



Summer A.S. XXXX (2005)

Filum Aureum

Newsletter of the Needleworkers Guild in the Kingdom of the West (SCA)
Stars, spangles
& studs

Aelia Apollonia
2050 Southwest Expressway #105
San Jose CA 95126

Guild calendar & projects

ARTS & SCIENCES TOURNAMENT CLASSES

July 22–24 · GILROY

Please remember to bring an embroidery hoop & scissors to any class where you will be stitching!

INTRODUCTION TO VOIDED WORK

Sabrina de la Bere

A counted thread technique where you cover the background fabric, leaving the pattern exposed (sometimes referred to as Assisi work). We will be learning the technique, basic stitches (double running and long arm cross stitch), and using historic patterns from model books.

LIMIT: 10 Cost: \$5

ELIZABETHAN EMBROIDERY: FRUITS AND FLOWERS

Isela di Bari

First in a series of 4 classes that will be offered over the next 2 years. This class will focus on the detached buttonhole stitch and the ceylon stitch.

LIMIT: 6 Cost: \$8

Bring: extra scissors to cut metal thread

ST. CUTHBERT COUCHING STITCH

Letitia de Scotia

How the couching was done on the St Cuthbert embroideries. This technique forms a lock stitch on the back of the fabric as you stitch. Learn how it works! A kit will be provided.

LIMIT: 6 Cost: \$15

OPUS ANGLICANUM STITCHES

Caiterina nic Sheamus

Come learn two simple stitches that created some of the most beautiful embroideries in the world, and make yourself a needlcase in the process. Opus Anglicanum is an easy-to-learn embroidery technique that primarily uses split stitch in silk on linen, and a gold thread underside couched background. This combination gives an amazing glow to your work, and is some of the loveliest embroidery we have from the Middle Ages. This is a technique for intermediate to advanced embroiderers. If you are a beginner and desire to learn this technique, please contact the instructor ahead of time for a pre-lesson!

LIMIT: 6 Cost: \$5

Bring: Stretcher bars 4" x 6" or 6" x 6" with mounting tacks if you have them

STARS, SPANGLES, & STUDS

Christian de Holacombe

Stars, studs, spangles and "bezants" of stamped metal are an easy and spectacular way to decorate medieval accessories and clothing. We'll study medieval examples, learn where to find modern equivalents, and happily whack some lightweight brass with mallets and stamps to make our own! Kits available to make a decorated belt or pouch.

LIMIT 20, AUDITORS WELCOME.

COST: OPTIONAL KIT \$5.

Bring: a thimble, even if you don't usually use one.

2005: ROYAL ROSE POUCHES

The Kingdoms of the Known World will again be green with envy at Pennsic this year, as each Queen is presented with one of our Royal Rose Pouches! These spectacular pouches occupied an entire table of the Needleworkers Guild display at June Crown, and were presented to Their Majesties during Court.

Thank you to the following embroiderers who created these pouches: Brid Hecgwilt, Jaida al-Badawiyah, Guiliana di Benedetto Falconieri, Caiterina nic Sheamus, Euriol of Lothian, Sorcha Fhionn inghean ui Ruaic, Cristeane McNab, Gwenyth of Mousehold Heath, Micheila MacCallum, Annora de Montfort of Shadowood, Bjarni Edwardsson of Jorvik, Sorcha Caramon of Eskalya, Alienor Fitzhenry of Eskalya, Adriana Tacita, Katherine McGuire, Aelia Apollonia, Evaine ni MacGreger, Katherine de Langelei, Theiadora Groves, Catherine Lorraine, Iulitta Rowan of Arran, and Megs (Shauna McGraugh).

Thanks also to Sabrina de la Bere for making the beautiful bookmarks presented as "thank you" to the embroiderers.

2006: ROYAL ROSE NEEDLE CASES

Our 2006 Guild Project for Pennsic will be Needlecases (book style), using each kingdom's Royal Rose. We may still need sign-ups for one or two Kingdoms: please contact Isela di Bari if you're interested. Each embroiderer can select their own materials and technique. Deadline for completion is June 1, 2006.

For the Kingdom royal roses, see <http://www.goldenstagnet.com/MiscSCA/KingdomColors.htm>. For a rose design, go to the WKNeedle Yahoo group's Files section and look for [WKNRosePouch.pdf](#). Isela di Bari is at (831) 385-3040 (home) or e-mail her at dcobb@mail.meyernet.com.

COMING IN THE FALL ISSUE:

The period workbox & its tools

- Which needles are best?
- Making a period workbox
- Giuli's stunning beaded Rose Pouch for Ansteorra

WINTER ISSUE:

The Bayeux Tapestry



The Needleworkers Guild of the Kingdom of the West

All are welcome to join us in making and enjoying historical needlework, furthering our knowledge, and developing our skills. We meet Saturday afternoon at every Crown Tourney, and we look forward to seeing you and your needlework!

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Stars, spangles & studs

—by Christian de Holacombe

All that glitters is not gold—but glitter makes a magnificent show, and to royalty, nobles and wealthy people through the ages, that's good enough. Spangles, studs, bezants, sequins, medallions, and other glittery bits of metal have decorated rich clothing for almost as long as we have surviving bits of clothing at all.

While there are plenty of shiny metal bits used to decorate clothing in Asian and other cultures, for this article we'll concentrate on bezants (as we'll call them all for the moment) in medieval western Europe.

The word "bezant" originally referred to a round gold coin from Byzantium, but the term was quickly extended to refer to round flat shiny things in general, and then to other shapes. Most of the bezants we see in the twelfth through sixteenth century are thin, flat cutouts, often with an embossed or stamped design like those shown in the elaborately beaded and bezanted border shown at right. Most seem to be made of gilded silver, but there are some in pure gold and others of base metals such as pewter. They're also called "gaufres" (which means "wafers") or spangles.

Books on embroidery often ignore bezants, although they are certainly used along with gold thread, beads and pearls to decorate a number of historical embroidered items. This may be because bezants are seen more as the province of metalworkers than of embroiderers. There are also not that many examples surviving of textiles decorated with bezants, and most of those are church furnishings that haven't been extensively studied.

Historical examples

Medieval European Jewellery, that indispensable reference to all things medieval and glittery, has a chapter on "Dress and Head Ornaments" that mentions many examples of bezants from the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

In 1167, for instance, the Empress Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England, left the Abbey of Bec a robe "covered with drops of gold" to be made into church vestments. Common also at this time were heavy gold-embroidered or braided borders on royal and imperial garments, with pearls, enameled medallions and other gold bits, as on the robes of the Holy Roman Emperor (1130-40).

At the top of this page is the equally elaborate border of a church furnishing, a cloth drape for the front of an altar. Not only bezants and spangles, but coral and glass beads decorate this altar frontal from Halberstadt, Germany. As is proper for

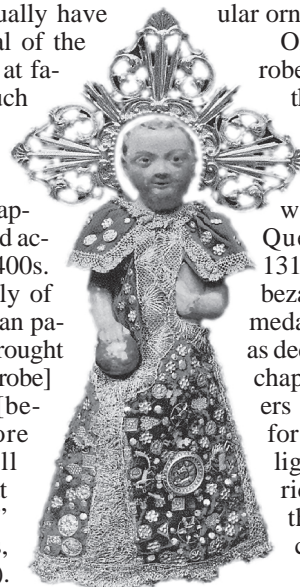


church furnishings, many of the themes — the Crucifixion, the heads of saints, the Lamb of God — are religious, but perhaps we can say that elaborate borders on clothing could have looked something like this as well.

Satires of the 13th century tell us that such ornaments quickly filtered down the social scale from royalty to nobles, knights and even rich merchants' wives. Etienne de Bourbon (d. 1261) denounces rich girdles (belts) of silk adorned with "lions, dragons and birds, and with precious stones set on the stuff so that their fashion[ing] costs even more than their materials."

Two 14th-century molds for making bezants survive, one in Hungary and the other in Norway. Each has carvings for various types of rosettes, quatrefoils, leaves, roundels, and biblical or legendary scenes. Some bezants may actually have been versions in precious metal of the common pilgrims' badges sold at famous shrines and cathedrals, such as those pictured in the Museum of London's book *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*.

Many examples of bezants appear in royal and noble household accounts through the 1300s and 1400s. A girl from the Accarisio family of Trieste, who married the Venetian patrician Antonio Erizzo in 1371, brought among her jewels "a *guarnaccia* [robe] decorated with fifty *stampe* [bezants] of silver." Others wore "broad trimmings of gold all around the collar at the throat that are as wide as a dog's collar," comments Giovanni de' Mossis, the chronicler of Piacenza (1388).



You might suspect he didn't have a high opinion of such ornaments!

In the mid-1300s there was a particular fashion for bezants in the shapes of letters of the alphabet. These could be the initials of the owner's or a sweetheart's name, or could even spell out words or mottoes. Borders could also feature a dangling fringe of bezants as well as those sewn onto the garment itself. One garment is described with a fringe of "little silver tubes", which sound something like the metal tube beads called "liquid silver" in modern catalogs.

Many of the surviving examples of bezants are on church furnishings. This is probably an artifact of survival: church furnishings tend to be carefully preserved, and are often kept unchanged as a memorial to the donors, rather than being updated or remade with each new generation as secular ornaments often are.

On our cover is a closeup of a robe made for a famous statue of the Infant Jesus in Sarnen, near Lake Lucerne in Switzerland (*photo at left*). Legend says that the deep red silk was from a dress given by Queen Agnes of Hungary in 1318. It is studded all over with bezants, love tokens and religious medals, some probably sewed on as decoration by the nuns in whose chapel the statue is housed, others given by devotees as thanks for answered prayers. Many religious statues have been given richly decorated "robes" like these in which they may be clothed for special festivals.

(continued next page —>)

(Stars, spangles, studs, *continued*)

The Dominican friar Francesco Eximenis, in 1382, writes disapprovingly of maidens who “wear hats like men, with badges and plumes.” Gold-decorated borders could also appear around the ends of sleeves, the edges of under-sleeves, and hoods. *El Corbacho*, an anti-feminist satire written in Castile in the 1430s, comments that some women have so many ornaments that they seem more like walking advertisements than ladies!

Mounts, spangles, buttons

The various types of gold or other metal ornaments cover a lot of territory, but can be more or less distinguished by how they are made and how they are attached. While the terms are used inconsistently and somewhat loosely, some definitions are useful.

We can refer to **spangles** as flat metal ornaments that are usually plain, rather than bearing some sort of additional design. Spangles may be cut or stamped out of flat metal, in plain rounds or shapes, and are usually sewn onto fabric by pierced holes. In the 16th century the classic Elizabethan spangles or “Oes” are often made by hammering flat a tiny circle of wire, leaving a central hole for attachment. Modern sequins and “paillettes” (now usually plastic) are their descendants.



Bezants in the narrow sense are flat pieces of metal that usually have a design of some sort stamped into them. Something like a fleur-de-lys or a fish can either be a raised design, cut out along its outline, or a similar raised or channelled design on a round or some other shape.

Usually these types of bezants are sewed down through holes pierced in the edge. They may also be fastened by wires or thin metal prongs. Modern so-called

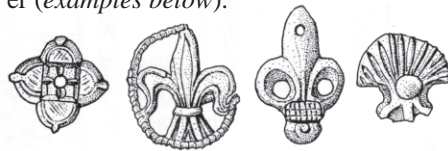
nailheads are simply such bits of stamped metal with sharp metal prongs around the edges, which can be pushed through cloth and then bent on the reverse side to hold the decoration in place.



Detail of a 14th-century mantle for a statue of the Virgin Mary from Halberstadt, Germany

Larger, heavier, and more elaborate bezants may be set with pearls or jewels, and are usually made thicker to hold them. They are commonly made by a jeweler and parts may be cast, engraved, or made from filigree rather than merely stamped from flat metal. These are often called **buttons** even when they are merely used as decoration and not as fasteners. The decorative uses of buttons seem to be at least as old as their use for practical garment fastenings.

Finally there are metal decorations fastened by rivets, which are usually referred to as **mounts**, especially when they're used to decorate a girdle or belt. The rivet attachment is especially helpful in attaching mounts to leather, which may be too heavy to sew through. Mounts may have practical functions as well as decorative ones, such as stiffening bars, hooks or loops to hold a purse. They are usually cast metal. The Museum of London's book *Dress Accessories* has many examples, both loose and attached to remnants of cloth or leather (*examples below*).



Motifs and styles

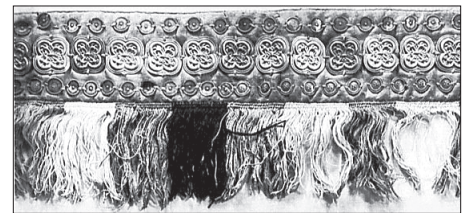
Finally, the variety of reported motifs and surviving examples is enormous. Rounds, diamonds, squares, hearts, quatrefoils, and other geometric shapes are common. So are leaves, both single leaves and sprays of leaves, and flower heads. Flat roses are among the Museum of London examples and also appear on the period examples in Halberstadt. There are also oak leaf and acorn examples and curling vines.

Stylized animals, swirled figures, stars, and symbols like the fleur-de-lys were also popular, and could be worn either purely for their decorative character, or as a reference to noble heraldry. Some may even be

“livery” badges given out by nobles to retainers and members of their households.

Studying the surviving examples in detail also reveals many bezants stamped with elaborate coats of arms, or even entire scenes with figures, depicting legends and bible stories. These were not confined to pieces intended for the church, but were also worn on secular clothing. Bezants could also be stamped with mottoes or initials.

Bezants could be scattered over a surface or arranged in regular patterns. As you can see from some of the pieces shown and described here, they can be part of a beaded medallion, sewn in rows to make borders or panels, or used alone. Several different types are often combined in the same piece, including various sizes and shapes. All these variations are easily adaptable to new projects.



13th-century silk fringe border with bezants from Halberstadt, Germany

Finding bezants

(and similar stuff)

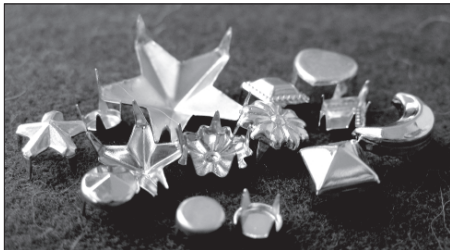
With a little imagination and a bit of investigation, it's not too hard to find suitable bezants, spangles, studs and mounts for your medieval clothing or furnishings. Of course many of the things you find will have totally modern motifs (bicycles, cell phones, beach balls), but if you look carefully you can also find much more medieval-looking stars, crosses, geometric shapes and rosettes that are quite suitable for medieval projects.

Fabric and craft stores are a good place to start looking, although your hopes shouldn't be too high. Still, you can find metal buttons with plain, domed, geometric, or lightly engraved designs that look reasonably medieval, and sometimes a few nailheads or flat metal shapes will appear as well.



Stamped metal “fish” and flat almond shapes from Fire Mountain Gems; stamped metal rose and filigree corner from crafts store; diamond-shaped mount and rivets from Tandy Leather; buttons from an SCA merchant.

Bead stores are another good place to look. There are quite a few flat "spacer" beads that are good approximations of plain round or geometric bezants. Online and mail-order bead sources are likely to have a much bigger assortment, as well as seed beads and real or glass pearls to combine with them. Fire Mountain Gems in particular now has a line of small metal plaques they call "patina disks," some with stamped designs such as fish and grape leaves.



An assortment of nailheads (various sources)

Leather stores such as Tandy will often have rivets and mounts, although a lot of them will have modern "western" or 19th-century motifs. But you can find rivets and nailheads in round, rosette, star, and diamond shapes as well.

Nailheads (especially the "Bedazzler" brand) went through a popular phase a few years ago when they could be bought in any crafts store. The fad has passed, but nailheads are now very popular in scrapbook-

ing, and **scrapbooking sources** have good assortments at reasonable prices.

Specialist suppliers and scrapbooking sources may also sell some **stamped metal** items, though these, especially stamped-metal bezants in medieval styles, are among the hardest to find. Often what you can find here is shapes such as roses or stars, and again it takes some careful picking and choosing to find things that look medieval.

Finally, don't forget sellers of supplies for **historical clothing and needlework**. You can now buy excellent 16th-century style spangles and reproduction cast pewter belt mounts from several sources in an assortment of sizes, though they tend to be priced higher than other sources. But you're paying for quality and expertise.

Sources

These are not by any means the only sources online, but a few to get you started:

Nailheads & some "charms," (i.e. metal stampings):

<http://www.scrapbookcottage.ca/Scrappin%20Extras.htm>

Metal stampings ("charms")
http://www.fancifulinc.com/site_map_page.htm

Fire Mountain Gems: spacer beads, metal "patina disks" (under jewelry components)
<http://www.firemountaingems.com/>

Period spangles & metal threads
<http://www.hedgehoghandworks.com/>

Pilgrim badges & belt mounts
<http://billyandcharlie.com/peregr.html>
<http://www.fetteredcockpewters.com/>

Bibliography

Dress Accessories: Medieval Finds from Excavations in London by Geoff Egan and Frances Pritchard (1991, reprint-ed 2004, Boydell Press, ISBN 0-8511-5839-0)

Medieval European Jewellery by Ronald Lightbown (1992, Victoria & Albert Museum, ISBN 0-9481-0787-1). Huge, out of print and very expensive; try the library.

Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: medieval Finds from Excavations in London by Brian Spencer (1998, reprinted 2004, Boydell Press, ISBN 0-1129-0574-9)

Online photos

Grizel's Bead Pages:
<http://www.medievalbeads.com/docs/docs-bezants.shtml>

Marburg Foto Archive:
<http://www.bildindex.de>
English instructions on using the site:
<http://paternosters.blogspot.com/2005/03/bildindexde.html>

Make your own bezants!

— by Christian de Holacombe

Making your own stamped metal bezants turns out to be remarkably easy. All you need is:

1. A concrete step or porch (or similar firm surface);
2. A hammer or mallet;
3. A few pieces of thick, soft leather or felt for padding;
4. Soft 36-gauge sheet brass;
5. Metal stamp tools and punches, the type used for decorating leather.

My first experiments worked splendidly. I laid a piece of leather down on the step, cut out a convenient sized piece of the sheet brass, put that on top of the leather, plonked the stamping tool down onto it, and gave it several good whacks with the hammer. Presto!

The sheet brass was actually easy to find; Emigh Hardware in Sacramento happens to have it, but I've also appended a couple of mail-order sources.

I was actually worried that this "soft" brass would be too soft, but silver and gold (the period materials) are even softer. I did



Leather stamps and sheet brass

try stamping the metal "paillettes" I'd ordered from Fire Mountain Gems and they're definitely too hard: the stamp made almost no impression. Jewelers' stamps and cutters would probably work better and last longer than leather stamps, but leather stamps (\$5-6 each) worked fine for starters.

The 36-gauge brass is thin enough to cut with ordinary scissors, and you can poke holes in it with a medium-sized needle. I found it was easier to pre-punch the needle holes with a slightly larger needle than the one I was using to sew with. All I did was put the bezant down on a piece of leather, put the needle point where I wanted the hole, and press firmly with a thimble.

A round leather punch will also cut the brass with a few good whacks from a ham-

mer, and it produces a nice little "domed" circle Just Like The Ones In The Pictures. These were very quick to do, easy to sew on, and the bezants seem to hold their shape just fine through ordinary handling.

ONLINE SOURCES FOR BRASS:

Mister Art: 12 in. x 3 ft. rolls brass each 36 gauge. Item # 5010200, \$6.37+shipping.
http://www.misterart.com/store/view/003/group_id/794/St-Louis-Crafts-Metal-Tooling-Foils.htm

R.J. Leahy: 12" wide - \$7.50 a pound to start (there are about 4 feet to a pound).
<http://www.rjleahy.com/Store/coil/bsh.htm>



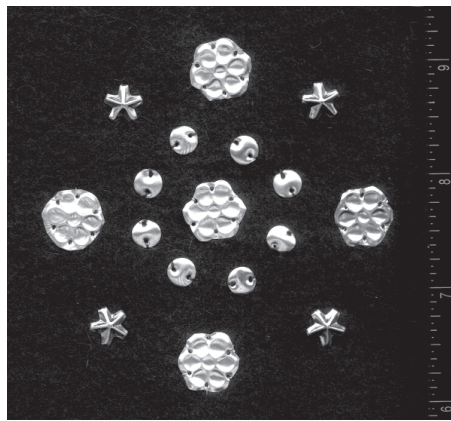
Some of the author's first batch of bezants

Decorating with bezants

— by Christian de Holacombe

Once you have your bezants, what can you use them for?

Studying period examples suggests using bezants to decorate garments, purses, cloth-covered boxes, wall hangings and book covers, and as mounts on belts. Borders with bezants can be applied to tunic necklines and cuffs, the front openings of coats and cloaks, and perhaps hemlines as well. (In period, most of the elaborate bottom borders seem to belong to "saints, angels, queens, allegorical characters and other people who don't have to worry about getting their hemlines dirty," comments Robin Netherton.)



Sewn bezants can be used on anything you can get a needle through. If you need more needle holes in the metal, and it's not the soft brass that can be pierced by a sewing needle, more holes can often be carefully punched with a small brad and hammer, using a padded surface underneath. A set of small jewelers' files is inexpensive and can be used to smooth edges and any burrs from making holes. It's probably a good idea to secure sewn bezants with something a bit stronger than sewing thread, and to smooth any rough or sharp edges before sewing them down.

Nailheads are very easy to apply: just place them where you want them on the fabric, carefully push the prongs through to the wrong side, and use a thimble to bend the prongs toward the center to secure each nailhead. Check placement on the right side before bending down the prongs: they can be unbent and re-bent for adjustments, but if you bend them too many times they'll break.

You may need a rivet setter for the riveted types of mounts; the setter isn't expensive and can usually be found wherever you got the rivets. An awl is helpful

for making holes for rivets in fabric without breaking the threads of the fabric.

Bezants do well attached to a fairly heavy fabric, which won't be distorted by supporting the additional weight of the metal. It's often useful to attach the bezants to a layer of fabric first, and then apply it to cover a box or other solid object. Items like purses can also be lined to help support the decoration on the outer fabric, and to protect the stitches or other attachments on the inside.

Studded belts can be easily made from cotton webbing and nailheads, and more elegant and authentic versions from a silk or leather base with riveted mounts. Considering how many satires mention "rich girdles of silk," they must have been a common small luxury item. A sturdy tablet-woven or warp-faced belt would make a good base.

Bezants provide lots of opportunity to play with decorations in various techniques. Now that you know how easy it is to make and use them, perhaps the Current Middle Ages will see a new fad: bezants, a touch of glitter. ✂



Far left, a few of the author's first bezants, sewn onto wool. Top, the author's belt made with cotton webbing and nailheads.

Middle right, bezants on a spectacular 13th-century Czech beaded hanging for the front of an altar. Above, a covered box for Communion breads, covered with beading and studded with spangles.

Bottom right, a Byzantine purse from the second half of the 11th century, with pearls and bezants.



Greetings, dear needleworkers!

I am very excited about all the learning opportunities that are becoming available to members of the guild through the efforts of our wonderful teachers. For example, we have some fabulous classes coming up at Kingdom Arts and Sciences Tournament (see page 2).

There are also embroidery classes being held at various local events — seek them out, or volunteer to teach one! We are also anticipating Iulitta' Rowan of Arran's Pricking, Pouncing, Painting, and Gold Twist class in late October, which will be held at Jaida's home in Sacramento on Sun-

day, October 23. I encourage you all to attend these classes and support both your fellow needleworkers and your home groups.

You can even do some teaching yourself! Whether this be through a formal scheduled class at an event, or on the fly with a friend or a youngster, it is our duty and privilege to spread the knowledge of period embroidery. I also encourage you to attend your local embroidery gatherings. For example, Teufelberg holds theirs on the first Thursday of each month at Katherine de Langelei's home in Concord, and Southern Shores holds theirs on the second and

fourth Wednesdays of each month at Catherine Lorraine's home in Sunnyvale. Please come out to share the knowledge and participate in these great learning opportunities! For details about these and other future classes and local meetings, please watch the guild's website, where we will strive to keep the most up to date information available to you. —✂

Yours in service,

Nelia Apollonia

POINTERS • POINTERS • POINTERS

— by Isela di Bari

Hard-core book readers searching for new or out-of-print books on textiles, embroidery and other subjects should check out www.goetzbuch.de Although this website is in German, many of the books are in English, French, and Italian.

The national needlework group called **CATS** will hold one of its 5 national stitching festivals this year on Oct. 21-23, at the Marriott Hotel in Santa Clara. For a catalog of classes, e-mail stitchingfest@aol.com, check out the website at www.stitchingfestival.com, or phone 616-447-0009. Although most of the classes are not producing SCA time period pieces, many do focus on stitches used in historical needlework and are taught by well known embroiderers.

Many of us may not have the time or finances to fly to London for lessons at the **Royal School of Needlework**. The good news is that they are now teaching classes here in the U.S! This year an RSN workshop was held in Pattee, Iowa between April 25th and May 6th. The classes ranged from 1 day to 6 days and focused on goldwork, stumpwork and even a certification course. Classes were filled right away, so keep your ears open for next year's dates.

Soie Platte, a flat silk thread once distributed by Kreinik here in the U.S. & used for Elizabethan embroidery, is now distributed here under the name **Soie Ovale** by the Au Ver á Soie company. Soie Ovale is an untwisted filament silk, on 30 meter spools. Colors come from the Soie d'Alger color card, available for about \$65. This is similar to Japanese silk and is best used

Greetings! This is the first in a series of columns devoted to pointing out resources for you, the medieval embroiderer!

with a “laying tool” to keep it flat. It's spectacular in satin or long & short stitches.

For those of us who like to play with gold & silver metal thread, check out **Benton & Johnson's** new website www.bentonandjohnson.com to view their on-line catalog and place orders directly. They're located in London and the turn-around time is 2-to-3 weeks. Great source and a better buy for gold & silver metal thread by the spool for couching.

Another great source for gold metal threads & flat silks is the **Japanese Embroidery Center** in Atlanta, Georgia. Website is www.japaneseembroidery.com. Personally, I've been using their Imitation Japanese Gold Thread (IG#4) for my Opus work and find that it works wonderfully in both coloration and couching. Sizes range from .8 to 10 with .8 being the smallest. Threads like the IG#4 (untwisted) come in 40 meter skeins. Great for Anglo-Saxon embroideries.

Speaking of **Anglo-Saxon embroidery**, check out Jane Stockton's research at http://Needleprayse.webcon.net.au/research/anglo-saxon_handout.html. Jane, an active Lochac embroiderer, provides a wonderful overview of embroidery and Anglo-Saxon clothing. Nice selection of designs for sleeves, hems and collars and patterns for making the infamous key hole collar.

So you may not be a Leonardo Da Vinci or a Michaelangelo ...if you're looking for pre-drawn designs, then the following books from **Dover Publications** might be for you. *The Illuminated Alphabet* by Theodore Menten features human figures with a medieval flavor, from queens to saints to fools. *Ready-to-Use Medieval Herb, Plant & Flower Illustrations* by Carol Belanger Grafton is a collection of re-

drawn 15th c. woodcuts of identified plants. *Early Medieval Designs from Britain for Artists & Craftspeople* by Eva Wilson offers border designs, spirals, animals, leaves, capital letters, beasts and Irish & Scandinavian interlace.

Be careful when you purchase **Eterna thread**. If you desire sheen and less twist...look for the number followed by an **S** for multiple-stranded floss. Without the S, it's single-stranded and more tightly twisted. I've run into a similar situation with **Appleton** wool thread. It comes in “tapestry style,” meaning single stranded and thicker, or “crewel style”, which is multi-stranded. Also, if you're working in wool thread for a large project, look into ordering hanks of wool instead of the small skeins. Great way to save money! —✂



Border with bezants from Lunenburg, Germany

CONGRATULATIONS

✂ to Guild Patron Sabrina de la Bere for winning the “Underpinnings” competition at June Crown with her embroidered Elizabethan Stockings. Very nice photos are posted on her blog at: http://broiderbaroness.blogspot.com/2005_06_01_broiderbaroness_archive.html#111990835610864398

THROUGH THE NEEDLE'S EYE

INTERVIEWS WITH THE "NEEDLEWORKER IN THE STREET"

Question:

What's your best period embroidery project so far? What are you proudest of? What did you do your very best work on? (*For some reason, all the most interesting answers this time were from our "sister guild" in Caid!*)

SARAH TELYN:

"Hmm... I guess I'd have to say my 'Faux Bayeux' panel is the one. I drew my own design in the style of the Bayeux Tapestry, and embroidered it using the stitches used on the Tapestry, with strands of crewel embroidery wool (which were as close as I could come to the actual threads). I was thrilled when someone who has a book on the original Tapestry showed me a plate in the book that was a photo of the back side of the actual Tapestry: it looks EXACTLY like the back of my embroidery!

MOLLY:

"When I was a few years into the SCA, I was walking through Merchant's Row at a Potrero. I saw a tiny lady sewing with metal threads. I stopped and admired her project and she invited me to sit down and see how it was done. I watched for half an hour or so and thanked her for her time. Later, I used the same technique to couch Sir Halfdan's device onto a fighting tabard. I was so proud because I had made the design using metal thread and silk. I was so proud to be able to go back and show the lady. She said it was the best half hour she'd ever invested. I still remember it and use that memory to remind me to take the time to encourage others."

ALISKYE:

"Because I'm rather a dilettante (I like to try everything!) I seldom complete a project. So, I'd have to say my best project so far, are the blackwork collar and cuffs I actually finished and applied to a chemise (which I wear all the time). Beyond that, the Elizabethan sweetbag I'm working on now will be the best thing I've ever done (if I ever finish it!)."

EOWYN AMBERDRAKE:

"So far, I'd have to say the pin cushion I finished that goes with the sweet bag I'm working on. I entered it in a modern EGA show, and got comments back from the judges. I won no prizes, which is fine. On the part of the score sheet that says, "Suitability for intended purpose," I got 2 out of 10 points! Yes, I suppose that a silk and metal thread stitched item, with gold thread in plaited braid stitch sticking out on the face and edges, is probably not particularly well suited for holding pins. On the other

hand, it looks a lot like the models, so I can't complain about being dinged for making it 'too historical.'"

ILORA OF THE WEST LEA:

"The collar I embroidered for my son's tunic. I did it on linen that we dyed to get the color he wanted and all the stitches are period, but the colors might stretch it a bit. I painstakingly did it in very tiny stitches and I loved every minute of doing it. The best part for me was when I had it on display at Estrella in the Laurel tourney and Mistress Catherine showed up and complimented it."

LIUDMILLA:

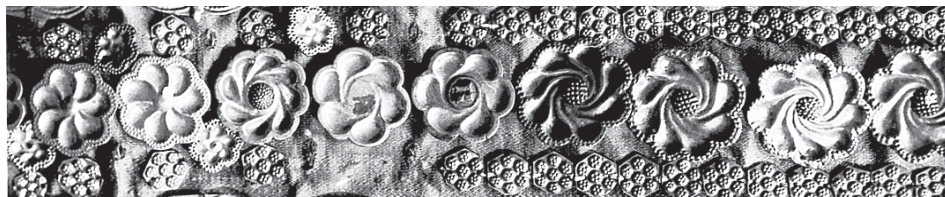
"A Novgorod-style kokoshnik headdress I did several years ago, embroidered in freshwater pearls and gold cord, with pearl netting and dangles. I think that the technique

was as period as I can get, without breaking the bank on materials. Unfortunately, that headdress was done when I was pregnant with my second child, and I haven't managed anything that good since he arrived. However, it also seems that my previous best work (collar and cuffs for royal garb) was done when I was pregnant with my daughter, so maybe I just need to do that again!"

NEXT TIME:

What is your favorite or most useful needlework tool, and why?

E-mail your answer to **WKneedleowner@yahoo.com** by September 1st. Please sign your full SCA name. Responses may be edited. 



C R E D I T S & C O N T A C T S

GUILD MENTORS

These people are here to help you with your needlework questions!

Catherine Lorraine	Sunnyvale	408-732-8581	connyftz@inreach.com
Aldith St. George	El Cerrito	510-215-5879	aldith@goldenstag.net
Francesca von Hesse	El Cerrito	510-525-1401	ehmoody@yahoo.com
Letitia de Scotia	Pinole	510-741-9885	vfrazier@pacbell.net
Kaitlin MacPherson	Sacramento	916-331-8066	carolee@fenris.net
Mairghread nighean Eanruig	Colusa	530-458-4144	ettrick@mako.com
Judith of Stormholde	Live Oak	530-695-3022	Ldydragonne@aol.com
Tashi of Falcons Claw	Modesto	209-824-0931	djgreco2001@yahoo.com
Jania of Call Duck Manor	Palo Alto	650-493-7756	mspeliduck@mindspring.com
Caiterina nic Sheamus	Vacaville	707-628-4473	KyrinnaArias@aol.com
Jenna Whitehart	S.Luis Obispo	805-934-9252	originalzaena@yahoo.com
Sabrina Goldbender	Santa Cruz	831-429-9020	stephaniefey@yahoo.com
Anne of Bradford	Oertha	907-338-4692	quidnon@micronet.net
Annora de Montfort	Oertha	907-344-5753	cinquefoildor@hotmail.com

LOCHAC LIAISONS (Worshipful Company of Broderers)

Bess Haddon of York, Guildmaster	srandles@adfa.edu.au
Keridwen the Mouse, Guild Patron	jheron@comtech.com.au

DEPUTY MINISTER & CHRONICLER

Christian de Holacombe	Davis	530-758-5407	claning@igc.org
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SERVICE PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Isela di Bari	Monterey	831-385-3040	dcobb@mail.meyernet.com
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GUILD MINISTER

Aelia Apollonia	San Jose	408-286-4838	madrigal_chick@yahoo.com
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GUILD PATRON

Sabrina de la Bere	El Granada	650-712-8405	SabrinadelaBere@coastside.net
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WEB PAGES

WK Needleworkers Guild Website	http://www.bayrose.org/wkneedle/
WKneedle Mailing List	http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKneedle/