the arts is rich with unicorns, but here let us look at some textiles.

From the Chinese collections in the Metropolitan Museum two unicorn-like animals of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) are reproduced. One, probably a part of a border, is tapestry woven with silk and metal thread (*k'o-ssu*) (pl. I). The beast is tan with markings in dark blue, European in shape, but his single horn is set further back on his head and looks like an inverted question mark. The ground is cream colour and pale green, with blues and brown. The second, a rank badge with the *hsieh ch'ai*, the symbol of the censor, is embroidered on blue satin (pl. II). The body of this mythical creature is couched in gold thread; his crest, tail and teeth are worked in satin stitch with the five sacred colours—black, white, red, green, and yellow. Again the horn is set at a "foreign" angle to the western.

In the medieval Muslim art world the unicorn existed, and there are representations of this fantastic animal, very fantastic indeed. The ani-

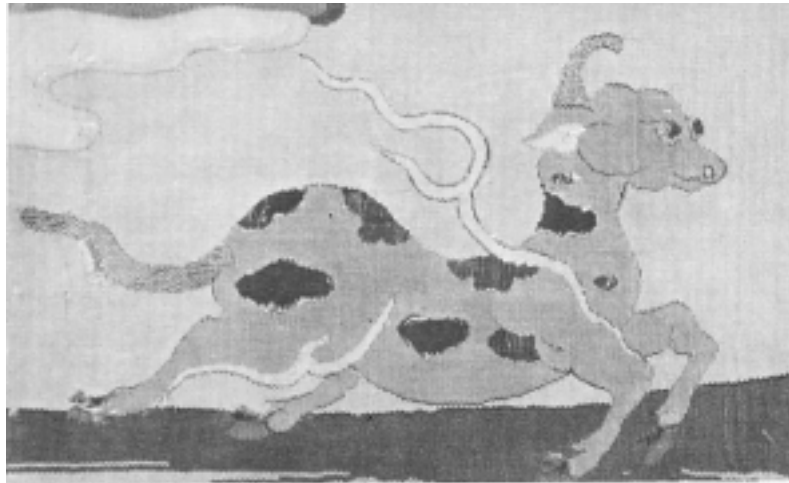


PLATE I

Top—Piece of border: tapestry woven (*k'o ssu*) in silk and metal thread. Chinese, Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Rogers Fund, 1932, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. $9\frac{1}{8}''$ x $12''$.

PLATE II

Bottom—Rank square: mythical beast, probably a *Hsieh ch'ai*, the emblem worn by a censor. Silk embroidered in silk and gold thread. Chinese, Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Fletcher Fund, 1936, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. $14\frac{1}{4}''$ x $15''$.

mal is single-horned, but sometimes has wings, often a clumsy body similar to the rhinosceros. In Mr. Richard Ettinghausen's study of the unicorn in Muslim iconography, two carpets are reproduced, a Mughal carpet in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., another in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, England. In both these carpets, the *karkadann*, as it is called in Islam, is an awkward beast not at all according to the western tradition. This animal is fierce and masterful, a warrior and fighter.

European examples are in contrast. A Scottish embroidered bed valance of the seventeenth century (pl. III) shows the unicorn at rest. This valance is worked in cross stitch on linen. It is from Judge Untermyer's collection and is now in the Metropolitan Museum.

A brocaded piece of satin from Portugal (pl. IV), woven in the eighteenth century with silk and metal thread, has a unicorn sitting at the feet of Apollo with a fine halo, surrounded by trees, flowers, birds and strange animals, even in Ethiopian having a boxing match with a lion.

Another brocaded silk in the Metropolitan Museum is Italian of the eighteenth century. It is of blue satin brocaded in silver. This unicorn is very lively and again surrounded by animals. Indeed, anyone going into the Metropolitan Museum can meet so many unicorns that he can say, as did Sebastian in *The Tempest*, "Now I will believe that there are Unicorns."

Plate V shows a sixteenth-century filet border with unicorns on either side of a fountain, perhaps guarding the water their horns have purified. According to Miss Edith Standen, this design appears in Vinciolo's pattern book, *Les Singuliers et Nouveaux Pourtraicts*, published in Paris in 1587.

In the Brooklyn Museum is a seventeenth-century English stump-work picture with a unicorn—perhaps an exception to prove the rule of his colouring, for this one is dark tan with a light-coloured mane.

Embroideries of Swiss work of the sixteenth century in the Schweizerisches Landesmuseum at Zurich show a unicorn in conventional European occupations, being hunted, chased, and with a maiden. The one shown in plate VI is silk embroidery on linen and measures 60 x 108 centimeters.

In the same museum are two early Swiss tapestries, one made in 1480, from Lachen. The scene shows the Virgin Mary in the "enclosed

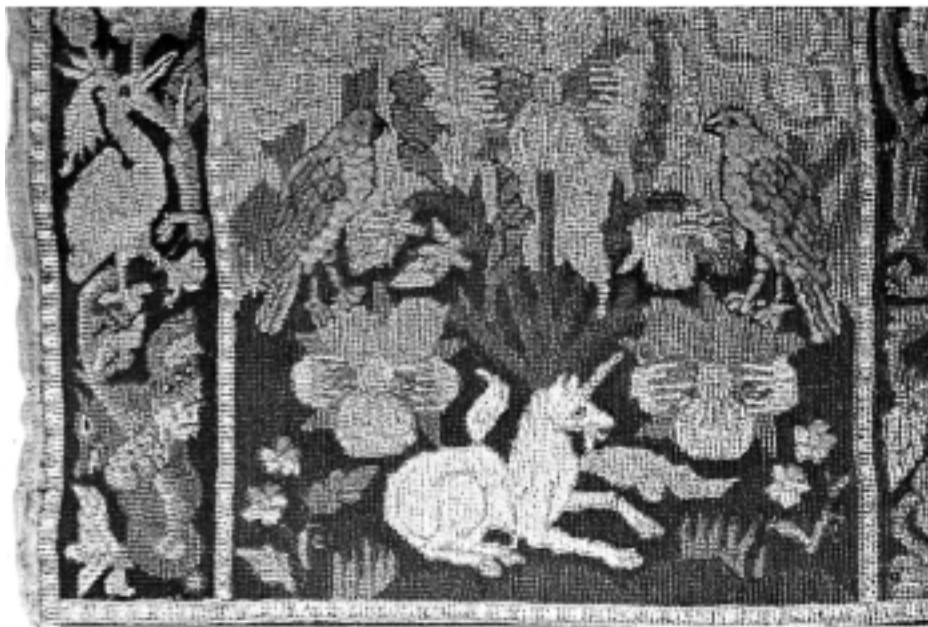


PLATE III

Top—Detail of valance: unicorn, embroidered in wool and linen. Scottish, from Loudoun Castle, Galstron, Ayrshire, XVII century. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1954, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 16" x 10'2".

PLATE IV

Bottom—Length of silk with mythological subjects brocaded in silk and silver thread. Portuguese(?), early XVIII century. Rogers Fund, 1952, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 33" x 14".

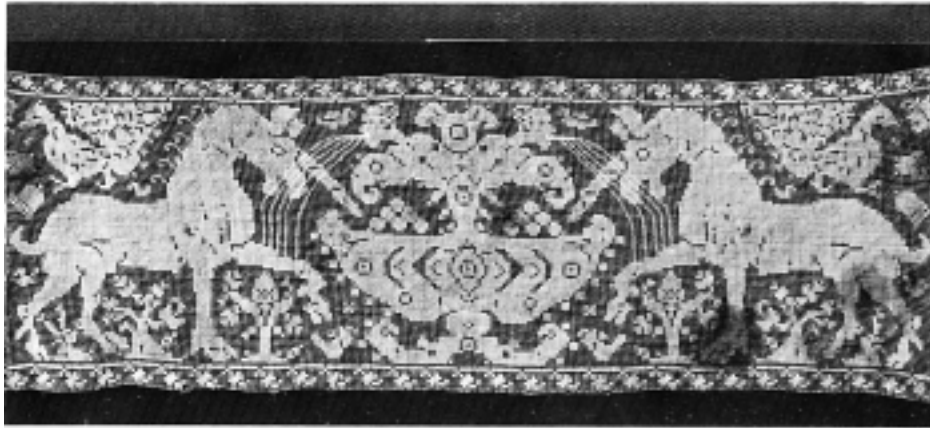


PLATE V

Top—Border: two unicorns at fountain. Filet worked in *punto a tela*. French, early XVI century. Anonymous gift, 1879, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 13½" x 31".

PLATE VI

Bottom—Panel: unicorn and maiden. Linen embroidered with silk. Swiss, XVI century. Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zürich. 23½" x 42½".



PLATE VII

Tapestry: The Virgin Mary with unicorn. Swiss, 1480. Heiligen-Kreuz-Kapelle, Lachen.

garden", the *Hortus Conclusus* (pl. VII), holding a unicorn by his horn while a youth stabs him in the breast. In the other tapestry, a small unicorn sits at a maiden's feet on the folds of her red gown, while three huntsmen with their dogs watch. Also in Zurich is an embroidered wall-hanging of a later date showing Mary in the *Hortus Conclusus* again with the unicorn being stabbed, here by Adam. This work is signed "Doratea Heidegger." According to record, her age was sixteen when in 1634 she embroidered this panel which measures 56 x 88 centimeters. There is much activity reproduced in this hanging, with many tales and legends, all clearly inscribed and explained. It is worked in many shades of wool, silk and metal threads on linen, in what in German is called *klosterstich*.

Two similar wall-hangings of woven materials are in the National Museum at Munich. They show subjects very popular during the Middle Ages in Europe—hunts and the eventual capture of the unicorn. This theme is shown in great detail and finely woven in the wonderful and familiar series of seven tapestries at The Cloisters in New York. The late James Rorimer wrote of these: "The profusion of details and the harmonious colours are masterfully arranged. The distribution of the reds, yellows, blues and orange, together with the emphasis on the white unicorn, is as dramatic as it is pleasant."

One of the rare medieval occasions where the unicorn plays an important role without being hunted is in the set of six tapestries in the Cluny Museum at Paris, known as *La Dame à la Licorne*. These are quiet, peaceful and static in comparison with the active hunting scenes. Five of these panels represent the senses, and the sixth, perhaps summing up the series, shows the unicorn with the lion, one on either side, holding open the pavilion-door behind the lady. Over the door of the pavilion is inscribed *A mon Seul Désire*. In each one the unicorn is important as a symbol as well as being a most handsome creature.

A reflection of today's continuing interest in the subject is a tapestry in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Countryman, woven at Aubusson from a cartoon by Mark Adams, an American. This unicorn is couchant, but alert, ready to spring if surprised, and following tradition, has flowers at his feet, suggesting the millefleurs of the sixteenth century.





BOOK NOTES

Approximately 400 miles northwest of the tip of Western Australia lies a cluster of islands bearing such exotic names as Sumba, Rotti, Timor. Neighbors of the more familiar islands of Java and Bali, these three specks of land are part of a small island group which marks the southern boundary of that great complex of insular territory known as the Malay Archipelago.

Irmgard Müller's doctoral dissertation entitled *Die primären Textiltechniken auf Sumba, Rote und Timor (The primary Textile Techniques of Sumba, Rotti and Timor)* (University of Basel, 1967) is a study of part of a textile collection gathered on these three Indonesian islands by Alfred Bühler between 1935 and 1948 for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Basel. More specifically it concerns those objects in the Bühler collection in which the techniques of looping, knotting, twining and braiding have been used. In essence it is a meticulous catalogue of objects, ranging from simple fish nets and traps to extraordinarily sophisticated ceremonial baskets.

Fully one half of Miss Müller's work is devoted to an enumeration of over 400 objects—some of great beauty, many of routine interest only. It must be said that this part of her dissertation is the least interesting, though she has approached the task of recording a multitude of ethnographic items with some originality. Cross-sectional profiles of artifacts accompany the description, provenance and measurements of most objects which Miss Müller includes in her study. This method of delineating material is commonly used by archeologists in studies of pottery. Miss Müller is an innovator in applying the archeologist's technique of portraying pottery to non-ceramic material, chiefly basketry. The cross-sectional profile is effectively used by her when she shows us the most complex of some of the extraordinarily structured basketry from East and West Sumba as well as Timor. It seems that the baroque, architectural quality of this basket-work lends itself especially well to profile studies, and the reader is left with a clear meaningful impression of this particular group of objects. Occasional three-dimensional surface details added to some of these profile pictures make visualization of individual pieces still clearer.

Unfortunately when simple, less complex forms are delineated by the profile method, this system of portraying objects is not only ineffective but ludicrous on

occasion too. Thus, a hat from the island of Rotti made of palm fronds and bamboo and patterned along European lines is shown in the following manner  while a bracelet also fashioned of palm fronds is indicated as an elongated rectangle . In the end one wonders whether some well chosen photographs might not have been more effective in illustrating such objects than the hundreds of cross sectional profiles used in the text, good though some of them are.

Much space in *Die primären Textiltechniken auf Sumba, Rote und Timor* has been devoted to the discussion and definition of looping, knotting, twining and braiding in relation to the catalogued material. In this context it is rather puzzling to note that Miss Müller feels that simple looping on a rigid foundation is a precursor to braiding, for the term she uses to describe this looping technique is “Wulsthalbflechten” or semi-braiding around a roll. Why Miss Müller considers this type of looping related to braiding remains a mystery for she never clarifies the relationship between the two techniques. Equally enigmatic is the fact that single and double element interlacing have been classified by the author as types of braiding. One supposes that she has included these simple forms of interlacing under the heading of braiding because they look like true braiding. The fact is however that braiding involves not one or two, but at least three elements as most dictionaries will indicate. For the most part, however, Miss Müller’s analytical material is logically presented and her discussions supplemented with excellent diagrams.

There are just enough good three-dimensional drawings and cross-sectional profiles to make *Die primären Textiltechniken auf Sumba, Rote und Timor* worth leafing through for people with more than a passing interest in basketry. As one turns the pages of this book one is impressed with a devilishly simple yet effective chicken trap, a charming necklace of star shaped pendants, containers that look like Buddhist temples, tiny animals, all of them produced from one or more palm fronds. Here one sees the art of basketry at its height. But, in spite of some good illustrative material, Miss Müller’s dissertation is really a technical manual for museum curators and dedicated students interested in Indonesian basketry, who do not mind tackling the elaborate German that still seems to be in favor among certain teutonic scholars.

Malcolm Delacorte

In *STUDIES IN INDO-EUROPEAN TEXTILE HISTORY* by John Irwin and P. R. Schwartz (Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, India, 1966), their essays on Indian textiles first appearing in the *JOURNAL OF INDIAN TEXTILE HISTORY* over several years are republished together, brought up to date and with maps and color-plates of samples from the Beaulieu manuscript.

Mr. Irwin, the Keeper of the Indian Section of the Victorian and Albert Museum in London, covers the textile trade between India and various parts of the world in Part I, from pages 8 to 74. Here he establishes, as far as possible from records and surviving pieces, the textile types for western India, south India and northeast India and discusses foreign influences on them. He includes a fascinating glossary of Indian textile names and a fine bibliography.

In Part II, from pages 75 to 121, P. R. Schwartz, the vice-president of the Société Industrielle de Mulhouse and administrator and secretary of the society's Museum of Printed Fabrics, reproduces and discusses several famous French documents on the elaborate Indian methods of cotton-painting and dyeing of such intense interest to European scholars and textile-printers. The Beaulieu manuscript is a description of the process in 1734 by de Beaulieu, a ship's captain in Pondicherry who had a piece of cotton painted for this purpose before his eyes and had a sample cut off at each stage of the process. The letters of Father Coeurdoux, a Jesuit priest in Pondicherry, were written in 1742 and 1747 for collections of "lettres édifiantes et curieuses" put out by his order. An anonymous report exists from 1752. Mentioned in the Authors' Addendum at the beginning of *STUDIES IN INDO-EUROPEAN TEXTILE HISTORY* is a manuscript-volume of 333 pages, just discovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale, written between 1678 and 1680 and to be known as the Roques Manuscript after the name of the author, an agent of the Compagnie des Indes in western India. Messrs. Irwin and Schwartz plan to publish this detailed account of trade and manufacture addressed to the Company's chief agent at Surat, with a discussion of its importance, as soon as possible in the *JOURNAL OF INDIAN TEXTILE HISTORY*. They note already that it refutes the doubts about woodblock-printing expressed on pages 119-120 of their present book.

This book is absorbing reading for the layman and an essential for all textile libraries.

Jean Mailey



CLUB NOTES

The first Needle and Bobbin Club event of the new year was held at the Lotus Club on January 18th. Four generous hostesses—Mrs. A. Victor Barnes, Mrs. Chauncey J. Hamlin, Mrs. Gerardus P. Herrick, and Mrs. Douglas M. Moffat—welcomed members to an illustrated talk on “Ruggs for the Bedsted” by Mr. William Warren, the director of the Stowe-Day Foundation in Hartford. A delicious tea was served after the lecture. Both were greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

* * * * *

A handful of intrepid members braved the great blizzard on February 7th to hear Mrs. Cecile Dreesmann, distinguished embroideress and lecturer from Amsterdam, talk on “Embroidery in the Netherlands” at the Lotus Club. She included in her illustrations many examples of her own embroidery in a personal style enriched with precious and semi-precious stones. Mrs. E. Farrar Bateson, Mrs. Kenneth Boardman, Mrs. Wells Browning, and Mrs. Theodore Fiske Savage were the brave hostesses, who offered a sustaining tea eagerly welcomed by the other brave souls who had made their way through the drifts.

* * * * *

The Annual Meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club was held on March 29th at the home of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York. Mrs. Robert McC. Marsh, Mrs. Charles B. Martin, Mrs. J. Harper Skillen, and Mrs. Malcolm E. Smith were the hostesses for this gracious and important yearly event. Miss Olga D. Dahlgren gave a witty and informative talk on “Linens and Other Appurtenances of the Table,” which everyone enjoyed. The tea appropriately following this was beautifully appointed and especially festive.

An interesting change of pace was provided by Mr. William Justema, New York designer and author, on April 27th when he spoke to members of the Needle and Bobbin Club on "Flowers in Contemporary Textile Design." He illustrated his lecture with his own drawings and with fabric samples from contemporary fabric houses, which members were eager to examine after the lecture. Miss Mary Bangs, Mrs. William Binnian, Miss V. Isabelle Miller, and Miss Mary Alice Smith welcomed members to the New York Academy on this happy occasion and gave them a charming tea.

* * * * *

The Club made its yearly spring safari northwards this year on May 10th for an afternoon at the Cloisters. A stop on the way at Butler Hall provided magnificent views of the city under sunny skies and an ample and appetizing luncheon. Mr. Thomas Miller, in charge of the Cloisters, welcomed Needle and Bobbin members to his domain and guided them on a fascinating tour of his treasures and of the beautiful cloister gardens full of spring flowers. Tea in an inner sanctum concluded this delightful expedition.

* * * * *

A fall safari suggested by Mrs. Barnes as a most welcome addition to the usual Club schedule is vividly described by Miss Hannah McAllister :

The Needle and Bobbin Club trip to Sharon to see Mr. Allen Owens' art collection was a great success. Promptly at 10 o'clock on the morning of October 10th the bus left Sixty-fifth Street with twenty-one members aboard. Several others joined us at lunch time. The day was hazy, but the only shower was considerate enough to come while we were having our lunch at the Altamont Inn in Millbrook, New York. The autumn foliage was lovely as we drove up the woody roads, and from the inn, which is on quite a hill, we had a good view of the country-side. As we had our drinks on the broad terrace we could look down into the garden, and could see the handsome, brightly colored monthly roses over the wall. After a delicious lunch we drove on to Sharon. Many of us said we would like to spend several days at the inn instead of a few hours.

Mr. Owens' large house proved to be full of art treasures from many countries. It is built of steel and concrete, though disguised by bricks and vines, so that its contents are thoroughly protected from fire. It would require an extensive catalogue to enumerate the hundreds of fine objects on exhibition, in the halls and family rooms on shelves, tables and walls, and in the special museum room. This room is full of wall- and table-cases and shelves, where objects of art are skillfully and

carefully arranged and lighted. Many are hung on the walls, placed on shelves, or on the floor when they are of large size. Bookcases contain authoritative books on all kinds of art from various places.

Many objects in the collection are ancient Egyptian, such as amulets of all sizes and materials, scarabs, jewelry, shawabti figures and other pieces of pottery, Coptic textiles, statuettes and parts of larger sculptures. One framed piece of papyrus showed a row of animals and birds beautifully drawn in pen and ink. In addition there are Greek and Etruscan vases, Luristan bronzes, Near Eastern pottery and metalwork, fine illuminated Persian Korans and other manuscripts and documents. A glass case in the living-room displays a charming collection of at least two hundred glass and china shoes on its shelves.

Mr. Owens greeted us hospitably at the door on our arrival, gave us a guided tour of the house, answering courteously our many questions, and finally gave us a lively tea party in the dining room, to speed us on our way home. A pleasant occasion to remember.

* * * * *

A return engagement in more favorable weather begged for by Mrs. Dreesmann took place on October 10th at the home of the Junior League of the City of New York. A much larger group of members than in February enjoyed her entertaining illustrated exposition of "Aspects of Fashion History." Mrs. Edith Mulhall Achilles, Mrs. William Seward Allen, Mrs. Fremont A. Chandler, and Mrs. Earl Kress Williams were the kind hostesses who offered a generous tea after the lecture, where everyone exchanged questions, comments, and anecdotes on this ever-popular subject. An exhibition of Mrs. Dreesmann's embroideries was held under the auspices of the Dutch government at the KLM galleries at this time. The Needle and Bobbin Club presented Mrs. Dreesmann with a brass needle three feet long as a memento.

* * * * *

An unusually interesting talk on "The Social History of Embroidery" was given to the members of the Needle and Bobbin Club on November 29th by Miss Joan Edwards of London, who is about to teach a course on traditional embroidery and a personal embroidery style at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Mrs. Walter Beinecke, Jr., Mrs. H. Batterson Boger, Mrs. Frederic P. Houston, and Mrs. Alastair B. Martin were hostesses at the Lotus Club for this event, and the members greatly enjoyed the delicious tea.

Mr. and Mrs. Norris Harknesses' festive Christmas cocktail and tea open-house for the Needle and Bobbin Club was crowded with members and their escorts on December 13th, enjoying to the full the spirit of the holidays on this happy occasion made possible by the Harknesses' generous hospitality.

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On December 5th, 6th, and 7th, one of the long-time members of the Needle and Bobbin Club, Mrs. Daryl Parshall, was honored by an exhibition of her embroideries in the gallery of the Bankers Trust Company, under the auspices of The Embroiderers' Guild. The beautiful little leaflet provided by them for all viewers of this impressive show was entitled "Twenty Years of Embroidery."

NOTES ON AUTHORS

Dr. Jenny Schneider is Curator of Textiles at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich.

Miss Joan Edwards of London is a specialist in the history of embroidery and in the art of creating embroideries of personal rather than traditional design. She teaches a course in both these specialties at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Miss Lois Clarke whom we all know as a fellow-member of the Needle and Bobbin Club is the owner of a medieval millefleur tapestry with a unicorn and is herself a skilled weaver of miniature tapestries.

Mr. Malcolm Delacorte is a member of the Textile Room staff at the Metropolitan Museum with a wide experience of primitive materials and other things.

Miss Hannah McAllister is especially able to appreciate Needle and Bobbin Club trips like the one to view Mr. Owens' collection because of her long association with the Near Eastern department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and with the Needle and Bobbin Club.

IN MEMORIAM

The Needle and Bobbin Club cherishes the memory of members who died this year :

Mrs. Charles Martin Clark, one of the earliest members of the Needle and Bobbin Club.

Mrs. Herbert S. Darlington, a long-time member who supported the Club from her lovely home in Santa Barbara, California.

Miss Mary Gibson, curator-emeritus of the Cooper Union Museum, who generously served as volunteer secretary for the Needle and Bobbin Club for many years.

Mrs. Ruth Burchell Ketcham, a member for many years, remembered especially as a charming and generous hostess.

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