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This issue is gratefully dedicated  
to the memory of  
**Lantiane von Fluegge**

# THE BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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## CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| Embroidery on Greek Women's Chemises in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. . . . . | 5    |
| Dr. Linda Welters   |      |
| A Legacy in Lace: Marian Powys' Scrapbooks. . . . .                             | 48   |
| June Burns Bové   |      |
| Notes on Authors . . . . .  | 79   |
| Book Notes . . . . .  | 80   |
| Club Notes. . . . .   | 88   |
| In Memoriam . . . . .   | 90   |
| List of Officers . . . . .  | 91   |

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**EMBROIDERY ON GREEK WOMEN'S CHEMISES IN THE  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**

**By Dr. Linda Welters**

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## EMBROIDERY ON GREEK WOMEN'S CHEMISES IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

### Introduction

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has in its collections twenty-nine embroidered chemises worn by Greek women in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries as part of traditional costumes. This group of chemises is by far the largest collection in the United States and Canada (Welters, 1981, p. 24), and appears to rival better-known British collections (Johnstone, 1972). Many of the chemises are remarkable examples of the embroidery traditions they represent, and a few of them are quite rare. Overall, the collection is geographically diverse and makes a solid foundation upon which to discuss regional variations in Greek embroidery.

It is the intent of this article to illustrate and discuss the embroidery of nineteen chemises from this collection. Information was gathered as part of the author's doctoral dissertation. The research involved close examination of 78 chemises in collections in both the U.S. and Canada. In addition, study was done in numerous museums in Greece.

The chemise is a basic garment worn by peasant women all over the Balkans for many centuries, as late as the twentieth century in some places. In Greek the word for this garment is "poukamiso" which is commonly translated as chemise, or shirt. It can best be described as an underdress as it was the first garment put on. It was always worn with other outer garments but certain parts would be visible, such as hems, sleeves and necklines. These visible parts were embellished with embroidery and sometimes finished with a needle lace edging in patterns traditional to each region. The women would generally have two types of chemises, a simple one for every day, and a more elaborate one for Sundays and festival days. Most of the chemises in the Metropolitan Museum's collection are festival chemises.

The embroidery on these chemises are particularly fine examples of folk art. In addition to embroidering clothing, Greek women worked similar motifs on certain household articles such as towels, cushion covers, bed covers and curtains. These embroideries were made as part of a woman's dowry.

In agrarian societies like pre-20th century Greece, embroidery on costumes and domestic textiles was a vehicle for a community aesthetic, just as woodcarving or metalwork was. The collective need for ornament in peasants' lives took the form of embellishment of functional everyday objects. For us, these objects of folk art are records of the political, cultural, and economic influences on the different regions of Greece.

These influences were many, making Greek embroidery a melting pot of Mediterranean heritage. Greece is located at the edge of Europe and at the threshold to the Near East. Although we do not know precisely when embroidery began, we know that Greeks embroidered in antiquity. The recent excavations at Vergina in Macedonia (350-320 B.C.) brought to light a murex-dyed textile with gold embroidery (Mitten, 1982). Certainly Greek women in the post-ancient world knew of, and perhaps had seen, the elaborate workshop woven silks from Byzantium, and later from Bursa or Venice, and tried to copy them in needle and thread. Byzantine church embroidery and Italian laces must also have been influential. Embroidery on underdresses appears to have been well-established by the 16th century according to Nicolas de Nicolay, who in 1572 illustrated and described embroidered costumes from Greece in an early travelogue (Nicolay, 1572, pp. 68-9).

Historically, Greece was part of the extensive Byzantine empire which lasted until 1453. From Byzantium the Greeks inherited the knowledge of sericulture, a love of elaborate ornamentation on simple forms in dress, and motifs such as double-headed eagles, cockerels, and mythical animals. Certain islands were under Frankish or Venetian rule from the 13th century on, thus introducing Western influence in shapes of dress and style of embroidery.

Perhaps most importantly, there was domination by the Turks from 1453 to 1821, the year of the Greek Revolution. Parts of Greece remained under Turkish rule until 1922 when the last vestiges of the Ottoman Empire collapsed. This affected Greek embroidery not only in the borrowing of motifs such as carnations and tulips, but by unintentionally encouraging the development of highly distinctive local variations of embroidery which lasted until the 19th and 20th century. This was done through the passage of sartorial laws limiting the subordinate Greeks to home-produced cloth, by restricting travel from village to village, and by suppressing independent economic development.

Regional variations on motifs inherited from Byzantium, Venetian Italy, and Turkey developed to such a degree that embroideries are easily identifiable by region, and sometimes the actual village of manufacture can be named. It is interesting to note that in some regions the women readily adapted Turkish or Italian elements into their costumes and embroideries, while in neighboring regions the dress remained more purely Byzantine.

Early collectors of textiles were attracted to Greek embroidery, especially those examples from Aegean islands and mainland Epirus. In the late 19th and 20th centuries, island embroideries were generally thought to be superior to mainland embroideries, perhaps because machine-made textiles had replaced handwoven and hand decorated cloth in the islands before the mainland. There is a substantial amount of descriptive literature on Greek island and Epirote embroidery, much of it written in the early years of the 20th century by the collectors themselves.

Mainland embroidery, with the exception of that of Epirus, has been slighted in most exhibitions and publications in favor of the older, better documented island pieces. Fortunately, the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection contains a substantial number of chemises from mainland Greece (23) compared to only six from the islands. Thus, this article will give a fresh perspective on Greek embroidery by discussing less frequently published mainland chemises.

Mention should be made of the particular collectors who donated Greek chemises to the Metropolitan Museum because their gifts are the backbone of the collection. Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith contributed on two occasions: the first contained an outright gift of two chemises, and a loan of five; the second was a gift of five. We know that the chemises in the second donation, and possibly the first as well, were from the collection of her aunt, Miss Henrietta Brewer of Oakland, California. Miss Brewer studied archeology in Greece and Asia Minor in the early part of the century. Greek textiles from her extensive collection were exhibited at Mills College in 1943 (Mills College Art Gallery, 1943). Irene Lewisohn, after whom the Metropolitan's Costume Institute Library is named, gave six chemises.

#### **Variables**

When studying Greek embroidery, certain overall variables must be kept in mind. These variables include technical and aesthetic factors.

*Fiber content* of both ground fabric and embroidery thread is important, and should be determined by microscopic tests. Ground fabrics were commonly made of cotton, linen, or silk, or mixtures thereof, depending on local availability. Embroidery threads were most often silk, sometimes linen or cotton, and in northern Greece, wool. The appeal of gold and silver to the Greek aesthetic sense is seen in the use of metallic embroidery thread. Hammered metal strips were used as well as the more common gilt threads wrapped around silk cores.

*Yarn type* did not vary much from region to region. Embroidery threads were usually 2-ply yarns. In certain areas, like the Dodecanese Islands, the twist was looser giving a more raised effect to the finished embroidery.

*Motifs* include flowers, animals, human figures and geometric shapes. Flowers and other plant forms are most frequently seen, including tulips, carnations, flower sprays and meanders, flowers in vases, single flower heads, branches and trees. Animal motifs, such as eagles, cockerels, and peacocks, were inherited from earlier Near Eastern textiles. Human figures are rare in Greek embroidery, but appear in certain regional styles, most notably those from Epirus and the island Skyros. Geometric motifs include squares, rhomboids, meanders, and highly stylized flowers.

*Placement of embroidery* on chemises follows the Byzantine tradition of decorating the simple structural framework of the garment. Embroidery is located at



necklines, on the edges of sleeves, in stripes up the sleeves, on seamlines, and around hemlines. Some of the more visually striking chemises have two vertical bands of flowers running up the front near seamlines. Vertical bands such as these were part of clothing since antiquity, such as the clavi on Roman tunics. There is a remarkable diversity in placement of embroidery on the chemises in the Metropolitan's collection.

*Color.* Greek women showed a preference for polychrome embroidery, although in certain areas color palettes were limited to one or two colors. In the Dodecanese Islands, for example, red-green color combinations were traditional. Dyeing of embroidery threads was done with natural dyes until 1900 when German aniline dyes made their way to the Greek village (Papantoniou, 1978, p. 86).

Most of the chemises themselves were white, although not all. The Metropolitan's collection has a number of chemises from Trikeri, Thessaly, where color of the ground fabric was symbolic of a woman's situation in life.

A marked preference for the color red in some proportion is seen. In Roman times, red was the color of brides (Gouel-Badieritakis, 1980, p. 125). The association of red with brides in Greece seems likely since the first time a woman wore her elaborately embroidered chemise was for her engagement or marriage.

*Technique.* Overall, chemise embroideries can be divided into three main categories based on technique. These are (1) counted thread embroidery, (2) drawn threadwork and (3) "grafta" embroidery. In "grafta", meaning written or drawn embroidery, the designs were traced on the fabric first with ink, then embroidered. The technique used had a decided effect on the design. Whereas the counted thread embroideries are geometric and abstract in appearance, the "grafta" work is curvilinear and more representative of nature.

The types of stitches used varied regionally. Each traditional style required its own repertoire of stitches. The simple counted thread designs were often cross-stitched, whereas the complex "grafta" designs used seven or eight different kinds of stitches to complete the design. In this study, embroidery stitches were identified using Thomas' *Dictionary of Embroidery Stitches*.

Greek women often finished their garments with something known as "bibila". This was originally needlelace, worked directly on the hem, sleeve or neck edge. Sometimes applied lace edgings were substituted.

There is some indication in the literature that in certain areas women did not always embroider their chemises themselves, but instead sent them to professional embroideresses (Hatzimichali, 1977, p. 31). Research done by the author in villages of Attica in 1983 revealed that most women knew how to embroider the traditional chemises, but that some wealthier families hired professionals to do the work. These

professionals were other women in the village who took to embroidering for hire in their spare time because they enjoyed doing it, or needed the money.

*Dating.* A.J.B. Wace summed up the problem of dating Greek embroideries by saying "It is impossible to assign, with any degree of certainty, a date to any piece of Greek embroidery, unless it happens to have the date worked on it" (Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1914, p. xxiv). Only a few Cretan skirt borders are dated.

The standard method of dating is to assign a 19th-century date if no documentation is available. Partially useful data for assigning dates to the Metropolitan's collection included information given by the donor, date of accession by the museum, and similarity to costumes already documented and published. Also useful is knowledge that the wearing of certain types of costumes ceased at different areas in Greece.

### **Regional Embroidery Styles**

Regional styles of embroidery will now be discussed by illustrating and describing specific chemises in the Metropolitan's collection. A map is included with the names of places included in the text.

*Attica.* The seven chemises in the collection attributable to the region of Attica all have borders on the skirt hems of solid silk embroidery, which means they were bridal or festival dresses. Everyday chemises were embroidered in cotton. These garments were sleeveless, but were worn with sleeved vest-like bodices made out of the same coarse cotton fabric. The sleeves of the bodices were embroidered in silk and gold threads in motifs related to the hem borders.

The borders ranged from relatively narrow (Fig. 3 - 16 cm.) to wide (Fig. 2 - 45 cm.). In Attica, festival costumes were indicators of economic status. These indicators were in the width of the embroidered hem border, the elaborateness of the other costume parts, the use of gold, and the amount of jewelry worn.

No two embroideries of the nearly 100 seen by the author are exactly alike. Diversity occurs not only in size, but in color, variation of motif, and degree of abstraction. The same basic arrangement of design elements is the key to identifying them as coming from Attica.

In Fig. 1, the design is composed of six bands of varying widths. The two wide bands have repeating stylized vase shapes with flowers growing out where there should be handles. The three narrow dividing bands consist of geometric meanders. The top band is a row of blunted triangles, creating a saw-toothed edge. The lines of the motifs are outlined in red, giving this piece a clear relationship between the design and the darker colored ground.

Fig. 2 shows a stylized version of the design just discussed. The shapes of the leaves and blossoms have become more geometric, and are filling up more space. The colors are brighter and more numerous, including a rather strong magenta. The vase motif is harder to distinguish, and the relationship of the design to the ground is not so clear. The overall appearance is mosaic-like.

Fig. 3 shows a narrow border in somber colors. Although this does not resemble the other two embroideries much, the basic elements are the same. The largest band displays angular vases and the smaller ones geometric meanders. The saw-toothed edge is in simplified form.

Although all three embroideries are from Attica, and share the same general arrangement of design, why are they so different? In an attempt to find the answer to this question, the author conducted field research in the villages of Attica in the summer of 1983. The project was funded by The Center for Field Research through Earthwatch.

One explanation is that each embroidery type is from a different village, since there are more than twenty villages that had this costume. It is certain that Fig. 3 is from the village of Vilia, as it is very similar to a published piece (Hatzimichali, 1933, p. 22), and interviews in Vilia in 1983 confirmed it. Fig. 1 and 2 were of a more general type the author has identified as coming from the Messoghia villages, but they cannot be pinpointed as coming from a particular village.

It is also possible that certain designs are older than others. Such may be the case here, with the more naturalistic Fig. 1 being an earlier piece (1800-1850?) and Fig. 2 being from a later period (1850-1900?). Although the data from the 1983 research has not been fully analyzed yet, this explanation is a distinct possibility.

A third theory is that individual embroideresses exercised artistic license within the basic framework of the traditional designs. From interviews conducted in 1983 it appears that certain designs and colors were preferred for aesthetic reasons, or because the wearer wanted to be unique. Therefore it is probable that some individual choice in design was allowable.

Overall, then, it is likely that each of these explanations is somewhat true. Before any firm conclusions can be drawn, however, the data needs to be thoroughly analyzed.

*Argolis-Corinthia.* There are four chemises in the collection from the Argolis-Corinthia region on the Peloponnesian peninsula. These chemises are particularly interesting because the placement of embroidery so closely resembles the clavi bands of Byzantine costume. Within this group of four, there are subtle differences in color, motif, and fiber of the embroidery thread.

Fig. 4 illustrates a chemise from the Voha region near Corinth. It is a “kolonata” (column) chemise, meaning that it has two vertical bands reaching from the hem to the chest. This indicates that it was a wedding dress (Hatzimichali, 1977, p. 142). The same theme is repeated in fourteen smaller columns of varying heights around the hem.

From a distance the predominantly black embroidery appears dense and geometric. Looking more closely (Fig. 5), we see that the majority of motifs are actually stylized flower heads. The columns alternate with small cypress trees. The sleeves have geometric designs based on zigzags and triangles. The geometric appearance is partly due to the counted threadwork technique.

Fig. 6 illustrates the hem and sleeve detail from a chemise which has the same placement of embroidery as the one just described, but the embroidery color is predominantly red with small areas of regularly repeating blue. General confusion in the literature makes it difficult to assign a more specific provenance than Argolis-Corinthia.

This chemise is embellished with two long and nine short ornamental columns of flower heads projecting from a central axis. Alternating with the short columns are two-tiered triangular shapes. The sleeves are embellished in geometric motifs with half-flowers ornamenting the seamline. It is unique among the chemises included in this article for its all-cotton embroidery.

*Atalandi.* The collection has one chemise from the Central Greek mainland village of Atalandi (Fig. 7). Like the chemises of nearby Attica, it is made of cotton fabric and embroidered in silk. Unlike the Attica chemises, which were embroidered after being made into garments, the pattern pieces were embroidered flat and then the seams were sewn.

The motif and coloration of Atalandi chemises do not vary like the others already discussed because they were worn in a smaller geographical region than Attica or Argolis-Corinthia. The skirt hem border measures 12 cm. and is composed of diagonally placed repeating stylized floral sprays. The colors of the blossoms are alternating reds and greens. The sleeve hem is a simplified version of the same motif. This is counted thread embroidery, primarily cross stitch.

*Trikeri.* The Metropolitan’s largest number of chemises are from Trikeri ( Fig. 8-14). Because it is unusual to find so many in one collection, and because they are diverse in color, design and technique, six will be illustrated.

The chemises of Trikeri are especially interesting for a number of reasons. The first is that the design elements of the chemise are symbolic of the wearer’s station in life. Secondly, Trikeri is one of the rare villages where the chemises are not only white, but red, blue, or green. Thirdly, although Trikeri is located on the mainland,

in Thessaly, the overall characteristics are those of the islands.

The inhabitants of Trikeri moved there in 1800 from the islet of Kikynithos, now called Old Trikeri, to escape piracy (Benaki, 1948, p. 55). They continued to live the life of seafaring people. As a result, their dress resembles that worn in the nearby Sporades Islands.

These chemises can be classified from a technical point of view by fabric, color, and style of ornamentation. The fabrics used are of two types: (1) linen poplin with selvedge stripes of waste silk (Fig. 8-10), and (2) sheer gauzy silk (Fig. 11-14). The embroidery was either of the geometric counted thread type, or freely drawn curvilinear designs in silk or metal threads on silk fabrics.

The chemise illustrated in Fig. 8 is made of linen poplin. Because it is white, we know that it was worn by a young unmarried girl. Usually the linen chemises were worn for everyday, but Hatzimichali tells us that it was the richness of the design and ornamentation which determined whether the chemise was a "good" chemise or a "second" chemise (Hatzimichali, 1930, pp. 143-144).

The embroidery is of the counted thread type. Hem and sleeve are embellished with repeating oblique floral sprays, the design of which seemed to be standard for the everyday chemise. Unique to this piece are two little human figures next to the seam on the skirt (Fig. 8). Peculiar to all the chemises of Trikeri embroidered in silk is the practice of changing color when making borders or seams. One can see this in the narrow border under the floral sprays in the insertion stitched seams, and in the picot edgings (Fig. 8 and 9). Colored insertion stitches are used to join seams and to make small gores at the hem. Three types of picot edge stitch are used: petit, ring, and woven, with colors changing every two or three picot units.

The indigo-dyed dark blue chemise illustrated in Fig. 10 is the only one of its kind in an American collection. The color and fabric indicate that it was worn as an everyday chemise, most probably by a married woman. The embroidery motifs and stitches are similar to the white linen chemise just described. Note that the sleeve motif is a simplified version of the skirt-hem floral-spray motif. The sleeve and hem motifs are rarely identical in Trikeri chemises.

Fig. 11 illustrates the sleeve and hem of a young unmarried girl's "best" dress. It was worn to church on Sundays as well as to festivals. It is made of a sheer, crisp white silk and embroidered in polychrome silks.

The embroidery motif is a complex floral meander done mostly in double darning stitch. The edges are worked in picot rings, which change color every three rings. The seams joining the garment are done in various types of polychrome insertion stitches.

Embroidery on a young girl's "good" chemise could also be in metallic threads, which was considered to be more elaborate than silk embroidery (Zora, 1981, p. 9). Fig. 12 illustrates the sleeve and hem of such a chemise, with yet another variation of the floral motif. While the sleeve border shows a floral meander similar to Fig. 11, the hem motif is a vertical branch with symmetrically arranged blossoms between leaves. Trilling notes the widespread use of the branch motif by comparing it to Egyptian embroidery of the Mamluk period (Trilling, 1983, pp. 22-25).

When a girl married, she wore a red silk chemise embroidered in gold, as shown in Fig. 13. Again, the fabric is crisp, sheer silk. The embroidery motif on the hem appears to be a complex stylized version of either flowers in vase or a branch with flowers, with bird-like shapes near the top. The sleeves are similar to the floral meanders seen in Fig. 11. There are small birds between the larger motifs.

In place of the picot edging, there is applied gold lace, in the "bibila" style. The edges of the sleeve pieces are also joined to a band of gold lace, which forms a decorative band up the back of the arm when worn. The small gores at the hem of the skirt are actually strips of pre-made gold lace.

Embroidery from another red chemise, bought by Henrietta Brewer in Athens in 1925, is seen in Fig. 14. Both the motifs and the work on this piece are particularly fine. On the hem we see a stalk of blue-bell type flowers, with birds in place of leaves. There are also small birds between the larger motifs near the hem. The sleeve border displays an elaborate floral meander, more complex than that seen in Fig. 11. It should be noted that colors change more frequently on this piece; even each picot ring is more than one color.

A young bride would continue to wear this red color for the period she was considered newly married. After that passed, she would wear a burgundy, dark green, or dark blue silk chemise on festival days. Dark green signified that the woman's husband was away; since these were seafaring people, this color must have been common (Hatzimichali, 1930, p. 143).

*Skiathos, Sporades Islands.* Of the northern Aegean islands known as the Sporades, Skiathos is the closest to the mainland. It is near the coast of the Pilion peninsula, where Trikeri is located. Understandably, the chemise of Skiathos, illustrated in Fig. 15, is in some ways related to those of Trikeri. The fabric is crisp, sheer red silk, like the wedding chemises in Fig. 13 and 14. Insertion stitched seams and gilt lace joining the sleeve seams are also similarities.

The placement of embroidery is unusual in the Skiathos chemise. From the shoulder to the bottom of the neck-opening there is a narrow gilt mesh band applied over the top of the fabric, a remainder of the old Byzantine clavi. The fitted velvet jacket that was worn with this chemise was cut away in the front to reveal the decorated neck and shoulder area. The border at the neck-opening and around the sleeves

is embroidered in gilt and silver threads in a flower and leaf design. A picot-like edging was applied to both neck and sleeve edge. Around the hem there is a row of small silk eyelets in alternating colors, like a floral meander.

*Epirus.* Two chemises in the collection are attributed to Epirus, a region in the northwestern portion of mainland Greece. Epirus was under Turkish rule from the 15th century until 1912, and its capital city Ioannina was the Turkish seat of government for all northern Greece and Albania. The famous Ali Pasha arrived in 1788, establishing his opulent court there. The city quickly developed a reputation for trade and craftwork, including gold embroidery which was sold all over the Balkans.

The chemise pictured in Fig. 16 and 17 was purchased by Miss Henrietta Brewer in Athens in 1925. Because the neckline was not finished, we can assume that this garment was never worn. This is a rather unusual piece in that it has two columns of floral sprays reaching from the hem to the waist area, unlike other published Epirote chemises, which have no skirt embroidery.

This piece is a prime example of the metal thread embroidery Epirus was famous for. Both silver and gilt threads were used. The neckline (Fig. 16) is lavishly embellished with curvilinear carnations and leaves. The arrangement of the leafy branch at the bottom of the neckline is reminiscent of the Turkish rose spray found on Epirote cushion-covers. The top and bottom sleeve seams, and the front chemise seams are embroidered with flower sprays which alternate direction (Fig. 17). There are seven sprays on each sleeve, both top and bottom, and fourteen on each seam of the front panel. Small sprigs of leaves repeat around the entire hem. Back seams are joined with decorative insertion stitches resembling lace-work which are the same height as the front embroidery.

Fig. 18 illustrates an extremely fine example of metallic embroidery on the sleeves and neckline of a linen chemise, attributed by the donors to Ioannina. Museum records date it to the 18th century.

The motifs are Anatolian in nature. On either side of the neck opening, there are flower bearing branches with a crowned bird in the center (Fig. 19). Birds like this were common motifs for Turkish pottery, and before that, for decorative woven silks of the Near East. An often-seen feature of the Epirote chemise neckline is a switch from metal thread to white silk thread at the back of the neck and the bottom of the slit opening.

This chemise is also embroidered on the upper seam of the sleeve in a floral branch motif. When worn, these wide sleeves would be visible from the elbow down, as the sleeves of the coat were open to the elbow. To understand how these chemises looked when they were worn with silk coats, see the catalog accompanying the Textile Museum's exhibition of Greek island embroidery (Trilling, 1983, pp. 88-89).

Epirote women also embroidered domestic textiles. Silk embroidered cushion-

covers, bed-covers and hangings in dark tones of red, green, yellow, blue, and black must have been fairly abundant because there are many in American collections. Typical designs were Turkish brocade-like rose sprays in ogival frames. Human figures in elaborate court costumes are also found on cushion covers.

*Leukas, Ionian Islands.* The Ionian Island of Leukas is near enough to Epirus to have its chemises bear some resemblance to those just discussed. The cut and placement of the ornamentation is related to Epirote chemises, but the embroidery itself is Italian rather than Turkish in nature. Leukas was under Turkish rule during the late 15th and 16th centuries, but was returned to Venice in the 17th century.

Two of the Metropolitan's chemises are from Leukas. Both are typical of the white-on-white embroidery from this island, which on the chemises is located around the neckline and on the sleeve. When worn, they must have been similar to what 15th- and 16th-century Italian shirts were like, with their delicate edgings visible only at the neckline or from under a sleeve.

It is evident, however, that the chemise in Fig. 20 was never worn as the neckline has not been cut. Every other detail of the chemise was completed. This uncut neckline, along with the unfinished neckline of Fig. 16, leads the author to believe that chemises in some parts of Greece may have been placed in the dowry chest not quite finished, and only when needed were the necklines cut and edged. This is also true of Turkish chemises seen by the author.

The embroidery motifs at the neckline, although difficult to distinguish from a distance, consist of a narrow border of diagonal floral sprigs alternating with birds (Fig. 21), and a larger area on either side with pairs of flowers between confronted birds. Johnstone calls these motifs "Italian/Mediterranean" and cites that they constantly recur in embroideries from Epirus, the Ionian Islands, and the Cyclades Islands (Johnstone, 1972, p. 23). The sleeve embroidery consists of floral sprays. There are small repeating sprigs around the skirt hem.

The seaming of this chemise is of a type of needlework known as "dantela." "Dantela" is the Greek word for the lacework which was introduced by the Italians in the 16th century (Zora, 1981, p. 12). The front and back vertical seams are joined by elaborate insertion stitches with small lacey gores near the hem.

The other Leukas chemise shows a little variation from the one just described. The motifs used in the embroidery are similar, however the birds are not confronted in pairs and are larger than those in Fig. 20 and 21.

*Patmos, Dodecanese Islands.* Patmos is the northernmost island in the Dodecanese group. Since the 11th century it has been the site of the Monastery of St. John the Divine, which saved it from marauders in the Middle Ages. The relatively peaceful existence may be the explanation for why the Byzantine form of decoration



survived in costume. It was under Venetian control until the Turks gained power in the early 1500's.

When the chemise illustrated in Fig. 22 and 23 was accessioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the registrar assigned only a provenance of Greece. Because it is almost identical to a published chemise from Patmos (Apostolaki, 1932, p. 52, Fig. 27), the author believes it is from Patmos. This is further reinforced by its similarity in technique and placement of motif to a chemise in the Textile Museum attributed to the nearby island of Kalymnos.

The most unusual feature of this chemise is the placement of the exquisite embroidery, which consists of repeating single floral sprays. The motif is repeated thirteen times in columns next to the seams of the central panel in both the front and the back (Fig. 22). No other chemise had such long clavi-type bands in the back. A larger version of the same motif is repeated four times at both the top and bottom of the sleeve seam (Fig. 23).

The floral embroidery motif is worked in a loosely twisted silk yarn, similar to that of other Dodecanese embroidery. On closer inspection of the embroidery thread, we see that instead of being plied in the usual "S" direction, it is plied "Z". Anytime two single yarns are plied in the same direction in which they were originally twisted, the resultant yarn tends to untwist, giving it a loose, raised appearance. The stitch appears to be half-cross stitch in pale colors with no two flowers worked in exactly the same color combination. Silver metal thread in a double darning stitch is used to fill in certain areas.

This chemise is dated 19th century in museum records, but it may be earlier. Tarsouli illustrates a different type of costume for Patmos in her book of Dodecanese costumes (Tarsouli, 1951), which implies that this was part of an older costume. The use of pale colors, similar to 18th-century Turkish embroideries, suggests that it was made in the 1700's.

*Tilos, Dodecanese Islands.* The chemise seen in Fig. 24 and 25 was purchased by Henrietta Brewer in Athens in 1925. She was told it was from Rhodes. However, the embroidery design on the sleeves tells us it is from the island of Tilos (Johnstone, 1972, p. 44).

This chemise displays a variant of embroidery characteristic of the Dodecanese Islands. We see the traditional color palette of red and green, the heavy raised embroidery, and the stylized plant motifs. These islands were renowned for extensive use of embroidery on cushion-covers, valances, hangings, and most importantly, elaborate tents used for the nuptial bed which were hung on wooden rings suspended from the ceiling.

The sleeves of the Tilos chemise (Fig. 24) are embellished with vertical stripes of small green flowers, much like the chemise from the neighboring islands of Astypalaia and Nisyros. The distinction is that sleeves from Tilos were not as densely embroidered as the others, and the pattern seems to have been limited to green stripes. The shoulder area and the U-shaped neckline are embellished in patterns similar to the other islands just discussed.

The sleeves are linen, whereas the body of the dress is cotton. Other published Tilos chemises have this same feature (Johnstone, 1972, p. 44).

The hem (Fig. 23) of this chemise is worked in a narrow border of designs called by some authorities "vase patterns" (Benaki, 1948, p. 67), although in Dodecanese embroidery they are abstracted to the point of no longer being identifiable as such. Color alternates from red to green to taupe. Each of the four skirt seams are ornamented with a Cretan feather stitch.

Typical of the embroidery of the Dodecanese is the use of a loosely twisted silk thread in a stitch which gives a raised textural appearance to the work. There is some confusion in the literature as to what the stitch used really is. Johnstone and the Benaki Museum label it cross stitch, while embroidery expert Gostelow calls it "Astypalaia stitch" (Gostelow, 1977, p. 158), which is really a raised chevron stitch. After closely examining the embroidery, we see that Gostelow is correct. This stitch is worked in two stages: first, a foundation is laid in parallel rows of small V's which do not show in the finished embroidery; secondly, the foundation is re-embroidered in the thick silk thread which does not pass through the ground material. In a chemise from Astypalaia in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the foundation thread is cotton, and the raised thread is thick silk.

*Psara, Eastern Aegean Islands.* Psara is east of the Sporades Islands. A hem from a chemise the author attributes to Psara, because of its similarity to a chemise in the Folk Art Museum of Athens (Zora, 1981, Fig. 15), is illustrated in Fig. 26. The ground fabric of the chemise is a striped fabric called "safido". All the yarns are white, but by using silk warps in groups against other cotton warps, a shiny stripe is achieved. The wefts are silk. The sleeves are made from a different fabric, a cotton gauze.

The hem of the skirt is embroidered in repeating motifs in white silk. Each motif has three branches bearing four-petaled flowers. Below runs a floral meander border.

The "dantela" needle lace is exceptional in this piece. Skirt seams are open at the hem to allow for "aratzidela", the narrow lace work which connects two widths of cloth. The hem has a wide "bibila" edging in a floral pattern. Both sleeve and neckline also have narrow "bibila" edgings. Very little of the chemise showed in the

final costume. In a photograph of a married woman of Psara taken around the turn of the century, the delicate edgings barely show beneath the hem of an ankle-length Western styled overdress (Papantoniou, 1978, p. 33).

A head scarf with an embroidered border, and a sash for the waist were donated as part of the same costume.

### **Summary**

Through illustration and discussion of 19 of the 29 chemises in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection, the diversity of the Greek embroidery tradition has been seen. Depending on influences from earlier cultures, specifically Byzantine, Italian, and Turkish, distinctive variations in embroidery developed on the universally-worn woman's chemise. From the complex solidly embroidered hem-borders of Attica, to the metallic embroideries of Epirus, to the textural red and green embroideries of the Dodecanese Islands, we see that Greek embroidery on women's chemises gives us a unique opportunity to study regional embroidery traditions.

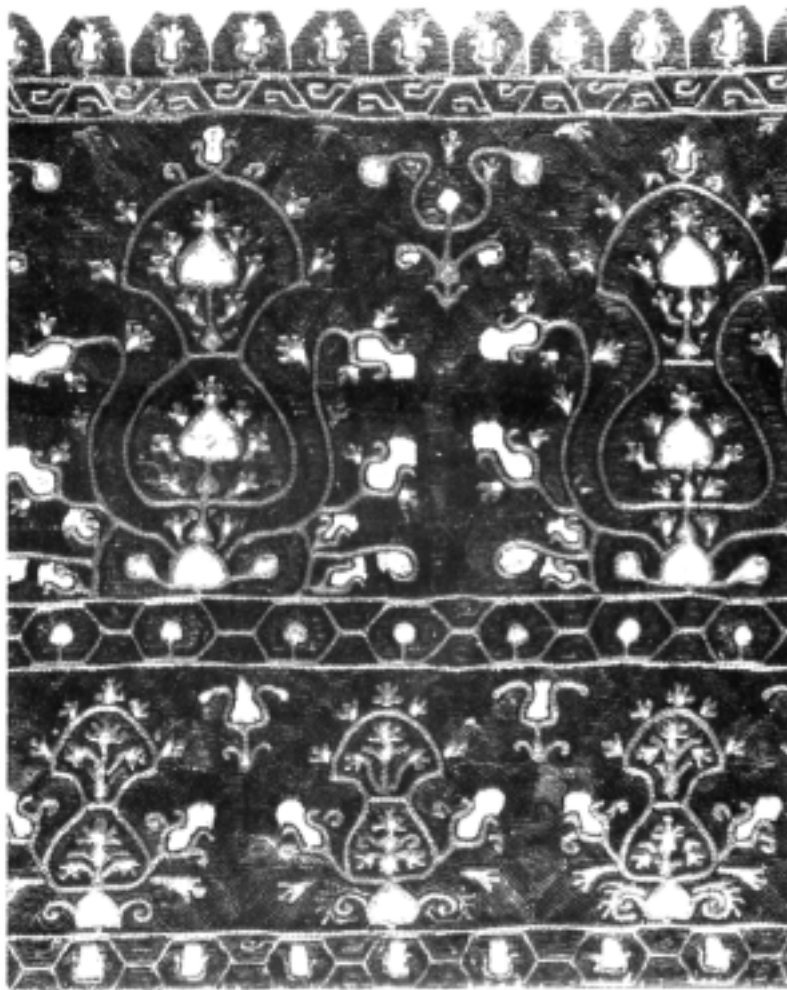


Fig. 1. Hem detail, Attica, mid-19th century, 38 cm. border (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI L41.11.45).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - gobelin, stem, and satin; hem edged with silk cord

colors - black, red, dark green, dark blue, light blue, and peach on white ground

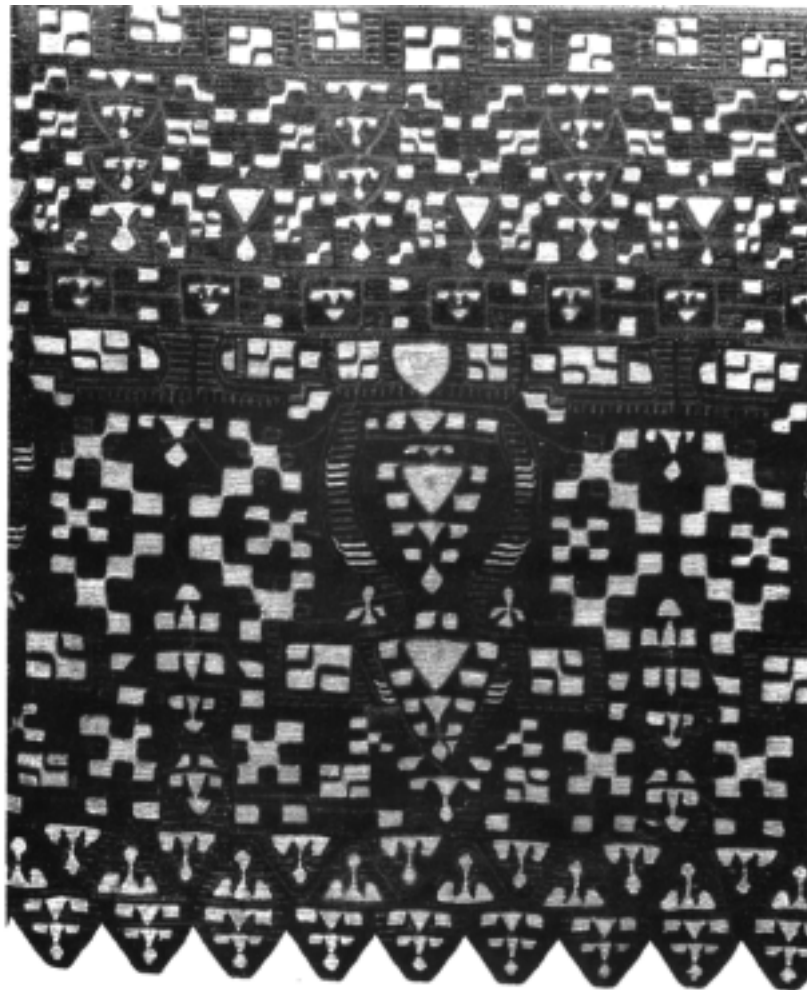


Fig. 2. Hem detail, Attica, 2nd half of 19th century, 45 cm. border (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 41.110.23).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches -gobelin, stem, outline; hem edged with silk cord

colors - black, blue, green, magenta, pink, light green, and light blue on white ground



Fig. 3. Hem detail, Attica, from the village of Vilia, late 19th century, 16 cm. border (Irene Lewisohn and Mrs. Alice Lewisohn Crowley, CI 46.9.197).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches -gobelin and chain; hem edged in fishbone stitch

colors - black, red, dark green, and dark blue on white ground

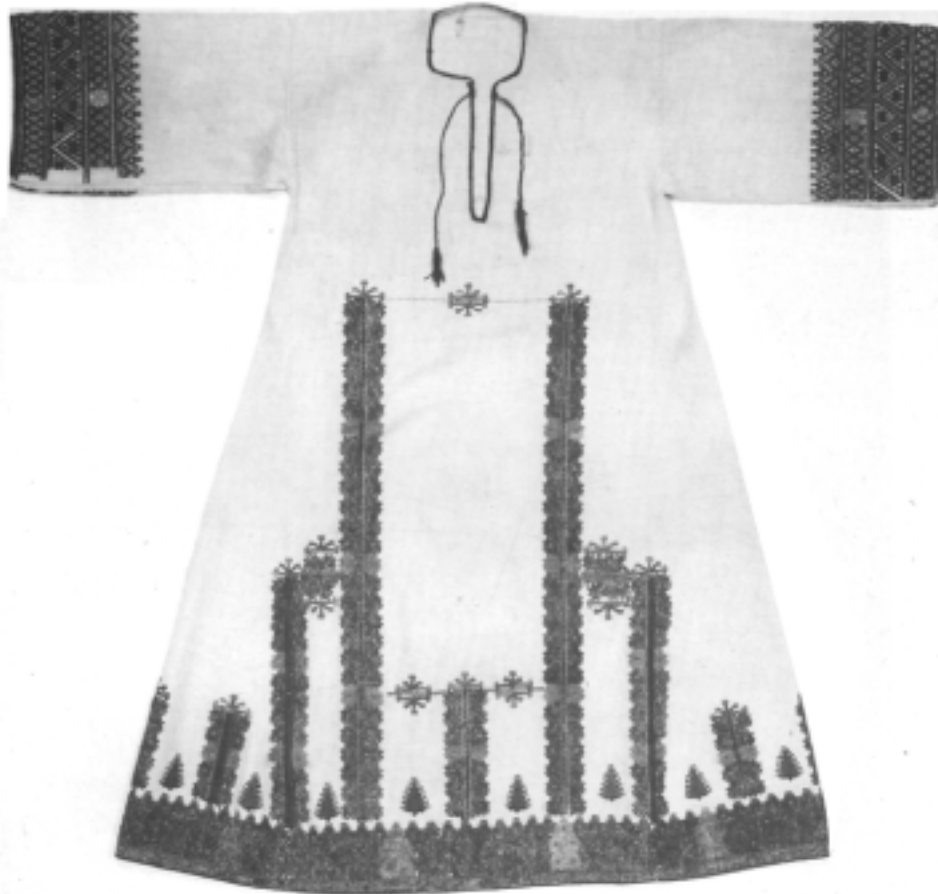


Fig. 4. Woman's chemise, Corinthia, possibly Voha, late 19th century, 122 cm. x 127 cm. (width at sleeves), (Miss Louise M. Iselin, CI 47.45.A).  
Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

cotton, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - running, double running, pattern darning, backstitch, stem, and Cretan stitch over seams, hem edged in fishbone stitch

colors - predominantly black with gold, red, green, and blue on white ground

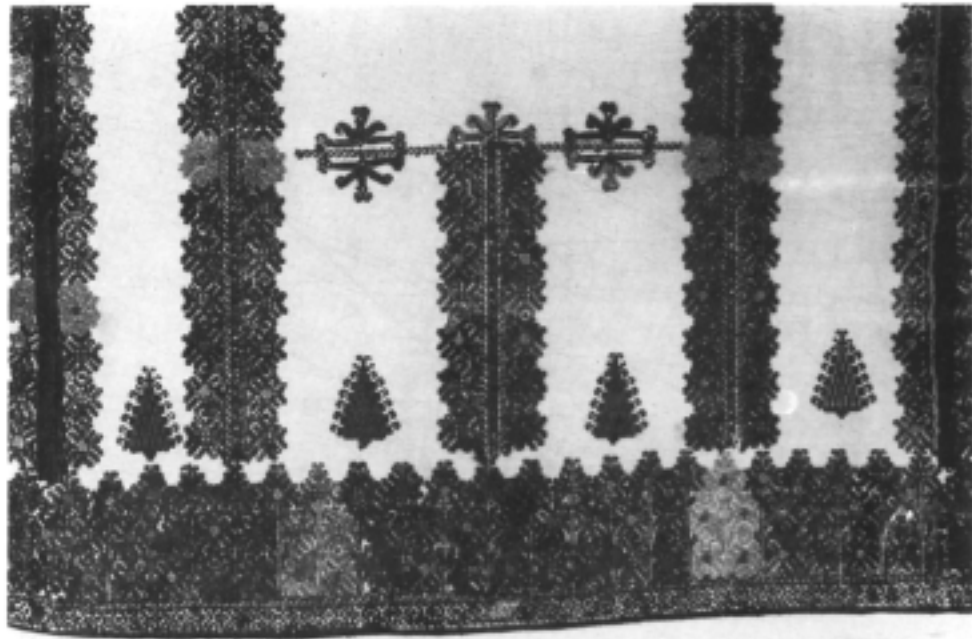


Fig. 5. Detail of Fig. 4, center front at hem.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.



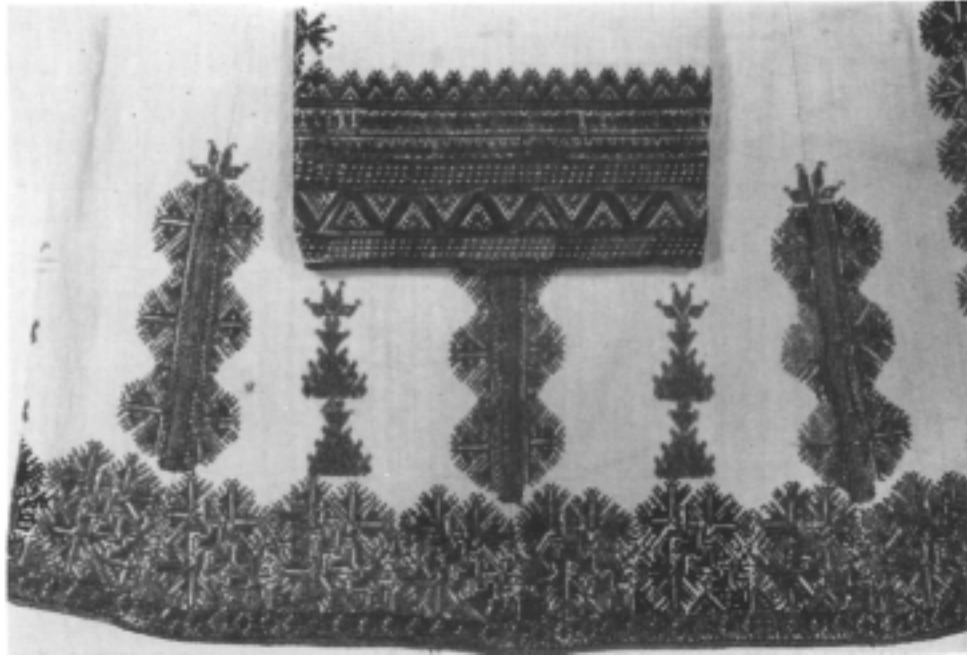


Fig. 6. Hem and sleeve detail, Argolis-Corinthia, 19th century, (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI L41.11.44).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - cotton, 2 and 3 ply, S twist

stitches - pattern darning, cross, back, gobelin, and Cretan stitch on seams; hem edged in long-armed cross stitch

colors - predominantly red with small areas of blue on white ground

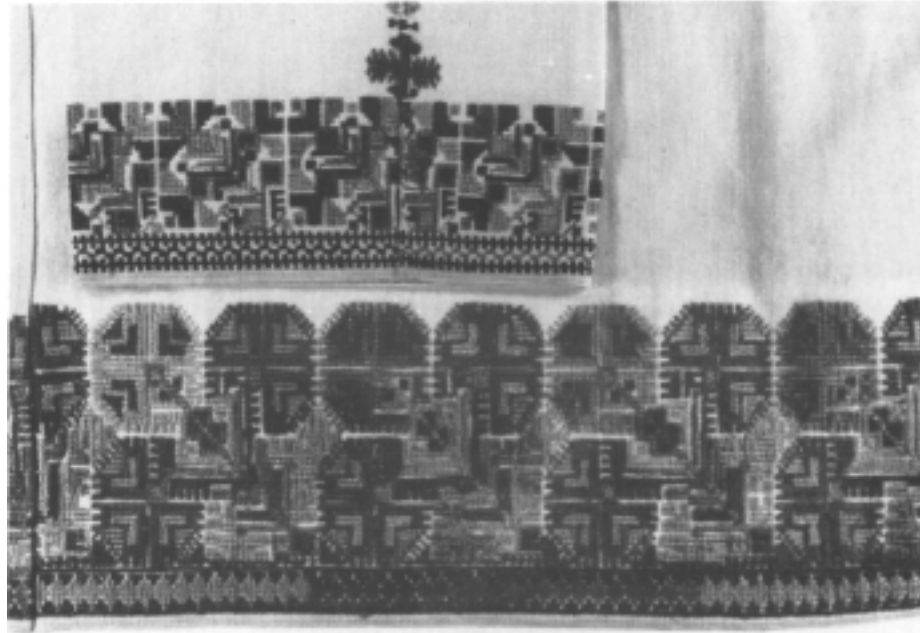


Fig. 7. Hem and sleeve detail, Central Greece, Atalandi, late 19th century, 12 cm. hem border, 6.5 cm. sleeve border (Miss Irene Lewisohn, CI 39.91.7A).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - cross, outline, running, pattern darning (collar), satin and pattern darning (sleeve)

colors - red, green, gold, peach, and faded black on white ground

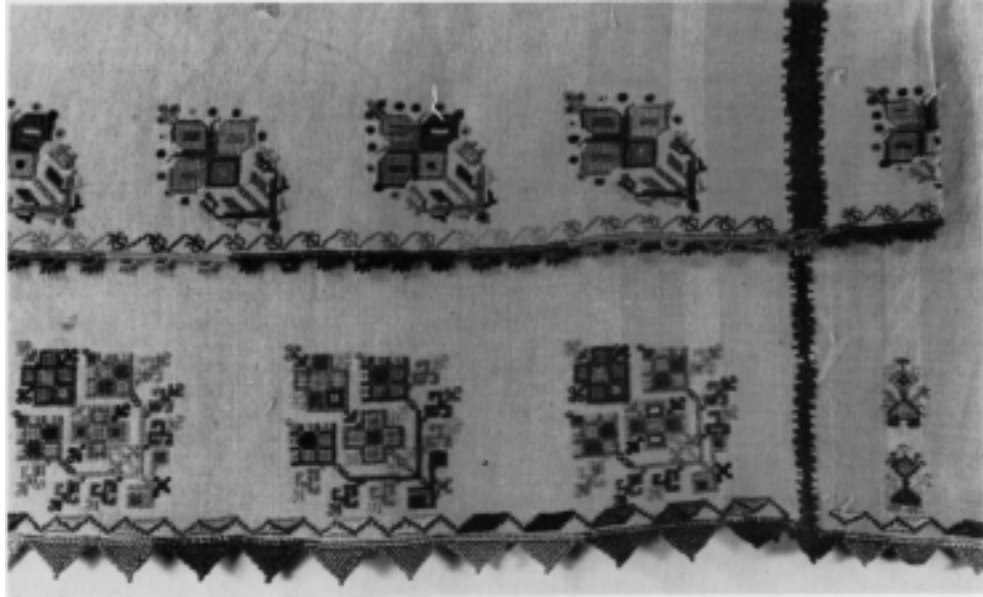


Fig. 8. Hem and sleeve detail, Thessaly, Trikeri, late 19th century, 5 cm. hem border. From the collection of Miss Henrietta F. Brewer of Oakland, California (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 53.21.5). Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - linen, single, Z twist with silk selvedge stripes

weft - linen, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - cross, satin, eyelet, and drawn filling; seams joined with various insertion stitches; neckline, sleeve and hem edged with various picot stitches.

colors - red, pink, blue, green, tan and black on white ground

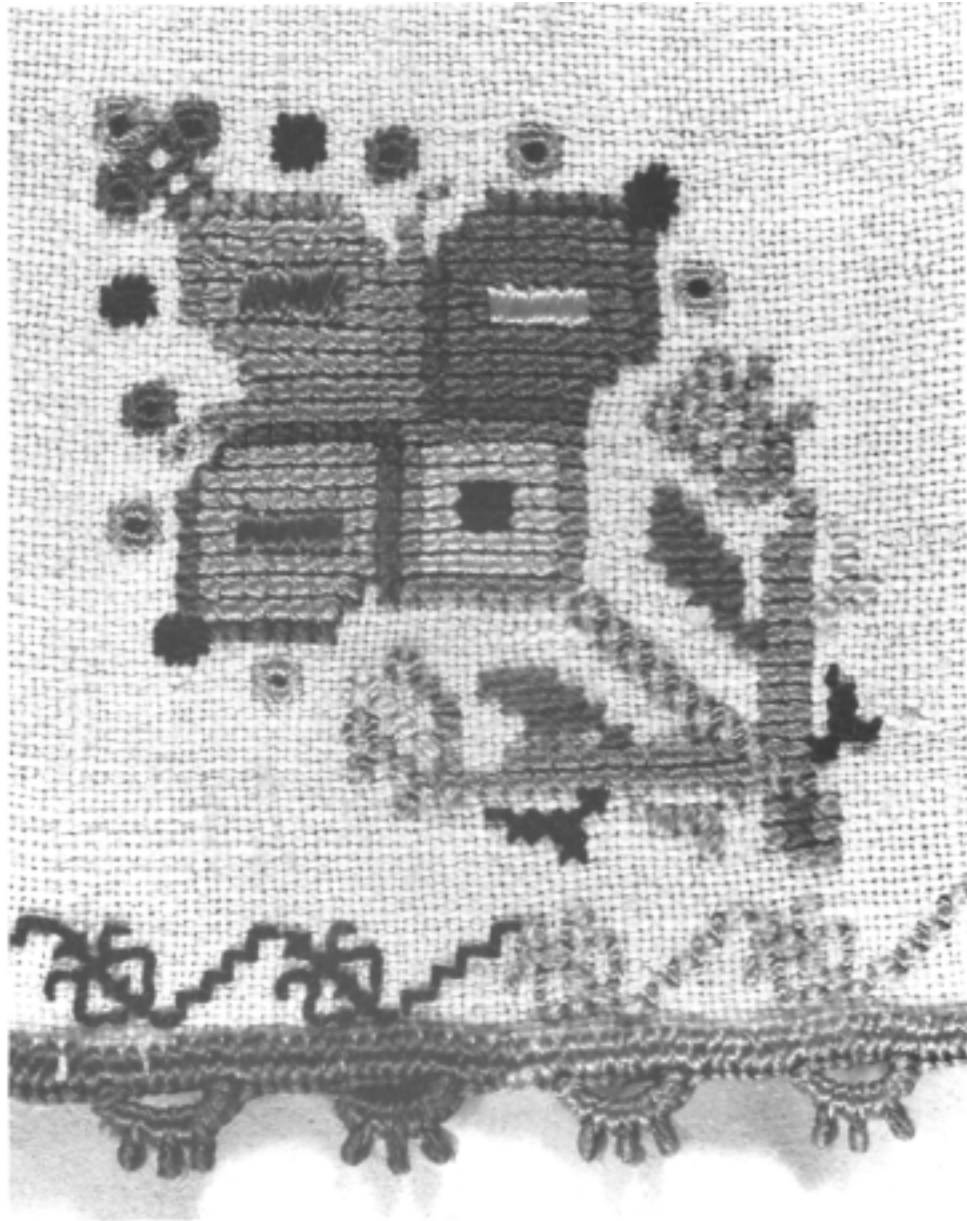


Fig. 9. Close up of Fig. 8, sleeve edge, 4 cm. border.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

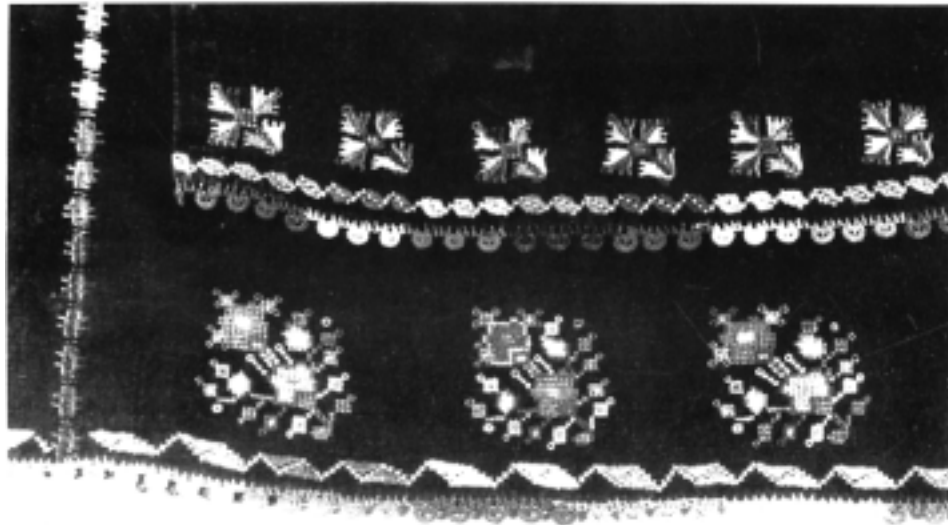


Fig. 10. Hem and sleeve detail, Thessaly, Trikeri, 19th century, 5.5 cm. hem border (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 41.110.118).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - linen, single, Z twist with silk selvedge stripes

weft - linen, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, Z twist

stitches - cross, satin, eyelet, and back; seams joined with various insertion stitches; neckline, sleeve and hem edged in picot ring stitches

colors - red, yellow, green, blue, pink and white on dark blue ground

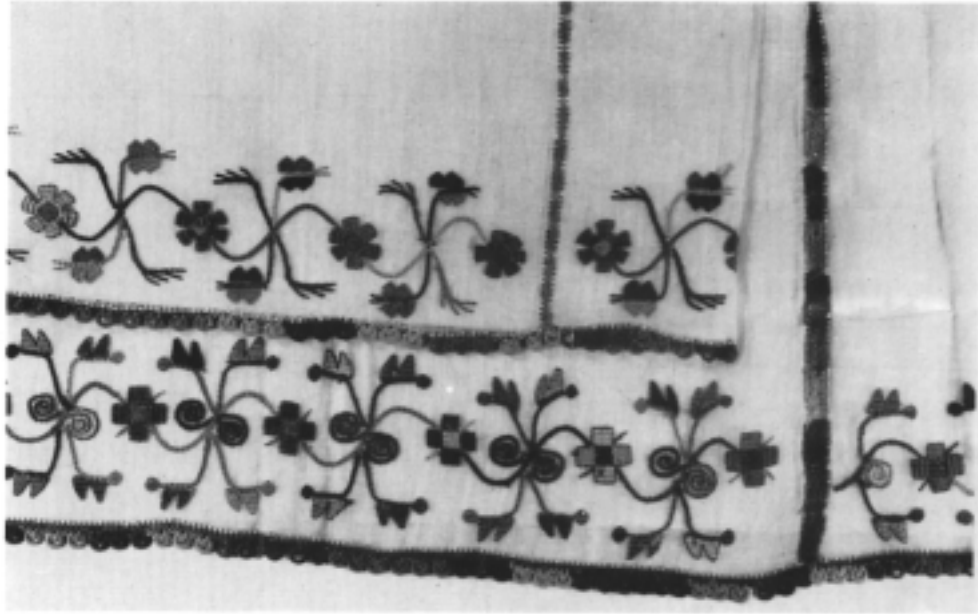


Fig. 11. Hem and sleeve detail, Thessaly, Trikeri, 2nd half of 19th century, 7 cm. hem border (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI L41.11.40).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - silk, single, Z twist

weft - silk, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - double darning; seams joined with various insertion stitches; sleeve and hem edged in picot ring stitches

colors - black, blue, yellow, 2 shades of green, and 2 shades of red on white ground

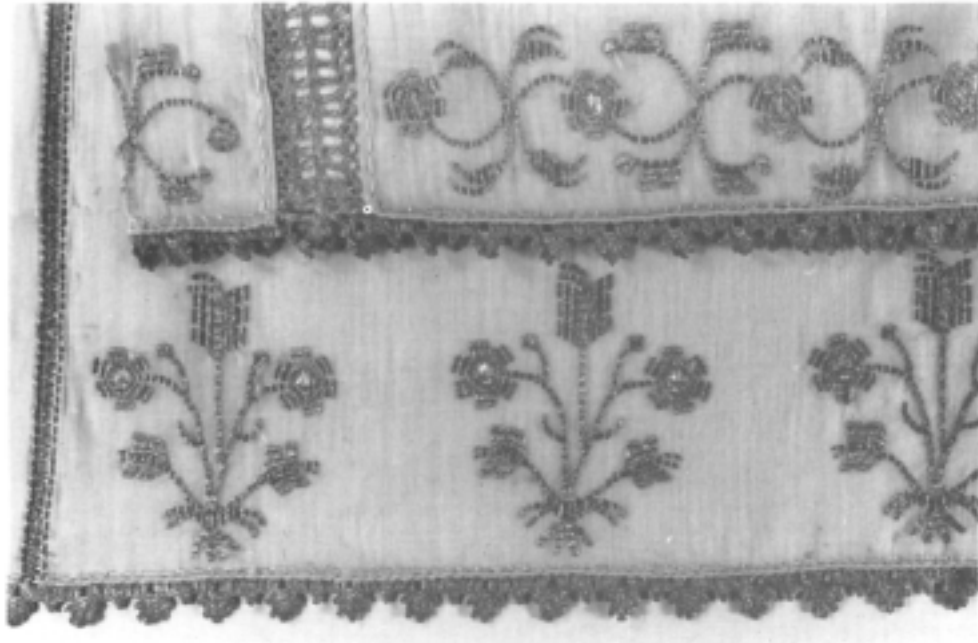


Fig. 12. Hem and sleeve detail, Thessaly, Trikeri, late 19th-early 20th century, 8 cm. hem border (Irene Lewisohn Bequest, CI 61.18.1B).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - silk, single, Z twist

weft - silk, single, Z twist

embellishment threads -metallic (gilt wrap, yellow silk core),  
2 ply, S twist; silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches -double darning and satin; seams in body joined with silk insertion  
stitches; sleeve seam joined with pre-made gold lace; sleeve and hem  
edged with pre-made gold lace

colors - gold motifs, red and white seams in body on white ground



Fig. 13. Hem and sleeve detail, Thessaly, Trikeri, late 19th-early 20th century, 16 cm. hem border (Irene Lewisohn Bequest, CI 61.18.2B).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - silk, single, Z twist

weft - silk, single, Z twist

embellishment threads -metallic (gilt wrap, yellow silk core),  
2 ply, S twist  
silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches -satin and fishbone; seams in body joined with insertion stitches; sleeve seam joined with pre-made gold lace; sleeve and hem edged with pre-made gold lace

colors - gold motifs; green seams in body on raspberry red ground



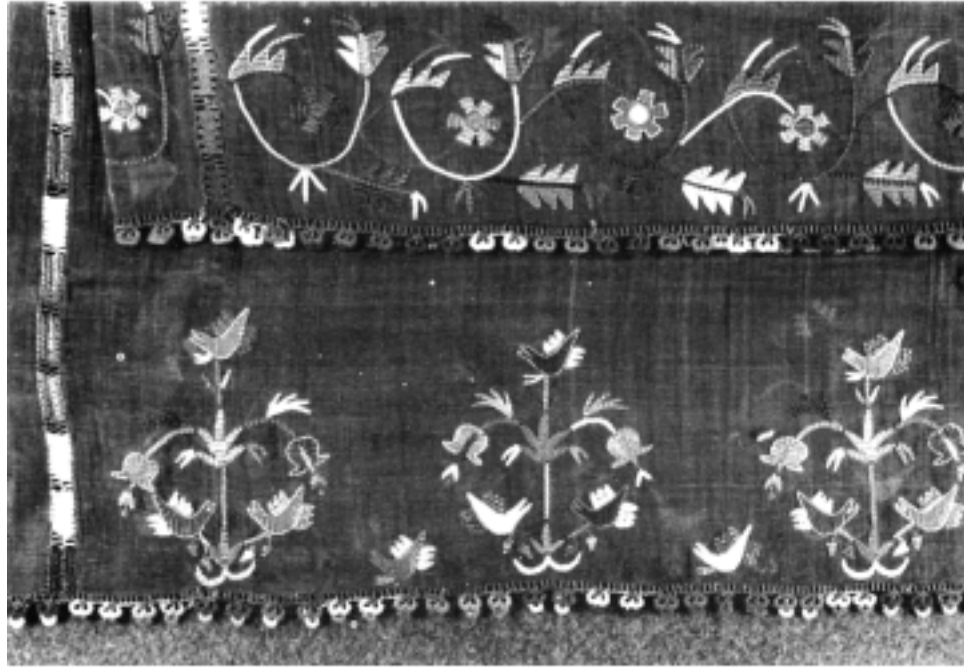


Fig. 14. Hem and sleeve detail, Thessaly, Trikeri, 19th century, 9 cm. hem border. From the collection of Miss Henrietta F. Brewer of Oakland, California (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 53.21.6). Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - silk, single, Z twist

weft - silk, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - double darning; seams joined with insertion stitches; neckline, sleeve, and hem edged in picot ring stitches

colors - red, pink, tan, white, gray, two shades of green, two shades of blue on red ground



Fig. 15. Woman's chemise, Sporades Islands, Skiathos, mid-19th century, 127 cm. x 159 cm. (width at sleeves) (Robert J. and Mary B. Monks, MMA 53.131.19). Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Technical analysis:

warp - silk, single, Z twist

weft - silk, single, Z twist

embellishment threads -metallic (gilt wrap, yellow silk core;  
silver wrap, white silk core),  
2 ply, S twist  
silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - satin, fishbone, double darning, eyelet; seams in body joined with insertion stitches; hem edged in picot stitch; sleeve edging, lace at sleeve seam, neck edging and vertical band at shoulder are pre-made before application

colors - gold, silver, green, dark blue, gold and white on dark red ground



Fig. 16. Neckline, Epirus, probably Ioannina, 19th century. From the collection of Miss Henrietta F. Brewer of Oakland, California (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 53.21. 10).

Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist with silk selvedge stripes

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads -metallic (gilt wrap, silver wrap, yellow core), 2 ply, S twist  
silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches -satin, drawn thread work; seams joined with insertion stitches

colors - gold, silver, and white on white ground

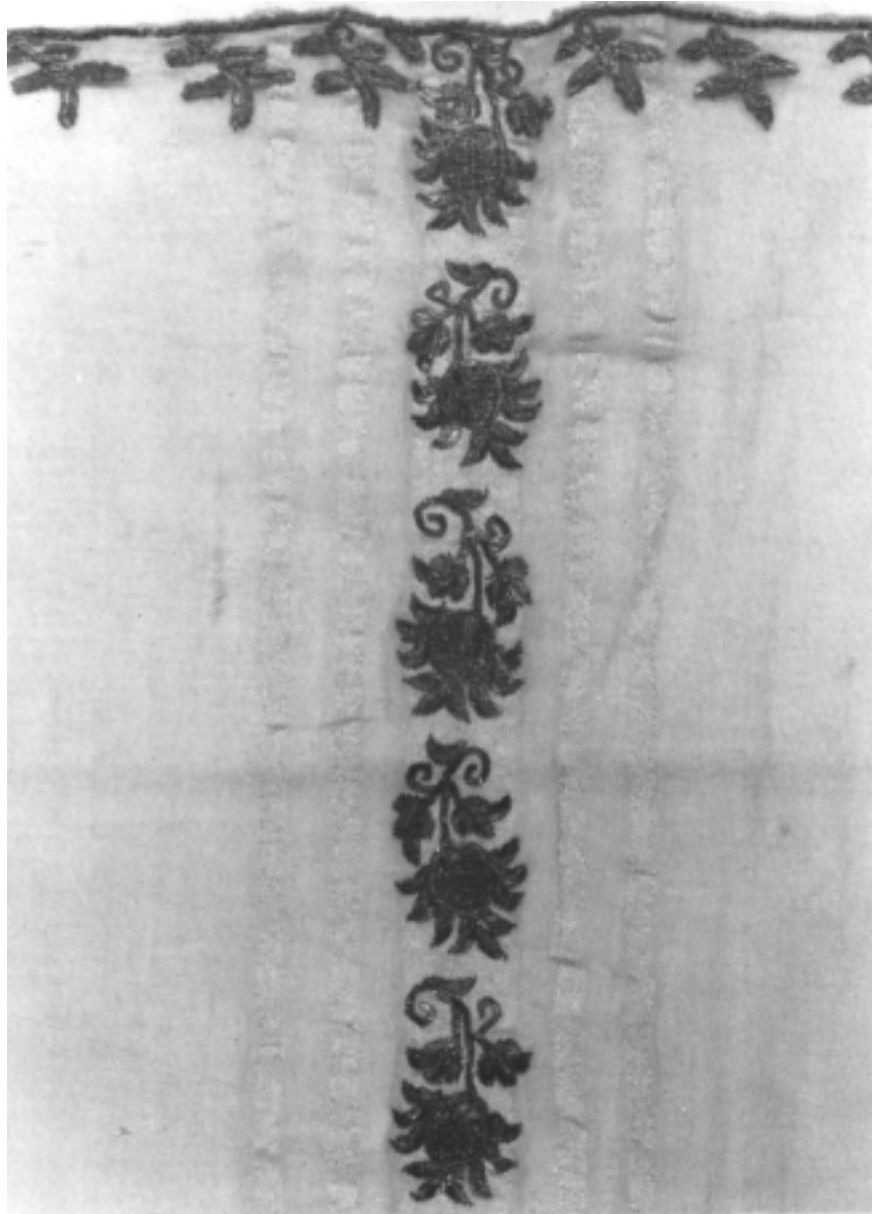


Fig. 17. Hem area of chemise illustrated in Fig. 16, 5 cm. hem border.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

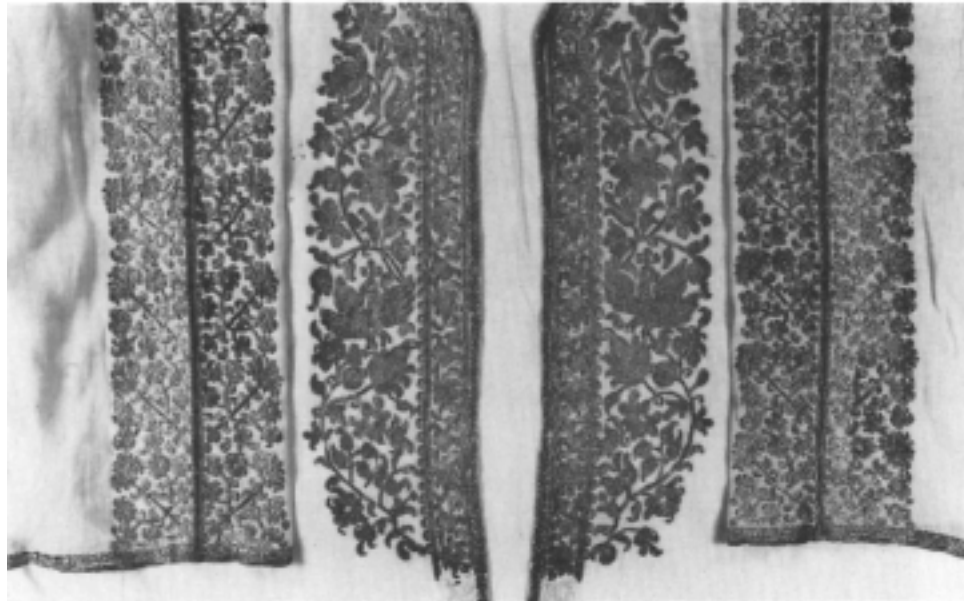


Fig. 18. Detail of neckline and sleeves, Epirus, Ioannina, 18th century (Robert J. and Mary B. Monks, 53.131.20).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel

Technical analysis:

warp - linen, single, Z twist

weft - linen, single, Z twist

embellishment threads -metallic (gilt wrap, silver wrap, white silk core),  
2 ply, S twist  
silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches -satin, eyelet, double darning, and overcasting; seams joined with insertion stitches

colors - gold, silver and white on white ground

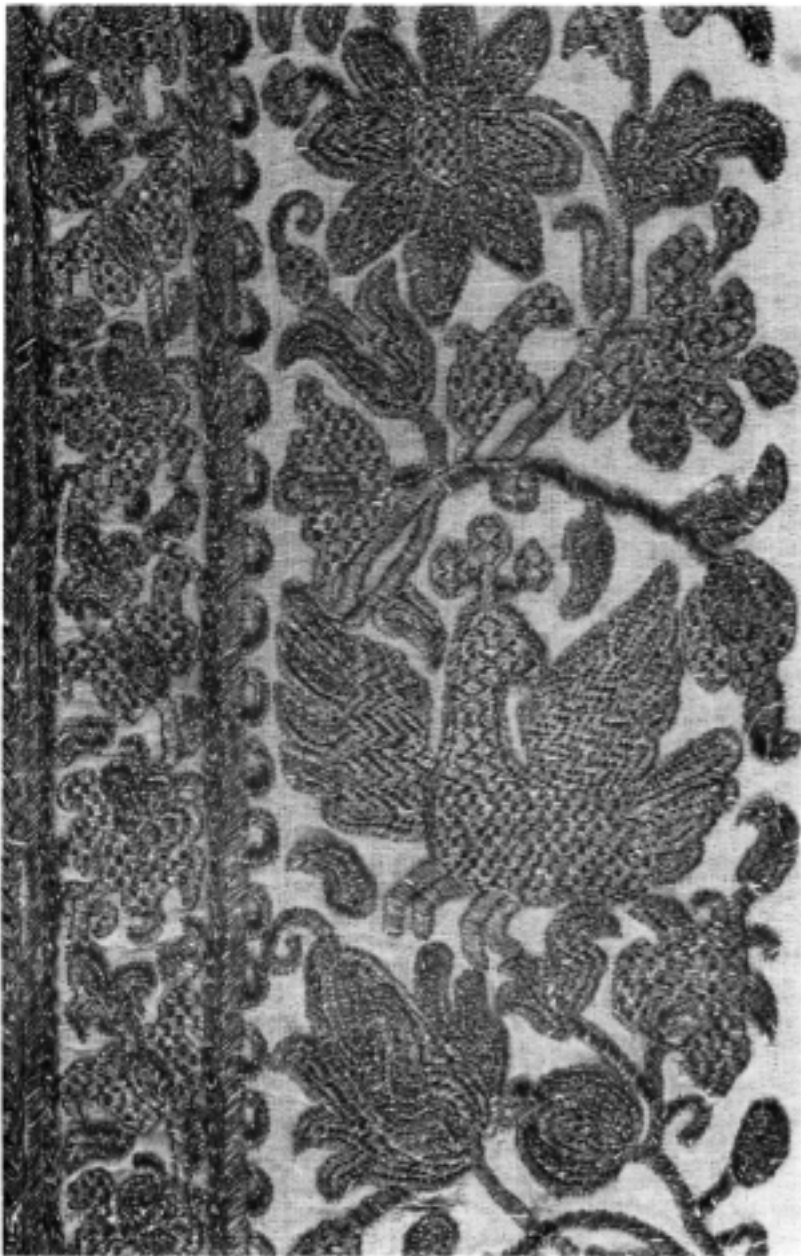


Fig. 19. Closeup of neckline illustrated in Fig. 18.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.



Fig. 20. Uncut neckline, Leukas, Ionian Islands, 18th-19th century. From the collection of Miss Henrietta F. Brewer of Oakland, California (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 53.21.19).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - linen, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - satin and eyelet; seams joined with various insertion stitches

colors - white on white ground

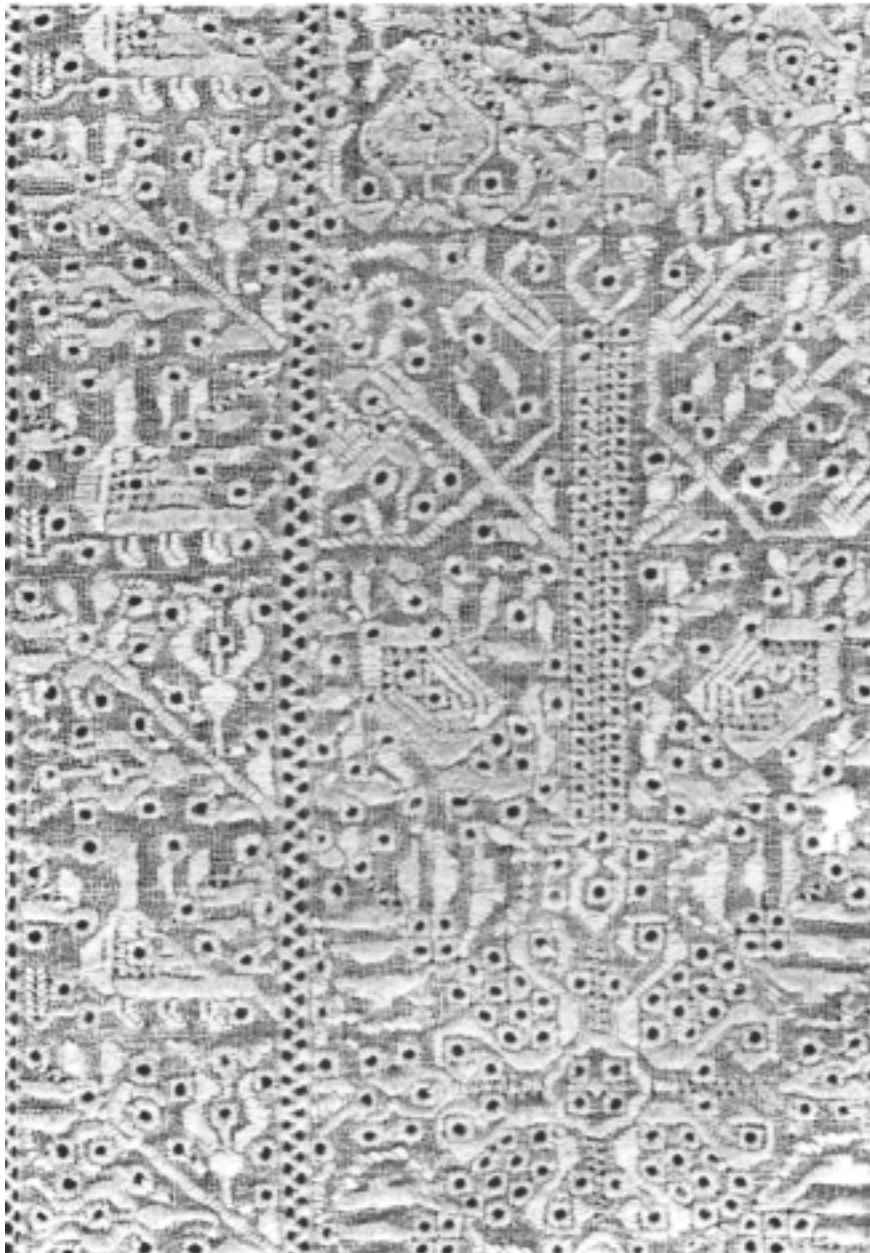


Fig. 21. Closeup of neckline illustrated in Fig. 20.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.





Fig. 22. Vertical band of flowers at front seam, Dodecanese Islands, Patmos, 18th century, motif height 4.75 cm. (Mr. and Mrs. Rafi Y. Mottahedeh, CI 1975. 344.10).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - linen, single, Z twist

weft - linen, single, Z twist

embellishment threads -metallic (silver wrap, yellow core),

2 ply, S twist

silk, 2 ply, Z twist

stitches -half cross; neckline and hem have cut work borders; sleeve seam is edge stitched

colors - pale hues of pink, blue, yellow and green; silver on white ground

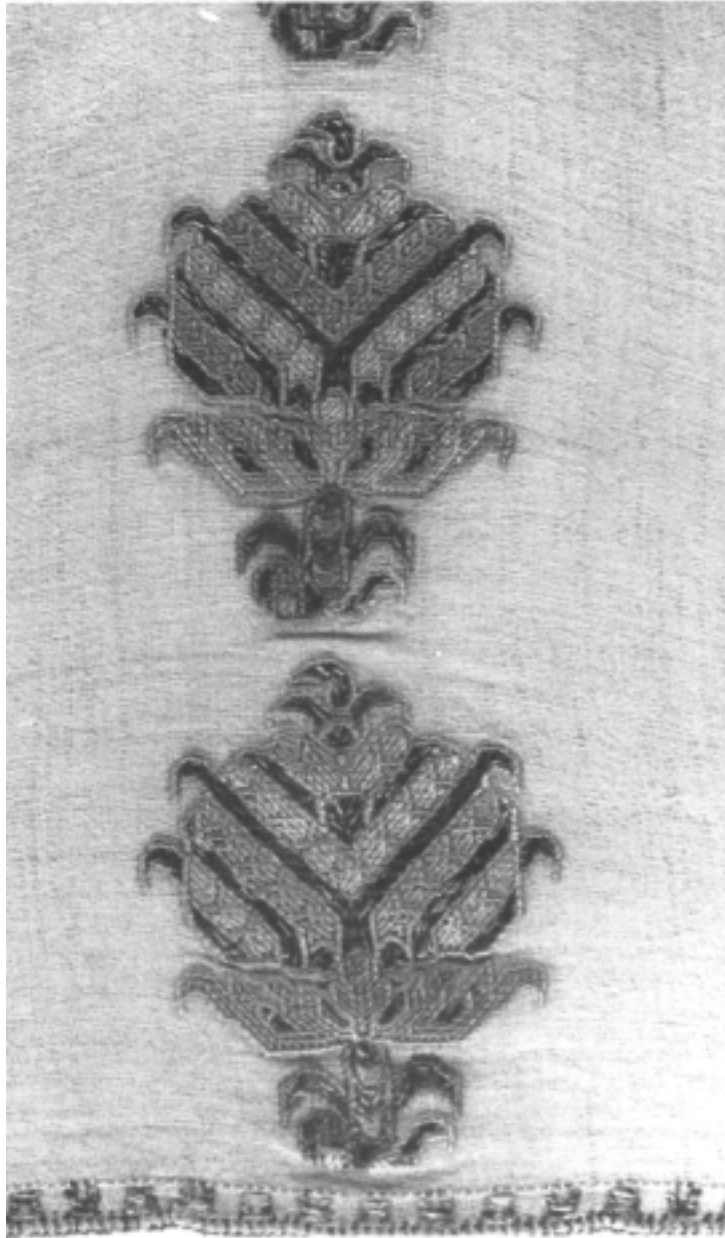


Fig. 23. Closeup of embroidery motif on sleeve of chemise front detail illustrated in Fig. 22, motif height 6.75 cm.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

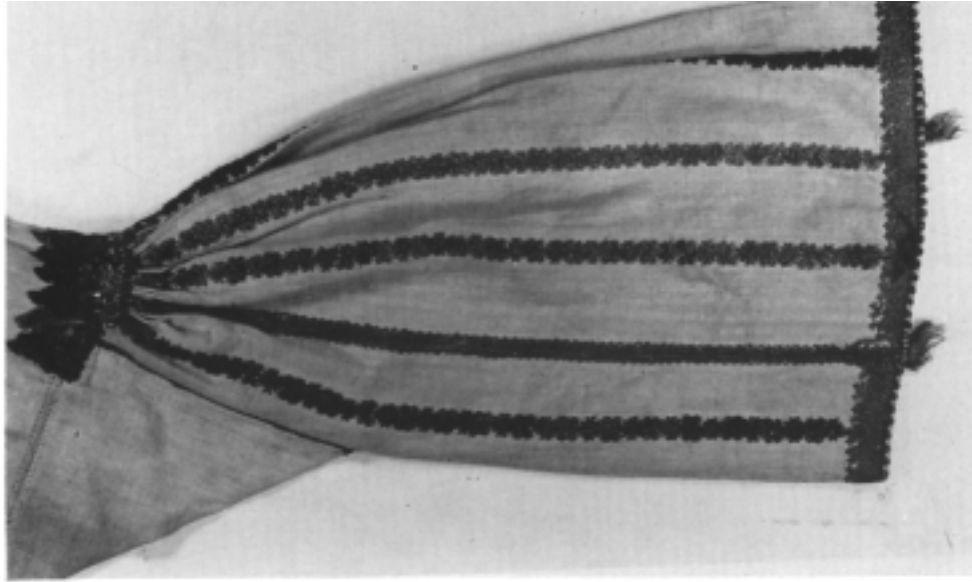


Fig. 24. Detail of sleeve, Dodecanese Islands, Tilos, 19th century, 47 cm. shoulder to sleeve edge. From the collection of Miss Henrietta F. Brewer of Oakland, California (Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, CI 53.21.7).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - linen, single, Z twist with cotton stripes

weft - linen, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - raised chevron, running, double running, straight, long-armed cross, and Cretan stitch on seam

colors - red, gold, peach, taupe, 2 shades of green, 2 shades of blue on white ground

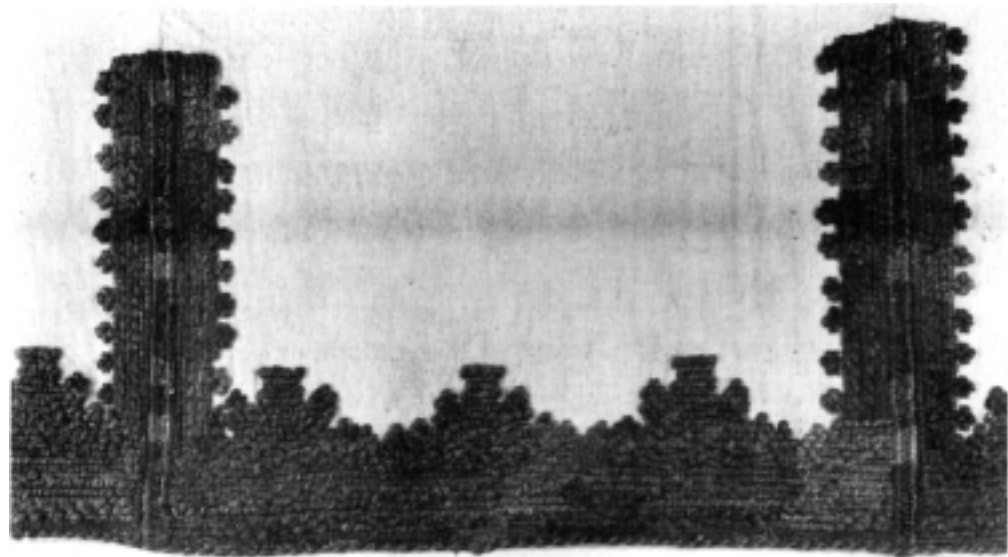


Fig. 25. Hem of chemise illustrated in Fig. 24, 7 cm. hem border.  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist

weft - cotton, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, 2 ply, S twist

stitches - raised chevron, running, double running, straight, long-armed cross,  
and Cretan stitch on seams

colors - red, green, gold, and faded black on white ground



Fig. 26. Hem detail, E. Aegean Islands, Psara, 19th century, 8 cm. hem border (Miss Irene Lewisohn, CI 42.93.1A).  
Photo: Gunnel Teitel.

Technical analysis:

warp - cotton, single, Z twist with wide silk selvedge stripes

weft - silk, single, Z twist

embellishment threads - silk, single, twist (?)

stitches -satin, eyelet, cross, hem, and lattice; seams joined with complex insertion stitch; hem edged with needlelace

colors - white on white ground

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\* Illustrated

## APPENDIX

List of Greek Women's Chemises in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA)  
and its Costume Institute (CI): Loan objects are prefaced by L..

### Accession Number

|      |              |                                   |
|------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| CI   | 37. 31. 5    | Attica                            |
| CI   | 37. 37. B    | Peloponnese, Corinth              |
| * CI | 39. 91. 7A   | Central Greece, Atalandi          |
| CI   | L41. 11. 39  | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | L41. 11. 40  | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | L41. 11. 44  | Peloponnese, Argolis-Corinthia    |
| * CI | L41. 11. 45  | Attica                            |
| CI   | L41. 11. 46  | Attica                            |
| * CI | 41.110. 23   | Attica                            |
| * CI | 41.110.118   | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | 42. 93. 1A   | E. Aegean Islands, probably Psara |
| CI   | 43. 12. 73   | Peloponnese, Argolis-Corinthia    |
| CI   | 46. 9.196    | Attica                            |
| * CI | 46. 9.197    | Attica, Vilia                     |
| * CI | 47.45A       | Peloponnese, Corinthia            |
| CI   | 48. 16       | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | 53. 21. 5    | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | 53. 21. 6    | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | 53. 21. 7    | Dodecanese Islands, Tilos         |
| * CI | 53. 21. 10   | Epirus                            |
| * CI | 53. 21. 19   | Ionian Islands, Leukas            |
| CI   | 53. 48. 2    | Attica                            |
|      | 53.131. 18   | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| *    | 53.131. 19   | Sporades Islands, Skiathos        |
| *    | 53.131. 20   | Epirus, Ioannina                  |
| CI   | 53.131. 21   | Ionian Islands, Leukas            |
| * CI | 61. 18. 1B   | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | 61. 18. 2B   | Thessaly, Trikeri                 |
| * CI | 1975.344. 10 | Dodecanese Islands, Patmos        |



**A LEGACY IN LACE:  
Marian Powys' Scrapbooks  
by June Burns Bové  
Photographs by Gunnel Teitel**

The legacy of enthusiasm and accurate knowledge left in certain published works is an enduring source of inspiration and information that becomes more valuable to students and scholars as time elapses. **LACE AND LACE-MAKING** by Marian Powys is such a book, first published in 1953 and back in print now after being unavailable for many years.

Marian Powys left scholars more than her published work, however, in the form of notebooks – really handmade scrapbooks – containing samples of lace from her collections complete with her handwritten notes. Although some of these notebooks were made for friends and are privately owned, two were gifts to the public and are available to serious students of the art and history of lace.

The first of these two notebooks was given by Marian Powys to the Palisades Free Library in Palisades, New York, in May of 1965. Inscribed, “To the Palisades Library from Marian Powys Grey,” the gift was presented at a reception for Miss Powys, a beloved and prominent citizen of that small, historic town at the edge of the Hudson River.

Containing eighty-two separate pieces of lace on fifty-five leaves of stiff grey paper, the leather-bound album is about nine by twelve inches and was really intended to contain photographs. Miss Powys wrote in dark blue ink and affixed her laces, often two to three to a page, with pins. Marian Powys believed that lace should be accessible, and she thought that the artistry of lace was best appreciated by direct observation. She began with samples of drawn work (*punto tirato*) and early Flemish bobbin lace and included pieces representing both various periods and centuries and the products of all the important lace-making centers through the mid-twentieth century.

As time has passed, unfortunately, the format Miss Powys chose for her notebook was not kind to the lace. The album contained perforated leaves so that every other leaf could be removed when material was placed on the pages, but Miss Powys did not remove any leaves, so the finished album did not close smoothly and the lace was crushed and wrinkled. In addition, the paper was of a high acid content, and the lace samples, in contact with the paper on both sides, have begun to discolor.

Realizing that it should not circulate, the Librarian had placed the album in the reserved section of the Palisades Free Library, but despite this precaution, the album was badly in need of conservation. This album has been lent to the Textile Study

Room of the Metropolitan Museum of Art so that the best way of conserving both the lace samples and Miss Powys' handwritten notes may be determined. As soon as the conservation work is completed, the album will be returned to the Palisades Free Library.

The second notebook was given to the Newark, New Jersey, Museum in 1966. J. Stewart Johnson, then Curator of Decorative Arts, had learned of the Palisades album and asked that Miss Powys supply a similar reference work for the Newark Museum Library. This book is a brown leatherette binder about twelve by fifteen inches in size with an inscription inside the front cover reading, "The Story of Lace from the XVI Century to the XX Century. Marian Powys." This inscription is in her handwriting, but the leaves all contain typed notations. Though records of the Museum do not indicate any conservation steps taken at the time of the receipt of the gift, it seems certain that Marian Powys' handwritten notes were transcribed by a typist onto acid-free rag paper leaves and that each sample was given a separate page whether or not Miss Powys had grouped them on a single page. Possibly the order of the samples was altered as well. Instead of following the chronological development of needlepoint and bobbin laces, with further indication for the important lace-making centers, as is the case with the Palisades notebook, the Newark album laces are grouped by country in alphabetical order. The scholar must be careful when examining these captions because some headings seem to have been carried over to samples to which they do not apply. In addition, the typist had difficulty with Miss Powys' handwriting and evidently did not know French, transcribing, for instance, *neige* as *nuje*. These are but small difficulties, however, as the samples are in a good state of preservation.

Eighteen samples in the Newark book are from the same pieces of lace as those in the Palisades book, but with a total of ninety samples in the Newark book, this compilation represents a further, rich variety. About ten of the samples may be cut from the pieces used for Miss Powys' published work, in the section called "The Key of Lace," but Miss Powys' son, Peter Powys Grey, has in his possession all of the prepared samples for the published book, and it is certain that Marian Powys chose larger, and in many cases, more interesting examples for the notebooks.

Making the photographs accompanying this article presented several problems. The Palisades album, a bound book, could not be held completely flat. In both cases the paper does not afford enough of a color contrast for a clear picture. Finally, removal of the pins securing the laces to the pages of the Palisades album will be a conservation problem because a number of them bear evidence of corrosion. In the case of the Newark album, moving the pins might have damaged the laces. These photographs were made by inserting small pieces of colored paper, trimmed to size, under each lace, avoiding the pins.

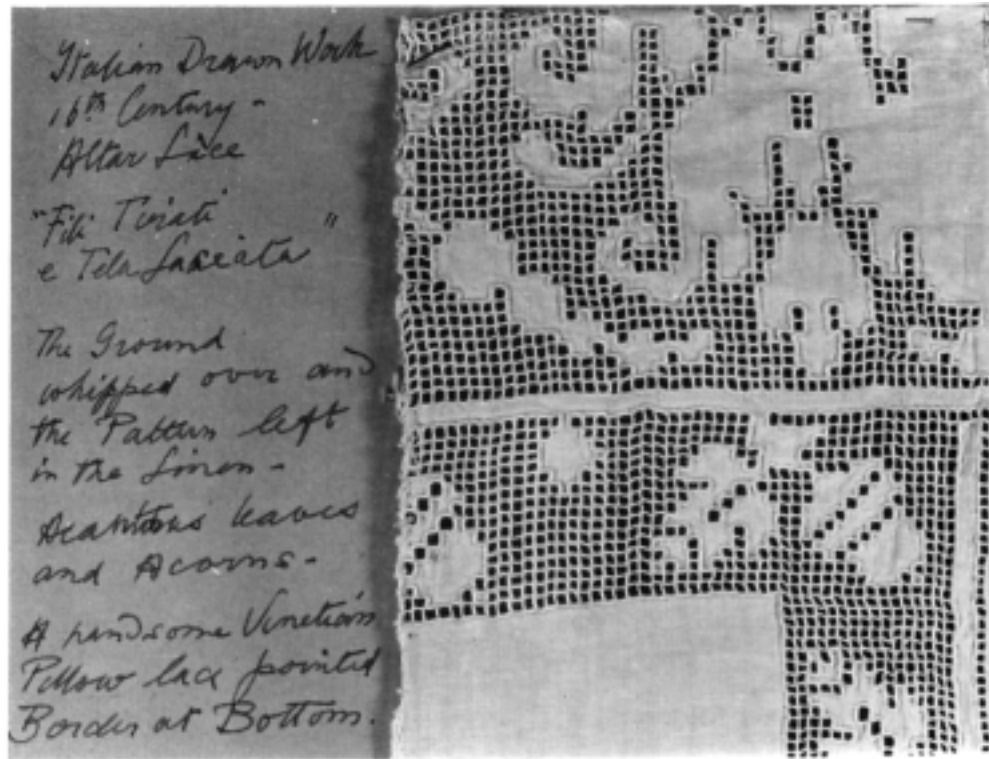
The following selection of pictures from both albums is arranged in the order Miss Powys used for the Palisades album. The texts of the captions in both albums

are in italics.

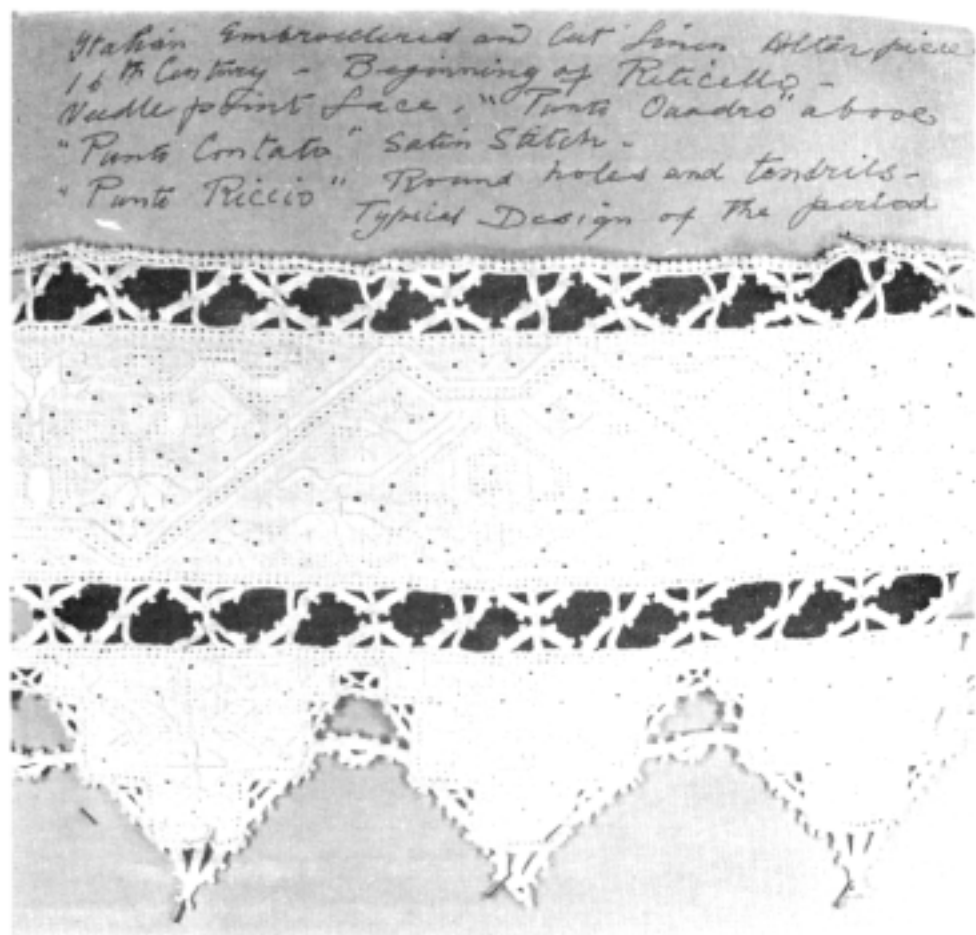
The mood of Miss Powys' handwritten captions is informal, almost conversational, as if she were commenting on each sample for the student. It is for this reason that an effort will be made to preserve the handwritten notation in the conservation of the Palisades album. Where possible, the photographs include her handwriting.

The Palisades album contains eighty-two samples of lace and the Newark album, ninety. Scholars wishing to examine the Newark book should write to Mr. Ulysses Dietz, Curator of Decorative Arts, Newark Museum, Post Office Box 540, Newark, New Jersey 07101, as the album is kept in the storage area, not the library. Those interested in seeing the Palisades album should wait for a year from the date of this publication, as the conservation work must be done before the book is returned to the reserve section of the Palisades Free Library in Palisades, New York.

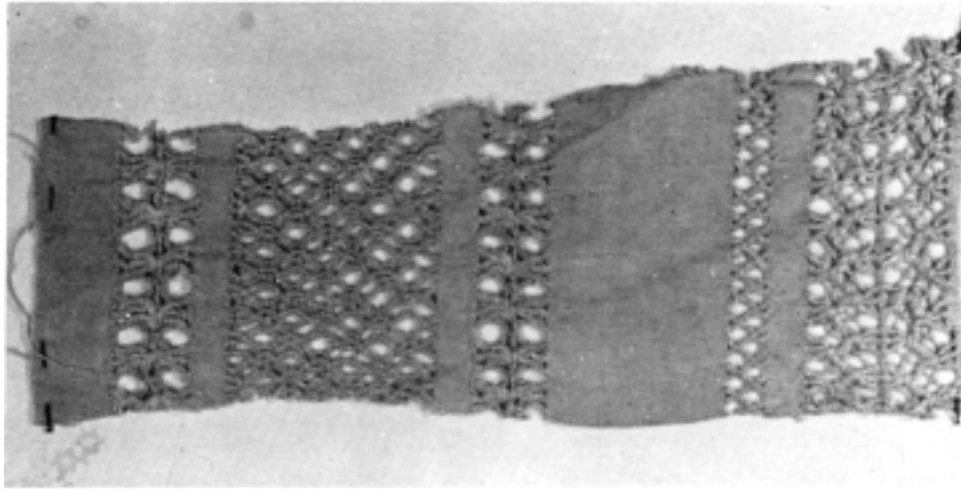
Miss Powys' enthusiasm and her love of the beauty of lace lives after her not only in her published work, but in these albums she so thoughtfully left to us.



1. Palisades: Italian Drawn Work 16th Century--Altar Lace "Fili Tirati e Tela Laciata"  
The ground whipped over and the pattern left in the linen.  
Acanthus leaves and Acorns--  
A handsome Venetian Pillow lace pointed Border at Bottom (not pictured).  
Miss Powys begins the Palisades album with examples such as this one showing the transition from laces incorporating selected warp and weft threads from a woven fabric to free laces.



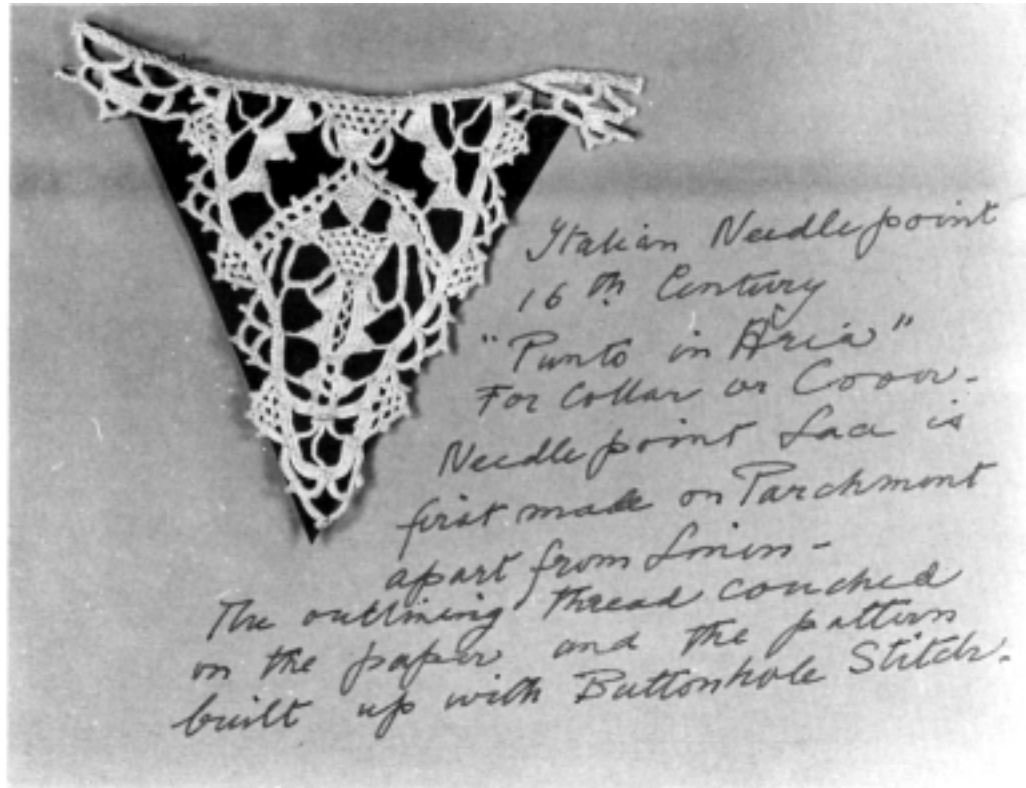
2. Palisades: Italian embroidered and cut linen Altarpiece 16th Century--Beginning of Reticello--Needlepoint Lace, "Punto Quadro" above "Punto Contato" Satin Stitch. "Punto Riccio" Round holes and tendrils--Typical design of the period. Another piece of this lace was used for the illustration in LACE AND LACE MAKING, page 9 bottom. A further sample is in the Newark album, 66.649A66, mounted wrong side up. This may not be an error, as Miss Powys sometimes pinned her laces to show the working on the wrong side.



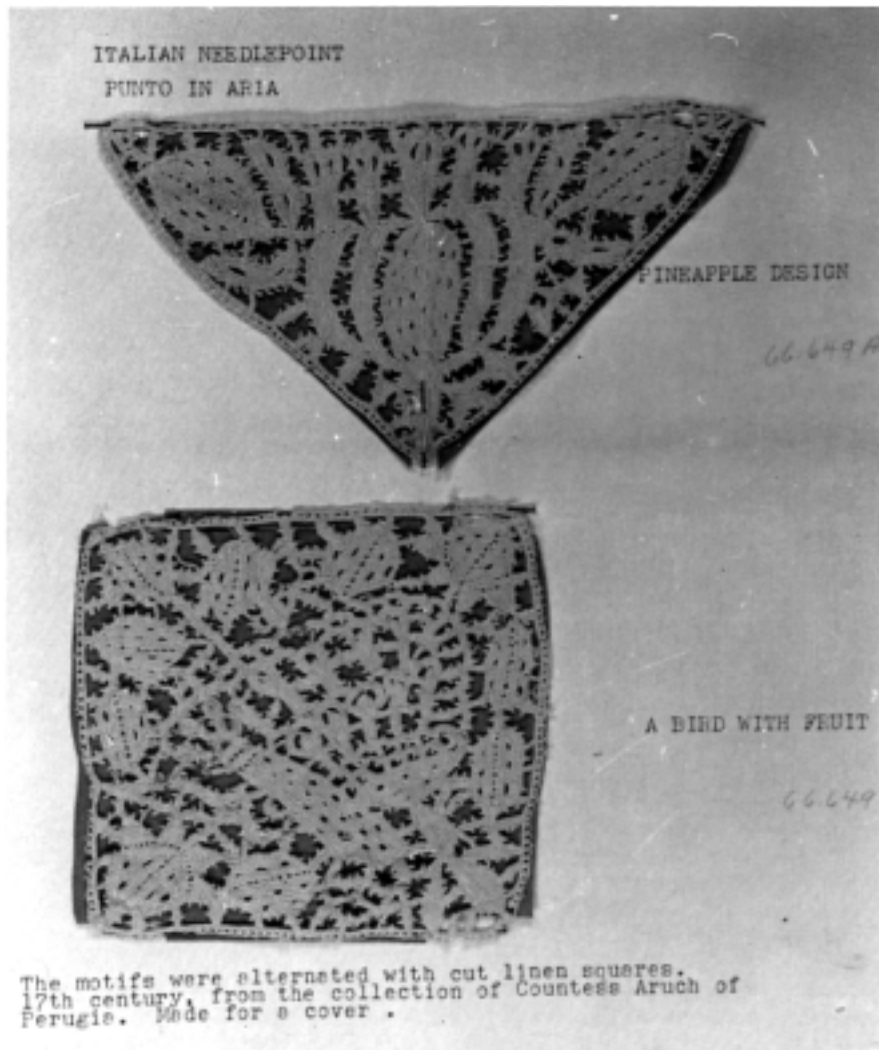
3. Newark 66.649A87 *Spanish Drawn Work Part of a decorated shirt or cover 17th century.*



4. Newark 66.649A64 *Italian Reticello Geometrical pattern, needlepoint, 16th century.*



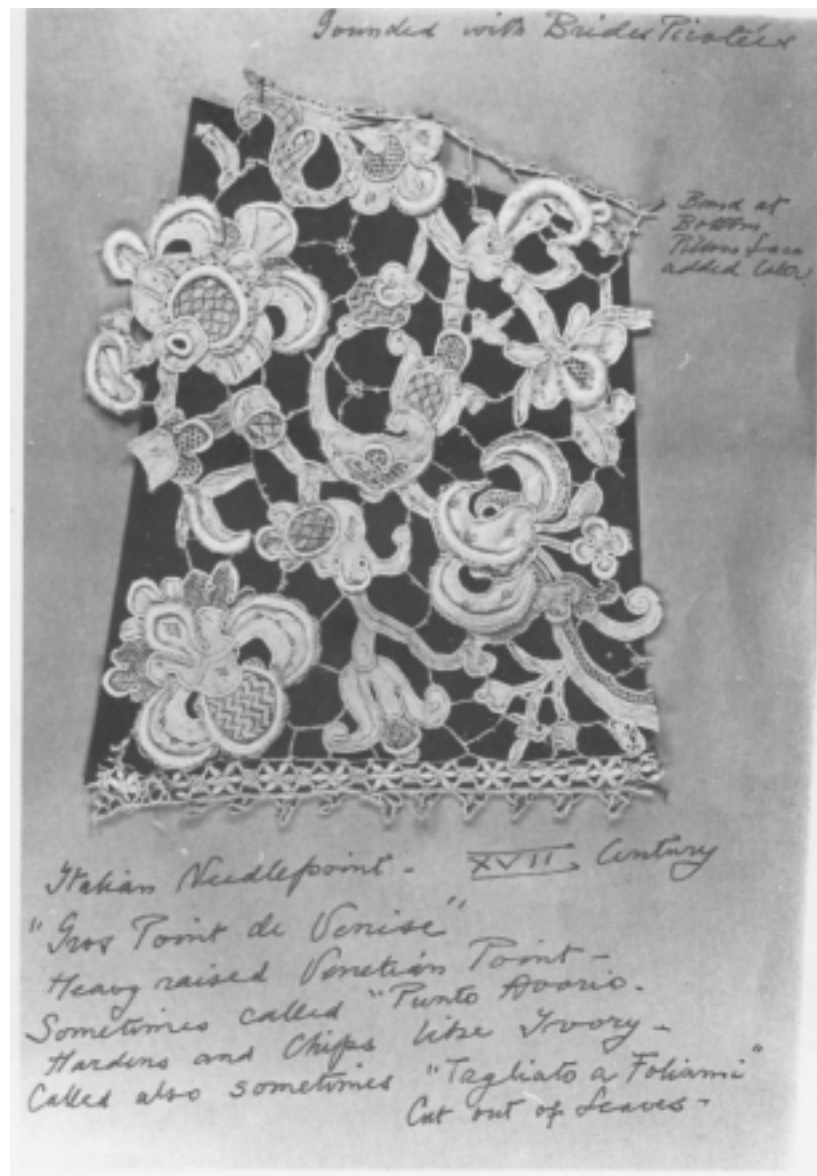
5. Palisades: *Italian needlepoint 16th Century "Punto in Aria" For Collar or Cover--Needlepoint lace is first made on Parchment apart from Linen--The outlining thread couched on the paper and the pattern built up with Buttonhole Stitch.*



6. Newark 66.649A62 (triangle shape) 66.649A63 (rectangle) *Italian Needlepoint Punto in Aria*

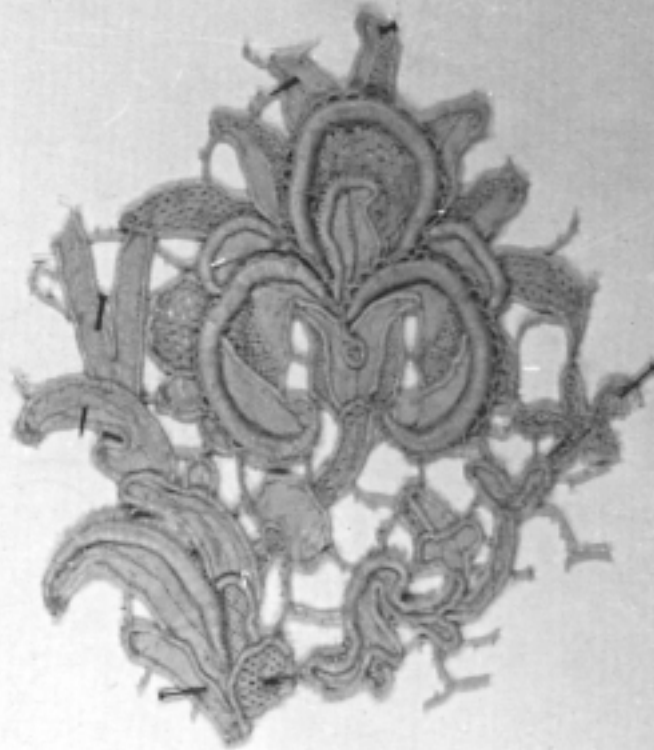
This is one of the few leaves in the Newark album with two samples on a single page. The upper triangular piece is labeled *pineapple design* and the rectangular piece, *a bird with fruit*. The caption reads, *The motifs were alternated with cut linen squares. 17th century, from the collection of Countess Aruch (sic.) of Perugia. Made for a cover.* In the Palisades album is a rectangular motif, similar to these, also from Perugia and dated by Miss Powys XVI century.





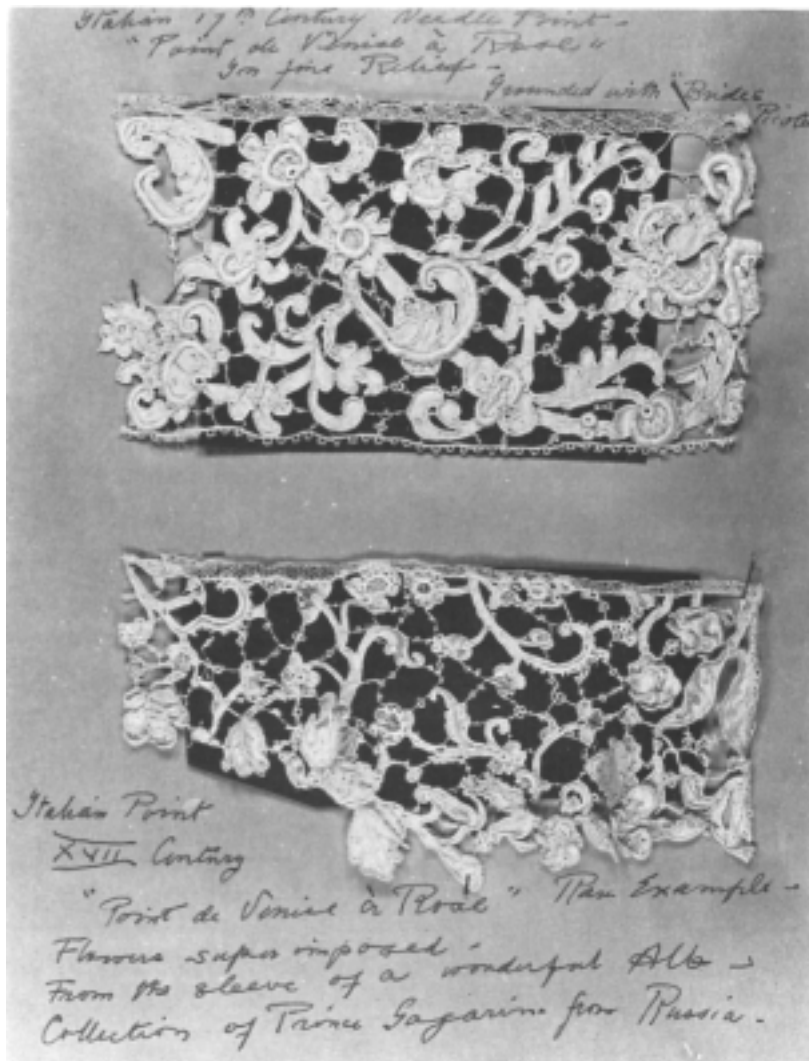
7. Palisades: Notation at the top: *Grounded with Brides Picotées*  
 Notation upper right: *Band at bottom--Pillow Lace added later. Italian Needlepoint XVII Century "Gros Point de Venise" Heavy raised Venetian Point--Sometimes called "Puntò Avorio--Hardens and Chips like Ivory--Called also sometimes "Tagliato a Foliami" Cut out of leaves.* The author has not been able to find a published reference for this explanation of the term "Puntò Avorio."

ITALIAN NEEDLEPOINT-GROS POINT DE VENISE



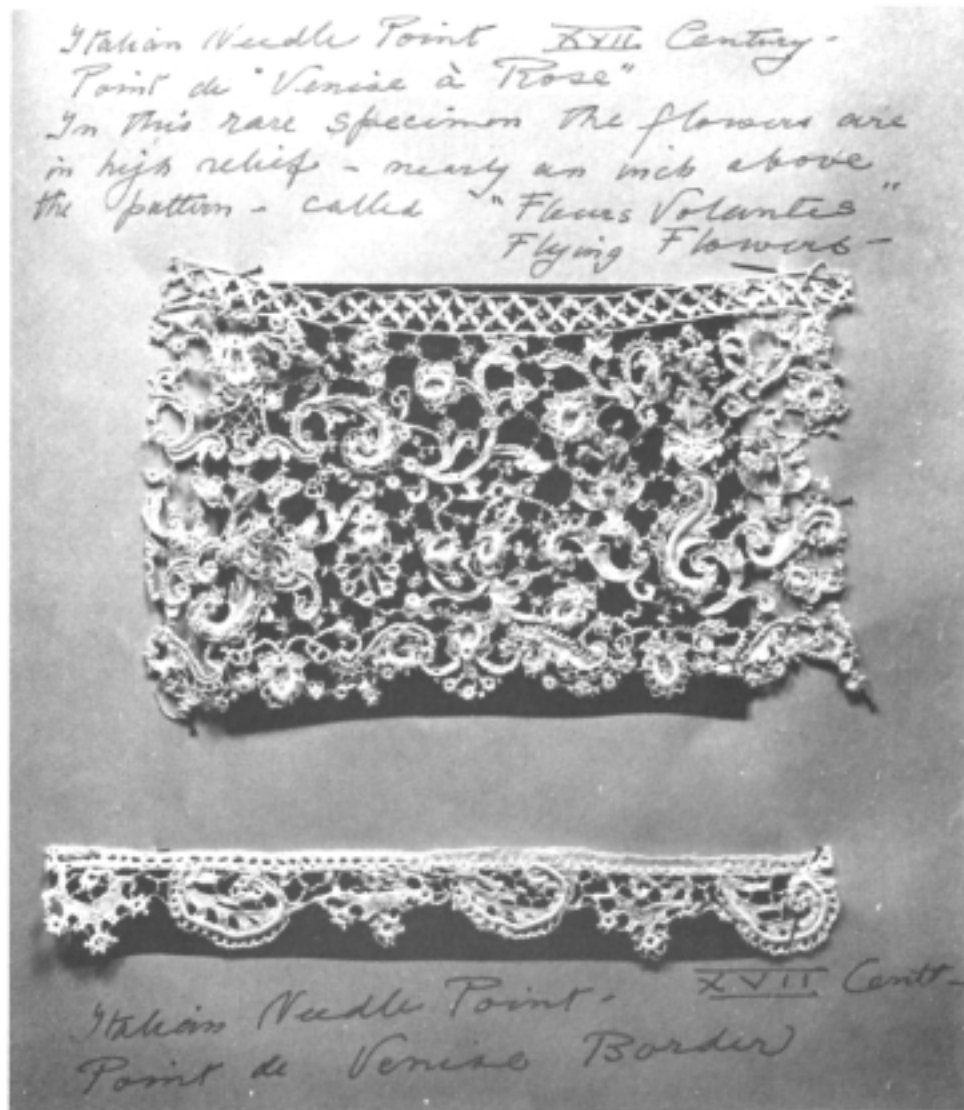
With a variety of fillings, 17th century

8. Newark 66.649A57 *Italian Needlepoint--Gros Point de Venise With a variety of fillings, 17th century.*

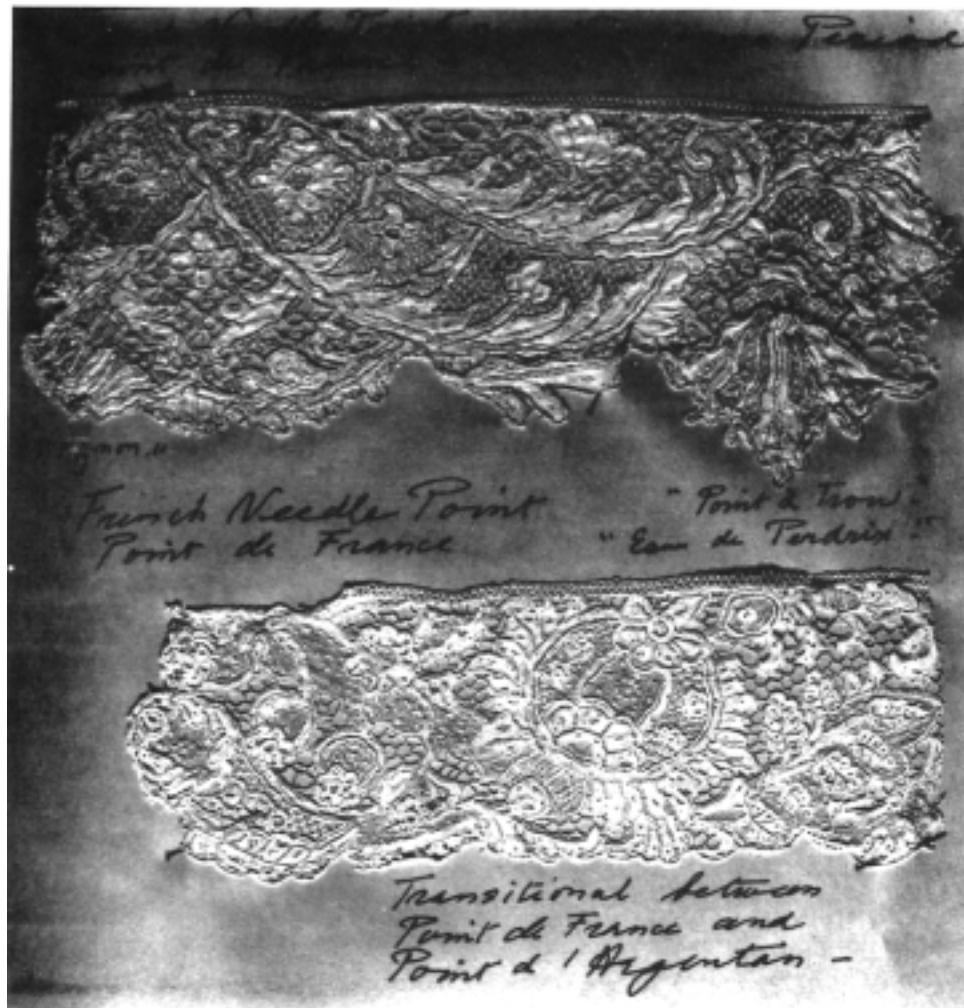


9. Palisades: Upper Piece: Italian 17th Century Needlepoint--Point de Venise à Rose," In fine relief--Grounded with Brides Picotées.  
 Lower Piece: Italian Point XVII Century "Point de Venise à Rose" Rare Example--Flowers superimposed--From the sleeve of a wonderful Alb--Collection of Prince Gagarin from Russia.

These samples of lace and the two in the photograph immediately following are among the exciting surprises of the Palisades album. Incredibly delicate, the petals and flowers are in nearly three-dimensional form, though the crushed condition of the laces at present prevents the camera from revealing these details, especially those of the "flying flowers" in the next picture.



10. Palisades: Upper Piece: *Italian Needlepoint XVII Century--Point de Venise à Rose*  
*In this rare specimen the flowers are in high relief--nearly an inch above the pattern--called "Fleurs Volantes" Flying Flowers--*  
 Lower Piece: *Italian Needle Point--XVII Cent-- Point de Venise Border*  
 The lower piece is on page 12 of *LACE AND LACE MAKING*, the third example down, in reversed position, possibly because of a reversed photographic image. Another piece of this lace is 66.649A59 in the Newark album. With the preceding three magnificent examples in hand, one wonders why Miss Powys chose this narrow border for her book.



11. Palisades: Upper Piece: *French Needle Point--Regence Period Point de France*  
 Asterix at upper left: *Point Mignon*  
 Lower Piece: *French Needle Point "Point à Trou" Point de France "Oeil de Perdrix"*  
*Transitional between Point de France and Point d'Argentan--*  
 A delight in both albums, for both the expert and beginner, is Miss Powys' inclusion of transitional pieces and laces less frequently seen, such as the Point de Sedan sample from the Newark album which follows.

FRENCH NEEDLE POINT  
Point de Sedan



Brides Picotées with fine fillings  
Regence period

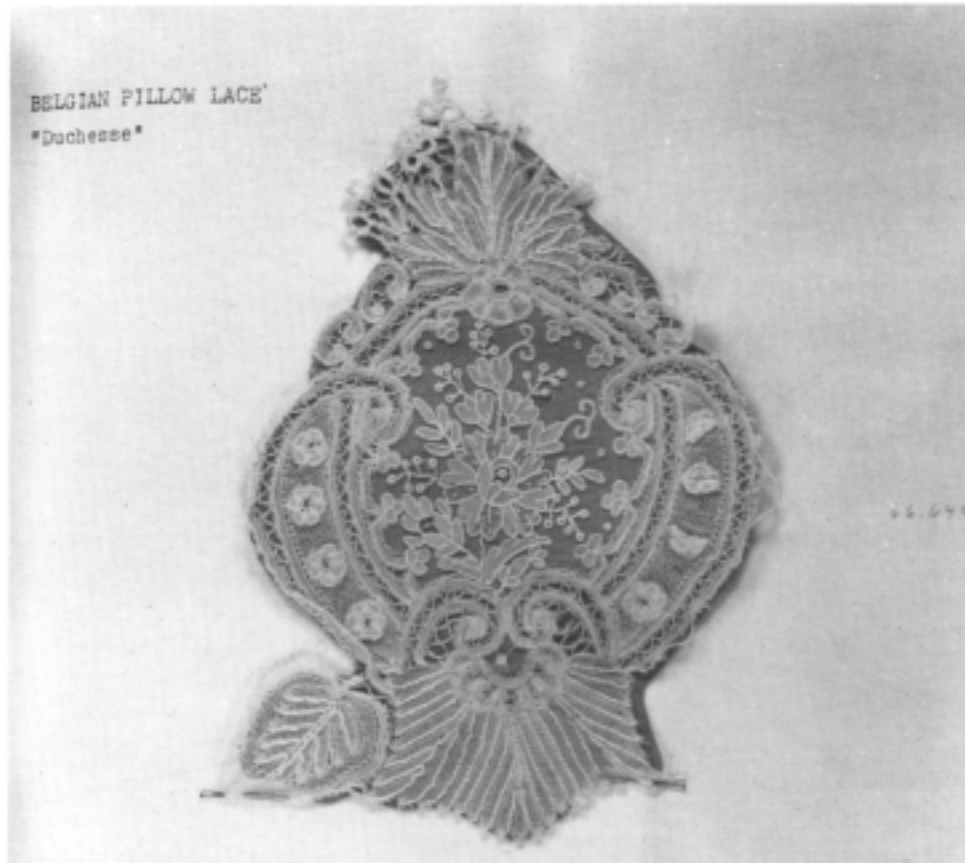
12. Newark 66.649A37 *French Needle Point, Point de Sedan Brides Picotées with fine fillings--Regence Period.*



13. Palisades: *French Needlepoint, Point d'Argentan Louis XV period. Grounded with the Brides Bouclées--Repointed (?--word not legible) Mesh: 1/10 inch with 6 sides, worked each with 6 buttonhole stitches--Fine Filling called the 'Partridge Eye' and 'Point Mignon' Remarks to the left: Well balanced floral design--Finest Quality.*



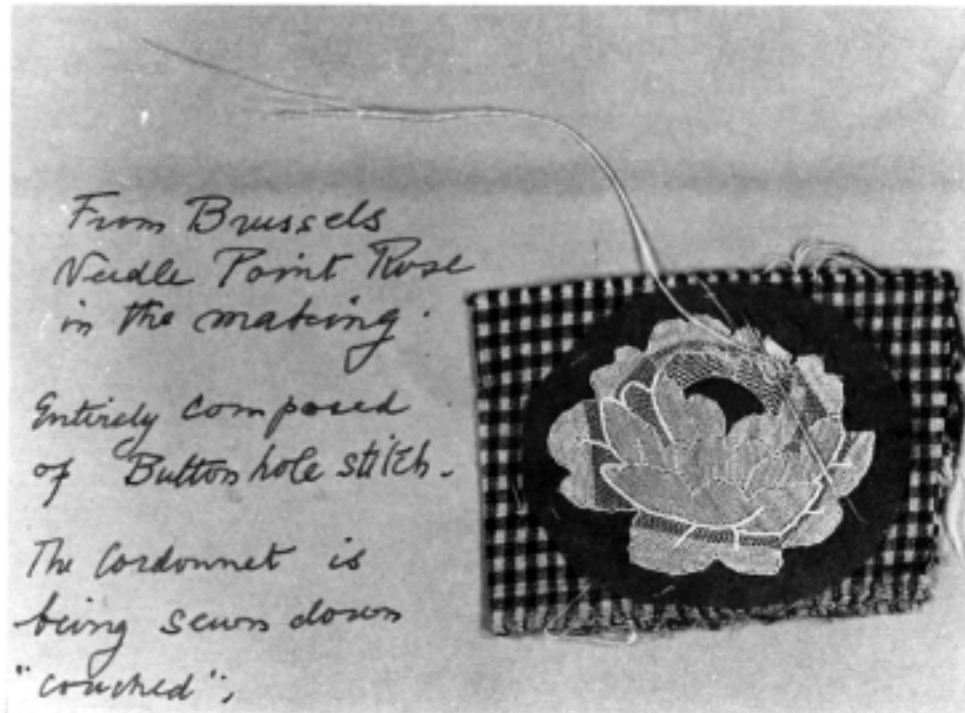
14. Newark 66.649A35 *French Needle Point, Point d'Argentan with Brides Bouclées Hexagonal mesh--buttonholed on each side--very fine work. The petit reseau treated as a filling. Handsome Floral Pattern with curving leaves, flowers and buds, XVIII Century. These two laces are very similar; the leaf sprays, flowers and bottom scalloped borders are identical. They may be the work of the same maker.*



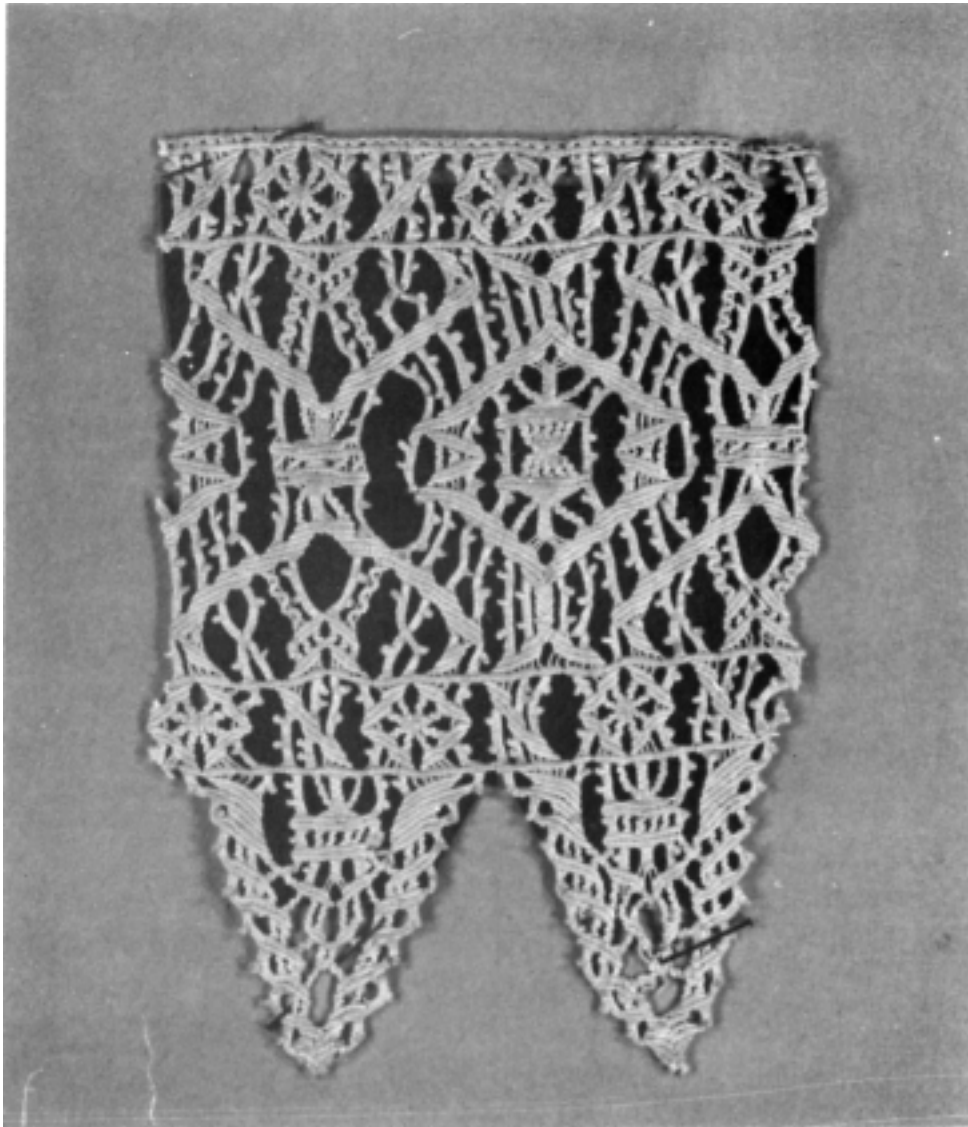
15. Newark 66.649A5 *Belgian Pillow Lace, "Duchesse"* In fine relief with raised flowers and a large central motif of Brussels needlepoint "Rose Point". Laces made facing down. First the raised work, then whole stitch attached with sewings (thread looped up and a bobbin slipped through), Then half stitch, then whole stitch with picots on the border. XIX Century.

This caption is an example of the importance Miss Powys attaches to understanding the construction of the various laces. The following picture from the Palisades album is one of the samples from page 164 (Plate 95 #C) of LACE AND LACE-MAKING.

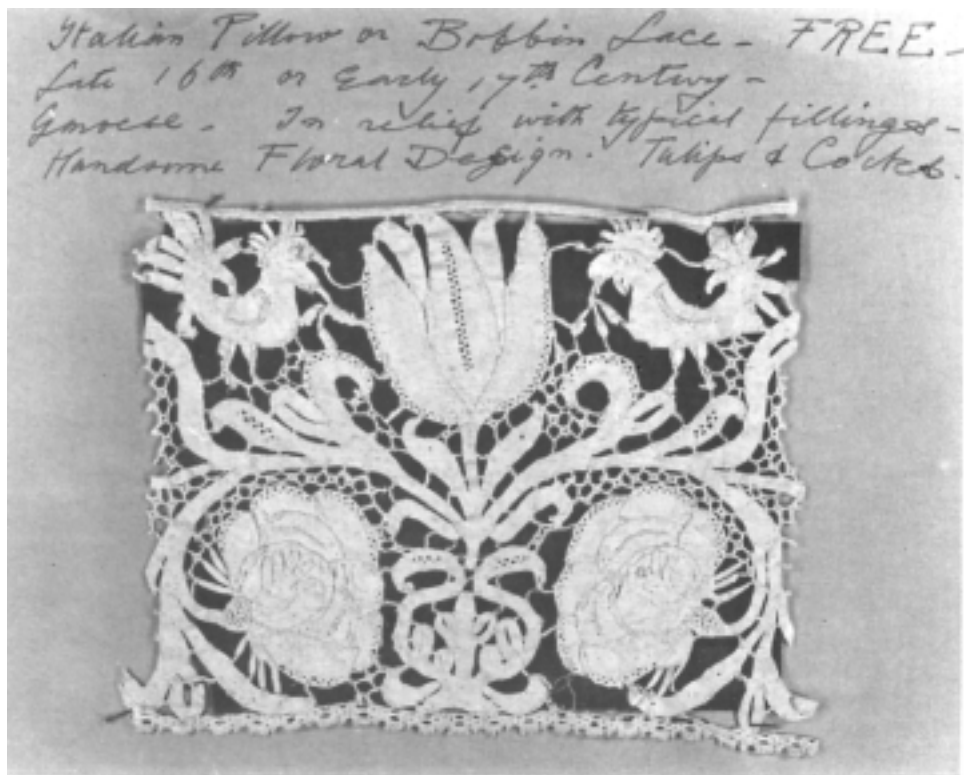




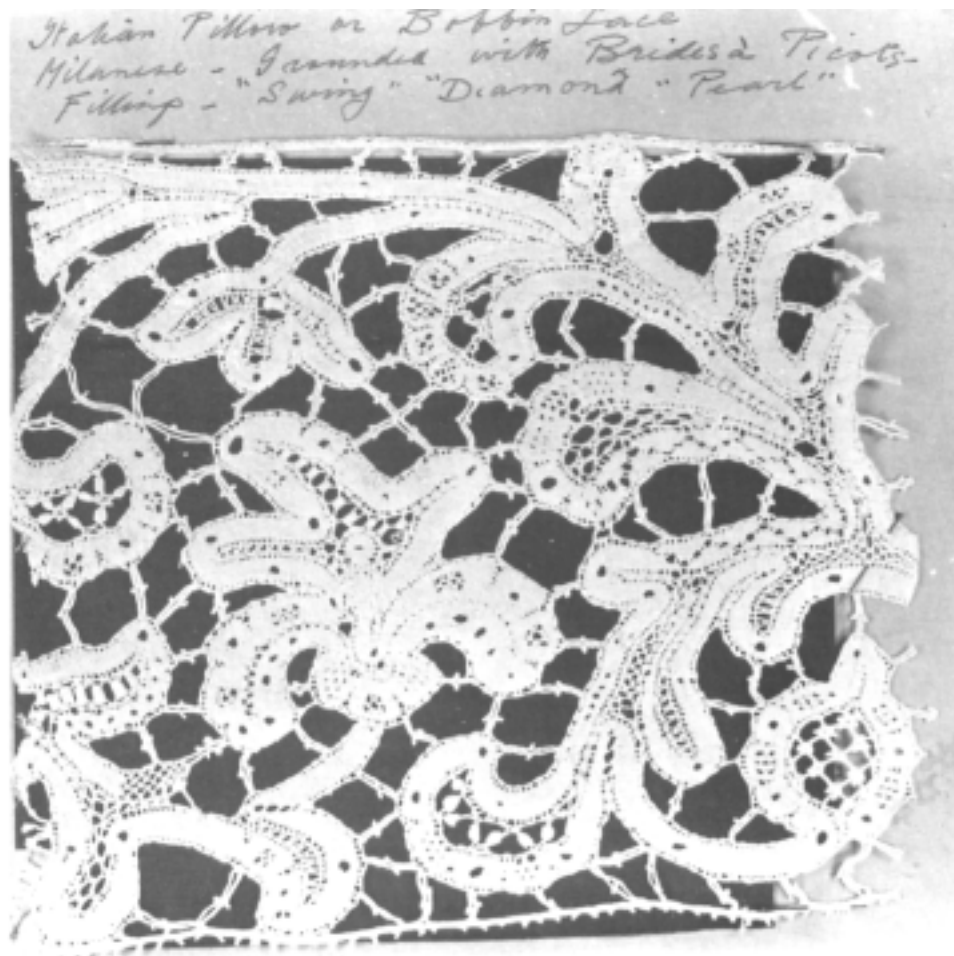
16. Palisades: *From Brussels, Needle Point Rose in the making. Entirely composed of Buttonhole stitch. The cordonnet is being sewn down "couched."*



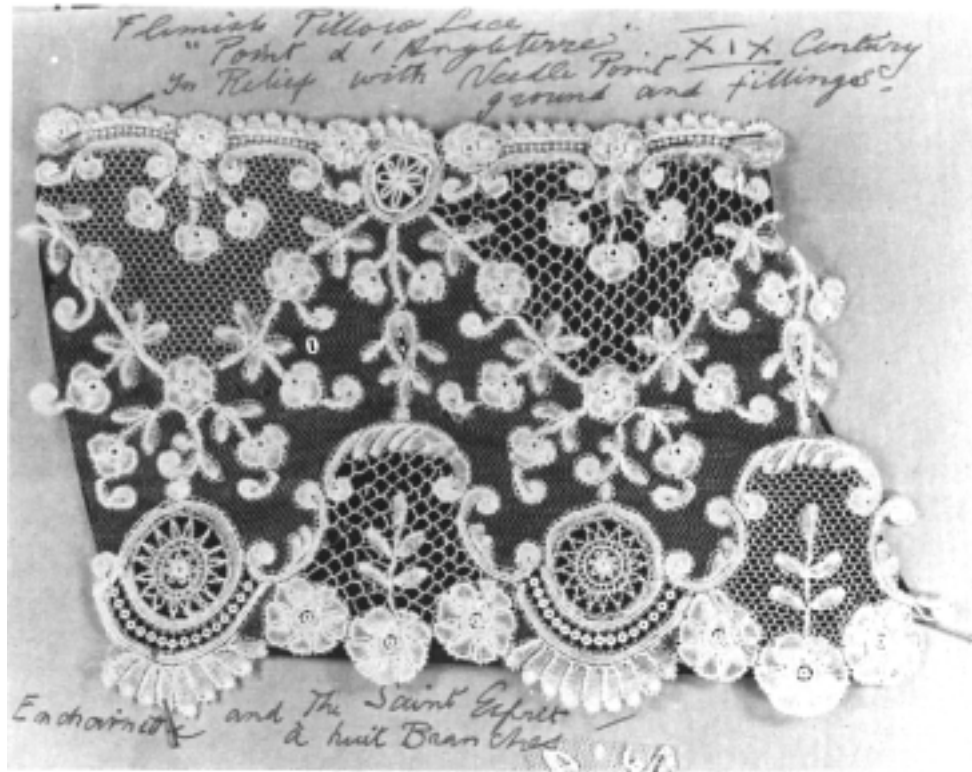
17. Palisades: *Italian 16th Century Knotted Thread work--“Punto a Grappo”*  
On page 19 of *LACE AND LACE-MAKING* Miss Powys gives a different example of Italian macramé of the sixteenth century. Thus in both her book and in the *Palisades* album, she places the early sample of macramé, made of knotted threads without the use of bobbins, just before her examples of free bobbin laces, which she classifies by construction, explaining that the motifs are made first and the ground put in afterwards.



18. Palisades: *Italian Pillow or Bobbin Lace--FREE Late 16th or Early 17th century--Genoese--In relief with typical fillings-- Handsome floral Design. Tulips and Cocks.* This lace is a piece of the same sample given by Miss Powys on the top of page 20 in *LACE AND LACE-MAKING*. It might have been cut from the right side of the lace pictured here. As the piece in the book is but a small area between the main pattern repeats, it is only when this lace is examined in the Palisades album that one understands why Miss Powys gave it such a prominent place in her published work.



19. Palisades: *Italian Pillow or Bobbin Lace Milanese--Grounded with Brides à Picots--Fillings--"Swing" "Diamond" "Pearl"*  
 In the Newark album, 66.649A74 is a piece of this same lace. It is captioned *Italian Pillow or Bobbin Lace; Milanese a Brides; With fillings like Flemish*. That Miss Powys was under some pressure to complete this album for the Newark Museum is evident when one examines 66.649A27 which is a piece of the identical lace but pinned to the page the wrong side up. It is labeled *Old Flemish Lace With the Swing Filling and others. Brick and Diamond. XVII Century*.



20. Palisades: *Flemish Pillow Lace, "Point d'Angleterre" XIX Century In relief with Needle Point ground and fillings--*  
 Notations at bottom: *Enchainette and The Saint Esprit à huit Branches--*  
 This lace is duplicated in the Newark album, 66.649A31, with a larger sample. Miss Powys' description is more detailed, so-called *Point d'Angleterre. Needlepoint ground--called "Point de Gaze". Needlepoint filling. The "Point d'Esprit à huit Branches" "Enchainettes," "Etoile".*



21. Palisades: Upper Piece: *English Pillow or Bobbin Lace--"Honiton" A Primrose from Devonshire--In fine relief--light and shade made by the use of whole & half stitch.*  
 Lower Piece: *A fern from the lanes of the West Country-- "A Lady fern" in relief.*  
 To the left of the primrose motif is a bobbin for the making of this lace, wound with thread. While it is an interesting addition, this bobbin has deformed the pages of the album. Similar sprays of primroses are on page 25 of *LACE AND LACE-MAKING* and in the Newark album, 66.649A20, where it is labeled *A Primrose--Drawn from life*. It is known from members of her family and from her own writings that Marian Powys found design inspiration in her garden and her extensive knowledge of wild flowers. Quite possibly these laces are her own design.

ENGLISH LACE - DEVON PILLOW LACE  
"Honiton"



A Bat - in relief with swing fillings

XX Century

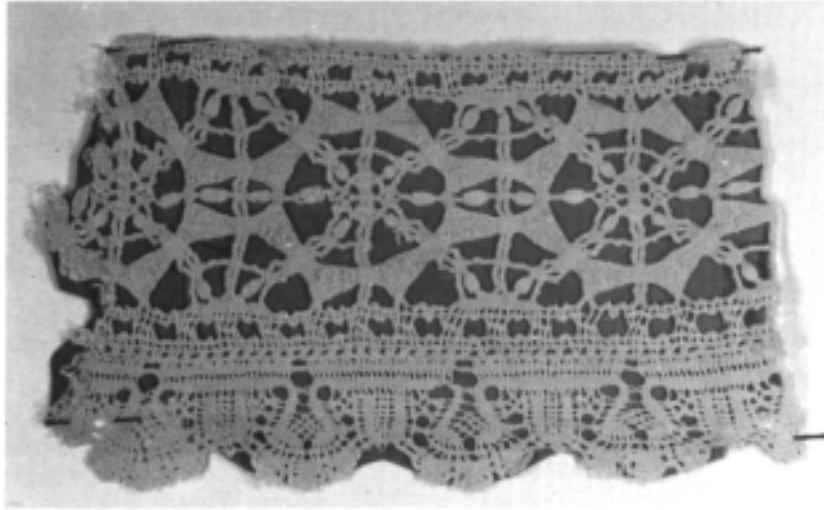
*designed by Marian Powys.*

22. Newark 66.649A21 *English Lace--Devon Pillow Lace "Honiton" A Bat--in relief with swing fillings XX Century Designed by Marian Powys.* There is no doubt that this lace was designed and made by Miss Powys. The water-color design and other examples are in possession of her son.

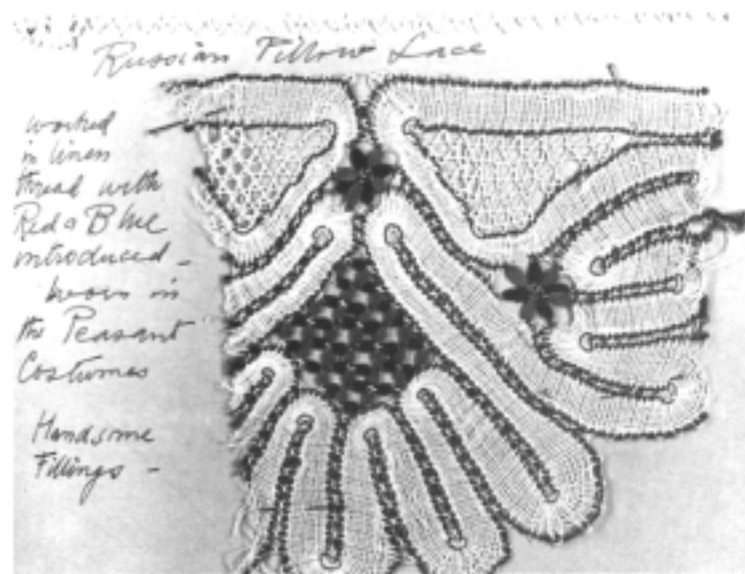


23. Palisades: Upper Piece: *Italian Pillow Lace XVII Century "Abruzzi"*  
Lower Piece: *Italian Peasant Lace Border. A good design of a Lion and a Fountain with birds.* Miss Powys does not neglect the peasant laces and gives good examples in both albums.

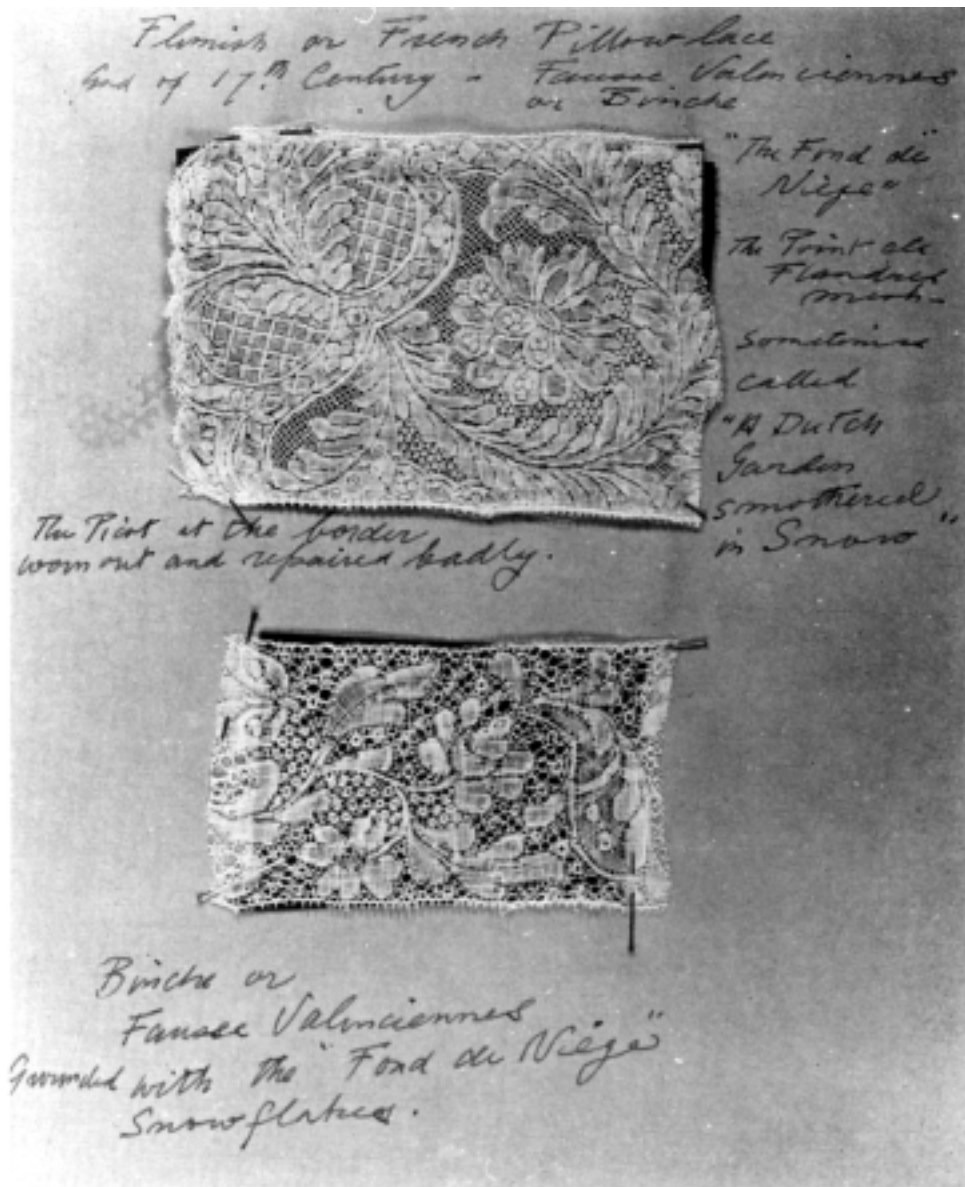




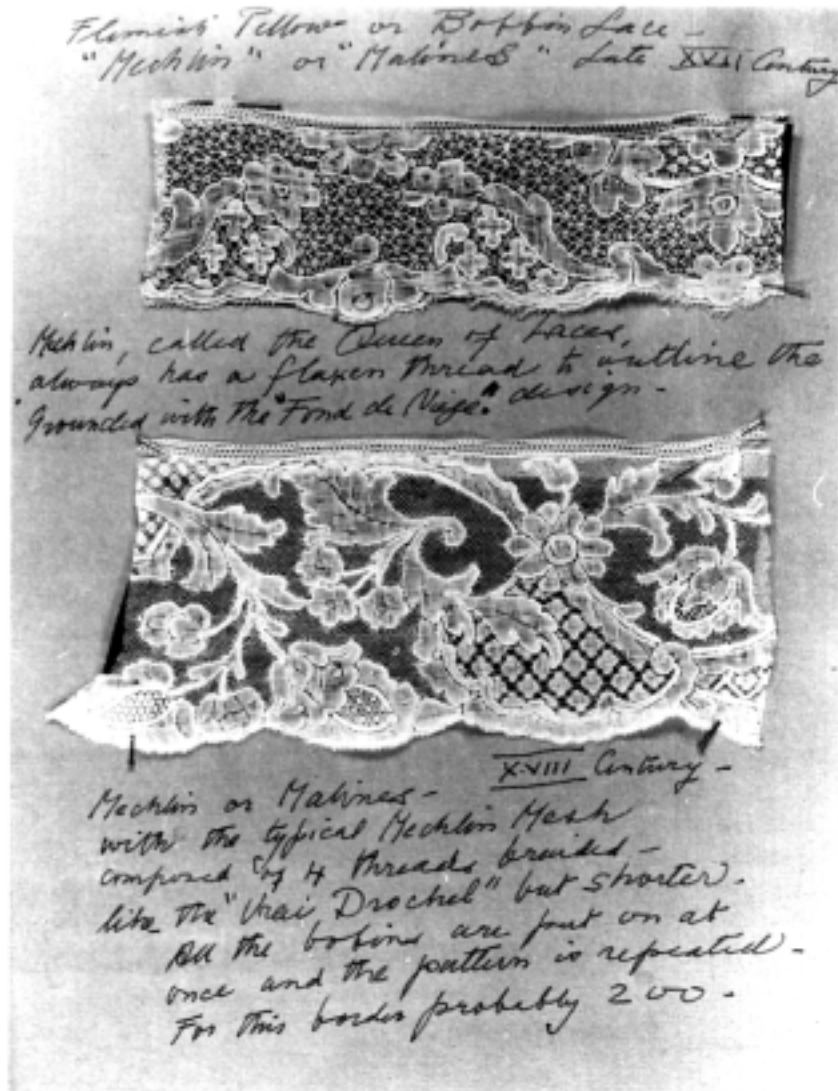
24. Newark 66.649A75 *Italian Pillow or Bobbin Lace Genoese, With lead works, XVIII century.* The sketch of the lead works was evidently transcribed from Miss Powys' notations.



25. Palisades: *Russian Pillow Lace Worked in linen thread with Red and Blue introduced--Worn in the Peasant Costumes. Handsome fillings--*



26. Palisades: Upper Piece: *Flemish or French Pillow Lace End of the 17th Century--Fausse Valenciennes or Binche, "The Fond de Nieve," the Point de Flandres mesh, sometimes called "a Dutch Garden smothered in snow." The Picot at the border worn out and repaired badly.*  
Lower Piece: *Binche or Fausse Valenciennes, Grounded with the "Fond de Nieve" snowflakes.*

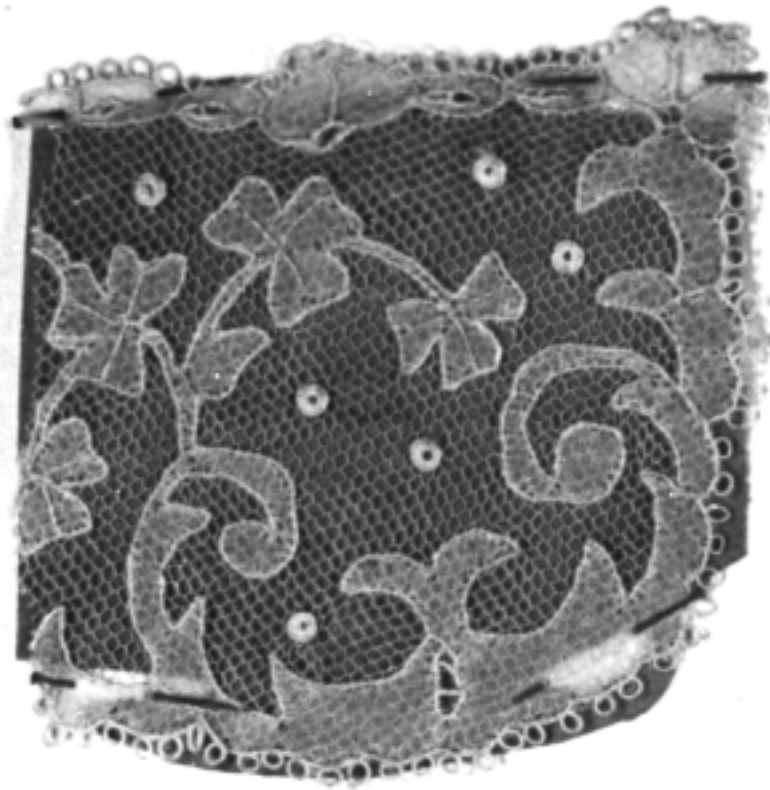


27. Palisades: Upper Piece: Flemish Pillow or Bobbin Lace "Mechlin" or "Malines" late XVII Century Mechlin, called the Queen of Laces, always has a flaxen thread to outline the design. Grounded with the "Fond de Nige" design.  
Lower Piece: Mechlin or Malines XVIII Century-- With typical Mechlin mesh composed of 4 threads braided like the "Vrai Drochel" but shorter. All the bobbins are put on at once and the pattern is repeated--for this border probably 200.  
These laces, and the two on the preceding page, are outstanding pieces of their types and are far superior to the examples given by Miss Powys in LACE AND LACE-MAKING.

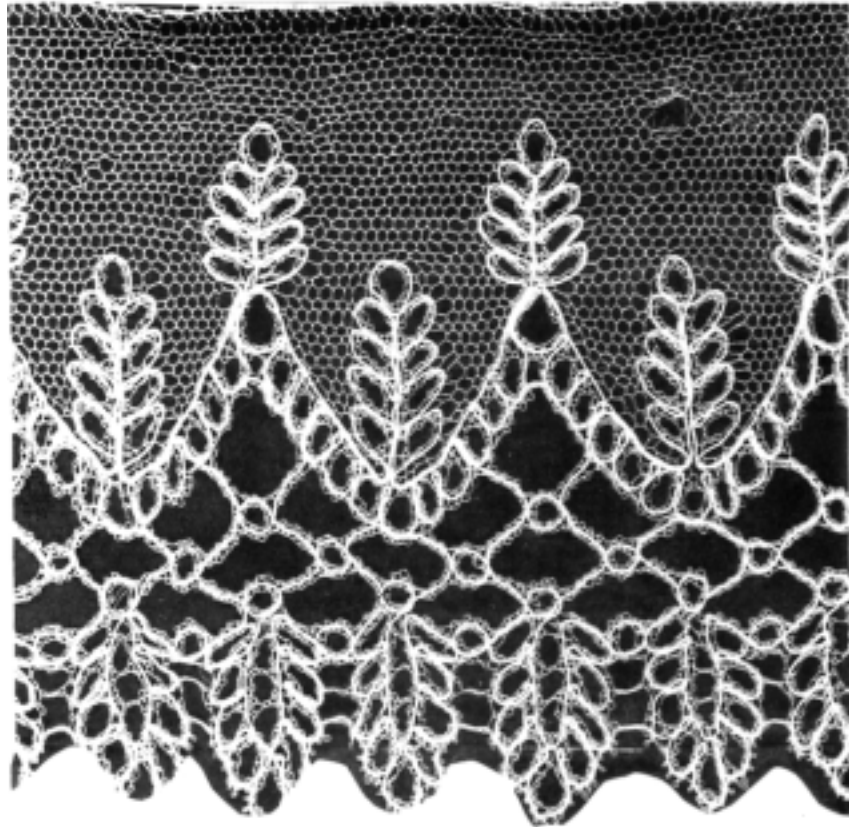
Irish Needle Point "Youghal"  
 Fine Quality -  
 Grounded with Brides à Picot -  
 Fillings as in Point de France -  
 "L'Oeil de Perdrix" Partridge Eye -



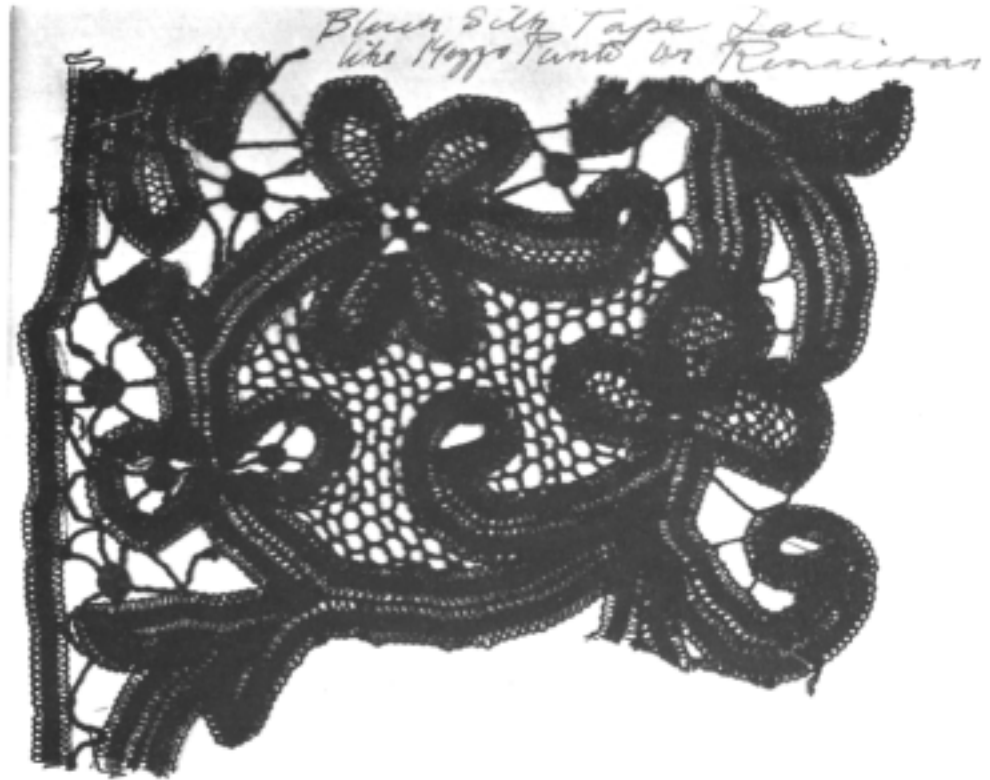
28. Palisades: Irish Needle Point "Youghal", Fine Quality Grounded with Brides à Picot--Fillings as in Point de France--"L'Oeil de Perdrix" Partridge Eye. Another piece of this lace is in the Newark album as 66.649A48. It is captioned *Grounded with Brides Picoteés. Starpointed fillings allied to the "Pheasant Eye."* Influenced by Point de France. Fine Quality. 19th Century. In both albums there is a generous variety of Irish laces including various types of Limerick and Carrickmacross and samples of Irish Crochet.



29. Newark 66.649A51 Carrickmacross Applique with Point d'Esprit Drawn pattern on shiny white material. Tack net all over. Tack linen or muslin all over. Sew down (couching) heavy thread on outline of design & making picots at border. Cut away the background, leaving the net. Buttonhole stars at intervals for decoration of ground.



30. Newark 66.649A82 *Spanish Blonde Lace Spanish Silver Blonde, the lace for Mantillas is black or white.* This large handsome example is a little more than five inches deep. Miss Powys gives numerous examples of Spanish laces, especially in the Newark album.



31. Palisades: *Black Silk Tape Lace like Mezzo Punto or Renaissance*. There are samples of black lace and laces of silk in both albums.

## NOTES ON AUTHORS

**June Burns Bové.** Mrs. Bové, a long-time enthusiastic student of the textile arts, founded the Costume and Textiles Collection of The Hermitage, a state historic site in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey. Recently she has been working on exhibitions for the Monmouth Museum and the Montclair Art Museum, both also in New Jersey, and for the New York Historical Society and the Jewish Museum in New York City. For eleven years she has been a Costume Institute volunteer and was asked by Mrs. Vreeland to be a special staff member for the last four Exhibitions of the Year.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Ruth Hellmann.** Mrs. Hellmann, a Barnard graduate in chemistry, has supplemented this field of professional endeavor with a scientist's study of lace and lace structures. More important, she is a lover of lace, as well. Her generous and expert volunteer work on the Metropolitan Museum's lace collection has extended for more than ten years.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Edith Appleton Standen.** Edith Standen is a long-time member of the staff of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her definitive catalogue of the Museum's tapestries dating from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries will be published by the Museum shortly. Not only will it be monument of superb scholarship, it will be written in the brilliant literary style which is another of Miss Standen's gifts.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Gunnel Teitel.** Mrs. Teitel has made needle lace and taught the art of needle lace for many years. She has worked as a volunteer-consultant with Mrs. Hellmann on the Met's great lace collection for some time now. Fortunately for the Textile Study Room, one of her most developed skills (along with scuba diving) is fine photography.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Dr. Linda Welters.** Dr. Welters has done extensive field work in Greece. She is at present on the faculty of the University of Rhode Island's department of Textiles, Merchandising and Design, in Kingston.

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## BOOK NOTES

Margaret Abegg, *APROPOS PATTERNS*, for Embroidery, Lace and Woven Textiles. Vol. IV, Schriften der Abegg-Stiftung Bern. Switzerland, 1978. (in English) Printed by Stämpfli & Cie AG, Bern.

Many who are interested in needle work, whether lace making or embroidery, and have looked into its lineage know the pattern books of the 16th and 17th centuries as the forerunners of our current pattern books. Very few, however, have ever seen one or even a picture of one or yet the kinds of patterns in them. Their very nature has led to their destruction through pricking, or tearing or simply wearing out by handling. Most of those that have survived, being extremely rare, are by now in museums or in private collections. Their importance historically rests on the fact that they were among the first books printed with movable type, and artistically they preserve a record of the development of lace which was to become so important economically and socially in the 17th and 18th centuries.

While there have been listings of these rare books with woodblock illustrations, a more complete compilation, perhaps definitive, was made by Professor Arthur Lotz in 1933. His *Bibliographie der Modelbücher*, covering the period from the early 1500's to 1700, is not light reading even for those who know German. It is indeed an excellent reference book for bibliophiles, but is neither of great interest to the non-specialist nor is it readily available. This situation has been corrected by *APROPOS PATTERNS*, in Part I.

Margaret Daniels Abegg was a member of the curatorial staff in the Print Study Room of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for over 15 years. Her assignment for most of this time was working with the pattern book collection which was in the formative stage and is now one of the three largest in the world. During this time she may have come to realize the value a less detailed book would have for those who were not specialists but had an interest in the subject particularly if it were well illustrated. Part I of this book which could be said to be a popularization of the *Bibliographie* would be the result of such a consideration.

The book is in size large quarto, 12" high by 10" wide. It lies quite flat when open. The text which is much narrower than the pages, leaves room on the inner margin for references and the outer for the number of the figures being discussed. The book ends with resumé's in English, French and German and a general index. The end papers are enlargements in full color of a design by Philippe de La Salle illustrated on page 177. The illustrations in Part I, including the portraits, are in black and white. Part II has black and white illustrations but also many in full color.

While it is an impressive book just to look through, the great value is in the large number of illustrations. All are well identified with the type, the name of the artist or printer, the country and date and the Lotz number for reference. (One could

wish the actual size of the pattern books and patterns had been included.) There are also many examples including portraits showing the end result of using the patterns.

The title pages are perhaps the most interesting. Among those included are both *Ein New Modelbüch* printed by Schönsperger in 1524, the earliest dated pattern book, and *Furm oder modelbüchlein* perhaps the earliest extant printed pattern book with a tentative date of 1523 which may have been printed by Schönsperger also. Others are equally important: Pagano's *La Gloria Et L'Honore . . .* (1556) using for the first time "ponti in aere" (stitches in the air, needle lace), R.M.'s *Nüw Modelbuch* which has the earliest reference to bobbin lace (1536) as well as the first picture of bobbin lace being made (1561?), *Le Pompe* (1557), the first pattern book for bobbin lace, and many others.

The running text which is interspersed with the illustrations, while comparatively brief, gives many interesting side-lights on both the contents of the books as well as the people involved with their publication. It also includes a description of many books not illustrated, to make the historical development more complete.

By 1700 the printing of the little pattern books practically ceased. The designs for lace which had become too complicated for home use, were no longer for the public but were considered secrets carefully guarded by the ateliers.

Part II, in continuing the evolvement of textile designs during the 17th, 18th and into the 19th centuries, discusses the contributing influences, particularly in France which was becoming the social and artistic center of Europe. When the formal gardens known as "*parterres de broderie*" became popular, the designs were copied by the embroiderers. The newly-opened trade with China led to "Chinoiseries"; with India to the "indiennes". The many artists involved in the building of Versailles, when needing textiles in their work, designed patterns for the lace makers, the embroiderers and the weavers. These were truly works of art, designed by artists and executed by creative artisans. To this reviewer the juxtaposition of an original design and the textile executed from it, as is done in this book, is an excellent way to show the interdependence of the artist as designer and the artisan as interpreter. It is indeed interesting to see the difference between the pattern even if done in color and the final embroidery.

The author touches on the great variety of designs which resulted from these varied influences and on the personalities of those who created them. Here again, as with Part I, the illustrations are outstanding.

With the advent of machinery in the 19th century, the author closes her book.

With a book such as this it is difficult to find a way it could have been improved — except perhaps for such things as a translation of the *Ordnung und Reformation gutter Policey . . .* reproduced in part on pages 12 and 13. It would be

interesting to know to what extent these sumptuary rules tried to govern “dress and dress materials, festivities and eating habits”. Translating from mid-16th century German can be very difficult. Also in view of such features as the excellent grade of paper used, the beautiful end papers and the high quality of the reproductions, the stitching could have been stronger to withstand extended use of the book.

Nevertheless, this book should have a favored place in the library of anyone concerned with the decorative arts, the history of printing or beauty in general.

– Ruth Hellmann  
12/1/83

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**M. Risselin-Steenebrugen, TROIS SIÈCLES DE DENTELLES, Brussels, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 1981.**

In her introduction, Mme. Risselin explains that her purpose in writing this fascinating book was not to compose a catalog of the extensive collection of lace in the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels of which she was conservator of lace for many years, but rather to tell the story of lace by using representative samples in the Museums. She is a purist who concentrates on the two main categories into which the subject may be divided: needle lace and bobbin lace, their techniques, their stylistic characteristics and their history. She has in a way recapitulated the lectures which she had given to many groups, both professional and amateur. As a result of her exceptional ability to communicate she was often urged to collect her lectures into a comprehensive whole, filling out where she thought advisable from her extensive knowledge of the subject gained through her doctoral studies in Liège and her subsequent research in the Museum. This book, then, is the result. It is also, in a way, a continuation of work done by Lucie Paulis, an excellent technician, who was her predecessor and collaborator.

The book, written in French, is quite large (9½" x 12") with 600 pages including 413 black and white illustrations. Most of the latter are of pieces in the Museum's collection and include not only reproductions of many pieces of lace but also of portraits, mostly full-page, showing how lace was used, and of drawings done by L. Paulis to aid in understanding the techniques. All pictures are numbered and placed in small groups at the end of the short sections which use them for illustration.

The first five chapters summarize quite succinctly what is necessary to know for the technical appreciation of lace: its use in fashion, the basic difference between the bobbin and the needle laces, the changing patterns, the difficulties in dating, the description of related techniques such as cutwork, drawn work, embroidered knotted netting and buratto, and passementeries. The book ends with a valuable annotated bibliography, somewhat personal, arranged according to the chapters, and finally a table of contents.

The main body of the work consists of a study of both the techniques and history of lace in Italy, France, Belgium and finally England with other European countries of less importance in the over-all picture. While the title is "Trois Siècles" it is a very generous three centuries, the first illustration being a portrait by Van der Weyden painted around 1433 and the other ones well into the second half of the 20th century. All countries are followed into the 20th century.

For each country the book covers the main points found elsewhere, such as the influence of the model books in Italy, the social and economic importance of lace in France, particularly the great innovations at the time of Louis XIV, the market for

lace in England rather than the country's creativity in the field, and the increasing domination of the bobbin lace production by the Low Countries, especially Belgium.

What gives excitement to this work, particularly to the non- or semi-professional, is the "filling out" given between the usual facts. For instance, it investigates the relationship between the Froschauer model book published in Zurich in 1561, but with patterns from Venice of 1536, and *Le Pompe*, a comparable model book published in Venice in 1557. Conjecturing that since many patterns in the two books are so similar they must have come from the same source, the museum catalogues could then resolve the question of the provenance of a certain number of pieces only by using a hyphen; the provenance of Froschauer-LePompe patterned samples are distinguishable only by the quality of the thread, the Zurich-Netherlands pieces being much finer and softer.

Along the same line, a discussion of how the Venetian lace-designer and model-book writer, Isabella Catanea Parasole, could have in 1616 suddenly been inspired to correct deficiencies in bobbin techniques published by her in an earlier edition leads to the query of whether, for the later issue, she had indeed "pilfered" from another designer. While admitting that such is possible, a better explanation is found: that she came into possession of a sample note-book containing actual pieces of bobbin lace, distributed by the House of Christophe Plantin of Antwerp to its customers. After having studied the samples at leisure, she could then write accurate directions for making them. This latter explanation is quite possible. The author feels this may be a small but significant example of how there was an interpenetration of the two cultures, the Flemish and Italian, unconsciously. The means of this traffic is further illustrated by the story of the Plantin family.

Christophe Plantin, the foremost printer and book-binder of Antwerp had a second business. Together with his wife and six daughters he set up an establishment in the mid-16th century for the designing, making and exporting of fine lingerie, "point coupé", and "ouvrages perlés et coupés". These latter are listed in the oldest account book of the business dated 1556-1557. A page from this book is reproduced. The enterprise became widespread with branches in many cities including Malines and Paris, making it entirely plausible that a sample note-book should reach Rome and come to the attention of Parasole.

The section on Belgium, based as it is on the great collection of lace in the museum, naturally is the most extensive. Again it follows the evolution of lace beginning with the mention of "punto fiamengho" in the Italian model books of the 16th century. Included in this section is a detailed description of the well-known "Couvre-pied des Archiducs Albert et Isabelle" made to celebrate their marriage and inauguration as "ducs de Brabant". Made in 1599, it is a masterpiece of early bobbin lace depicting many scenes possibly from the "Joyous Entry" into Antwerp, although it is admitted there are still many aspects of the coverlet that are not known which later research may clarify; for instance, the date is questioned, the identifica-

tion of some of the scenes is not sure.

The 17th-century chapter covers the great artistic and technical innovations in bobbin lace-making, especially those which were made possible by the use of “crochetage”, or the technique of joining design elements in process. While the laces were known as “dentelles de Flandre” or Flemish lace, the characteristics which would distinguish the various kinds of bobbin lace in the next century were appearing. The text follows in detail these subtle changes, especially in the making of Brussels lace.

The needle laces were not as popular nor as avidly made as the bobbin laces; a quiescent period awaited the 18th century. However one interesting question is raised here about the well-known self portrait of Rubens and his wife Isabelle Brandt (1609). She is painted wearing lace which is presumably Flemish in origin. But - did he buy his collar which looks like *point coupé* in Italy where he spent some time or in Antwerp where he lived? At first glance it could be Italian needle work. On the other hand, the museum has some pieces with the same decorative simplicity which were made with the “points coupés sur bâti aux fuseaux” which we might call “bobbin reticella”. The text continues that this would prove the collar had been made in an area where bobbin work was common. As an example of how difficult it is to determine the provenance of lace, this question cannot be decided; this kind of lace is truly of Flemish origin but the author believes the impersonal and often commonplace design makes certain attribution impossible.

The further flowering particularly of the free laces of Brussels is followed through the 18th century. Brussels needle laces and the needle-bobbin mixtures became important. The straight laces were assuming their individual names according to the city where they were first perfected: Valenciennes, Binche, Lille. The mesh structure became increasingly important. The author succeeds in making the details interesting reading..

The text follows into the 19th and 20th century the changes caused by the Industrial Revolution and modern wars. The age of lace seemed to be past, at least for a while. Yet a note is added: a workshop which has been organized in the Royal Museum for those who want to work with their hands and wish to preserve an ancestral art is quite well attended.

The final chapter is almost unique. Here is described, with illustrations, work of great originality that is currently being made in Spain and Brazil, in Hungary including the types known as Hunnia and Halas, and in Czechoslovakia. The bibliography also includes titles in each language, many with resumé's in English.

The value of this work could be said to lie in the expert transmittal of information about lace with enough pertinent digressions, sometimes in the realm of gossip,

usually in related but personalized history, to make it interesting, informative and exciting for both professional and non-professional readers. It also conveys, especially to Americans, a look at the history of lace from the viewpoint of the Netherlands and Belgium, the North Countries. This perspective can be and is sometimes quite different from the usual approach from the South, Italy and France, which is more familiar. In addition the frequent posing of questions raised by gaps in the history serves to involve the reader.

A third value rests in the large number of illustrations. That some have been used in other publications only indicates the value placed on them. One recognizes them, then often finds something new, perhaps a different significance, written about them in the text. Unfortunately the captions do not include the page or pages (some are referred to more than once) where the reproductions are discussed. It would be a further asset if the captions were more uniform. While most have the date indicated if known or if unknown by a question mark or "uncertain", many, especially the portraits, do not.

A more serious lack, particularly for the American reader, is the absence of either a glossary or an index. While this is not meant to be a text, yet there is so much information, it should be more easily retrievable. Also, the usual bilingual dictionary commonly available does not always list meanings pertaining specifically to such a specialized field as lace.

But such considerations are minimal when compared with the value and do not alter the excitement of this book in lecture form. In fact you can almost hear the click of the projector as you attend a slide lecture given by an experienced professional in the comfort of your own home. Let us hope you will be able to enjoy it again soon - in English.

—Ruth Hellmann  
8/16/83

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**Pierre Verlet, THE JAMES A. DE ROTHSCHILD COLLECTION AT WADDES DON MANOR. The Savonnerie, Its History, The Waddesdon Collection, published for the National Trust by the Office du Livre, London, 1982.**

The great catalogues of the magnificent collections made by members of the Rothschild family and given to the English National Trust by James A. de Rothschild have been appearing year after year since 1967; no-one interested in the decorative arts has failed to follow their publication with interest. But the most recent volume is much more than a catalogue, for Pierre Verlet has prefaced his account of the Savonnerie carpets, furniture, upholstery, screens, and other objects at Waddesdon Manor with a substantial history of the manufactory, far superior to anything that has ever been written about it before.

There are chapters on the technique, including the materials and dyes, the personnel, the production, and the cartoons with their designers. Imitations, both in France and elsewhere in Europe, are discussed. All this information, largely based on previously undisclosed archival material, is richly illustrated by examples of Savonnerie weaving in Europe and the United States. This is the first half of the book. But even when the catalogue takes over, the entries for each type of object are preceded by a substantial essay with many illustrations of comparable works. One such essay discusses the 93 enormous carpets made for the Long Gallery of the Louvre, but never displayed there or even seen by Louis XIV, who ordered and paid for them. New Yorkers are fortunate in that they can see two of these superb objects in the Wrightsman Rooms at The Metropolitan Museum; they illustrate the splendor and arrogance of the Roi Soleil as decisively as the palace of Versailles itself.

M. Verlet's *avant-propos* is in French and conveys perfectly his unobtrusive learning, his wit, and his love of art. He pays tribute to his translator, Anthony Blunt, who has indeed accomplished his difficult task so successfully that the rest of the book reads as if it had been originally written in English.

—Edith Appleton Standen

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The year started auspiciously on Wednesday, January 19th, with a talk by Mrs. Williston Benedict, internationally known rug expert and editor of RUG NEWS, on "An Horticultural Approach to Oriental Carpets". The hostesses were Mrs. Paul C. Guth, Mrs. John Hammond, Mrs. David Hecht and Mrs. Donald Ross. The meeting was held in Mrs. Guth's apartment where wine and cheese were served after Mrs. Benedict's talk.

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On Tuesday, February 15th, at ten o'clock, members of the Needle and Bobbin Club and a limited number of guests were given a sparkling tour of "La Belle Epoque" by Ms. Jean Druessedow, Assistant Curator of the Custom Institute. The splendid spectacle was enjoyed by all, under these privileged circumstances.

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On Wednesday, March 23rd, Mrs. Marilyn Hirsh gave a lecture on the "Gujerati Textiles of Sarashtra and Kutch", illustrated by colorful examples she had picked up during her years with the Peace Corps in India. Mrs. James P. Gallatin welcomed the Club to her apartment for this event, and she and Mrs. H. Beecher Chapin, Mrs. Carl Dauterman, and Mrs. J. Stanley Davis, served wine and cheese after the lecture.

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The Annual Meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Wednesday, April 27th. Mrs. Anita Spertes Holmgren spoke on Southeast Asian textiles and showed spectacular examples from the Holmgrens' collection. Our hostesses, Mrs. John Hammond, Mrs. Andrew Weir, Mrs. John W. Christensen and Mrs. Morris Wirth provided coffee, tea, and cookies

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The month of May was celebrated by a Club safari to the country. Nine of our Connecticut members - Mrs. Jerome Harrington, Mrs. John W. Christensen, Mrs. William L. Finger, Mrs. Norris W. Harkness III, Mrs. Renville H. McMann, Mrs. Walter L. Milliken, Mrs. Patricia Rice, Mrs. G. Norman Robinson, and Mrs. David B. Stowe - invited the members of the Club to a luncheon al fresco in the garden of Mrs. Harrington's home in Darien. Mrs. Madsen Adams provided a delightful sketch of Mrs. Harrington's garden by Stony Brook to grace our invitation. Members then traveled further by the minibus which had brought them to Darien. We were greeted at Caramoor in Katonah, New York, by Mrs. Mary Ann McGovern and a group of docents who gave us special guided tours of the fascinating interiors which are rich in exotic decorative arts. We were also given a special welcome by Dr. Taube Greenspan, director of Caramoor.

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Alan Kennedy, a young New York dealer-collector who studied under Dr. S. V. Cammann, shared the results of his special research on Buddhist ritual costume with members on Thursday, October 13th, at 2:30 p.m. at the English-Speaking Union. Tea, sandwiches, and cookies were served through the kindness of our hostesses: Mrs. Madsen Adams, Mrs. John Hammond and Mrs. John W. Christensen.

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Our guest lecturer at the meeting on Thursday, November 10th, was Mrs. Pauline Johnstone, recently retired from the Victoria and Albert Museum, who spoke on the famous medieval English ecclesiastical embroidery (*opus Anglicanum*). The meeting was held at the English-Speaking Union, and a beautiful tea was provided by hostesses: Mrs. Norris W. Harkness III, Mrs. David Hecht, Mrs. Charles Hilliard, and Mrs. Stanley deForest Scott.

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On December 2nd a few members from New York City journeyed to Providence, Rhode Island for a very special treat. Mrs. Betty Ring, who was the guest curator at the Museum of Rhode Island History for a very exciting exhibition of 100 samplers and embroidered pictures, greeted her fellow members and conducted them on a tour of "Let Virtue be a Guide to Thee: Needlework in the Education of Rhode Island Women, 1730-1830". Afterward, they went to the Rhode Island School of Design to their Museum of Art for a very spectacular exhibit: "Gorham, Masterpieces in Metal."

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The year's program ended on December 10th with the Needle and Bobbin Club's Officers and Board of Directors inviting members, with escort or partner, to a festive Christmas party which was celebrated in the House of the Redeemer. Michael Auclair and his madrigal group sang carols and madrigals in the background while members exchanged greetings and enjoyed elegant refreshments. This gala evening had been arranged through the hard work of Mrs. James P. Gallatin, with the assistance of Mrs. Paul C. Guth and Mrs. Morris Wirth.

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**IN MEMORIAM**

The Needle and Bobbin Club cherishes the memory of members who died during year.

Mrs. John Gerder  
Mrs. Frances H. Ludington  
Miss Mildred McCormick  
Mrs. Patricia Rice  
Mrs. Howard J. Sachs  
Mrs. Russell Veit  
Mrs. Rudolph von Fluegge

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# LACE *A HISTORY*

SANTINA M. LEVEY

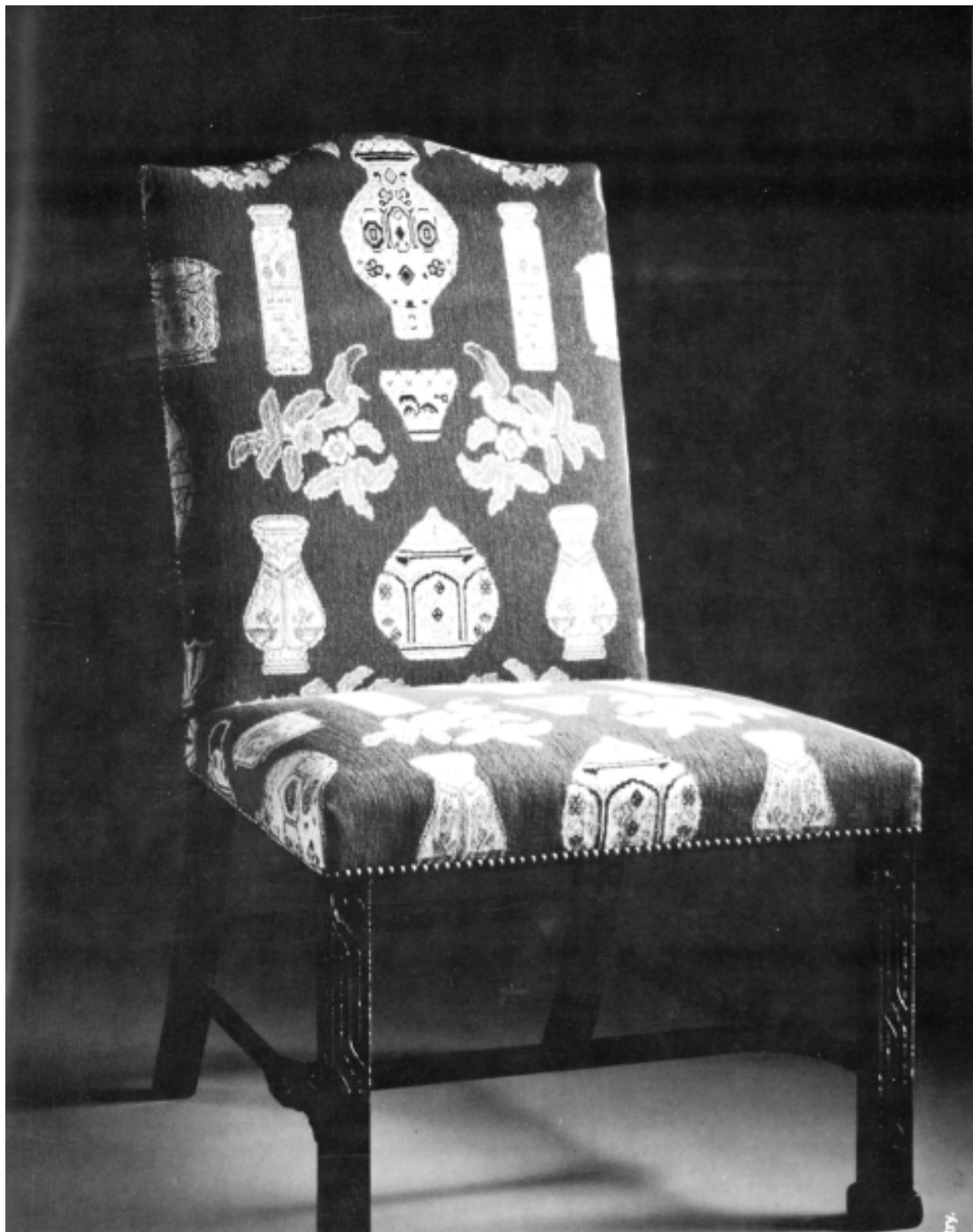
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## NOTES