

Spring-Summer
A.S. XLIII (2008)

Newsletter of the Needleworkers Guild

in the Kingdom of the West (SCA)

The roots of blackwork embroidery (will the real blackwork please stand up?)

— by Christian de Holacombe

Blackwork, as a style of needlework, is notoriously hard to define. It's worked in black thread — except when it's red, blue, or lavender. It's usually in a single color — except when it's two or three colors at once, or has spangles, or gold thread added. It's mostly outlines — except when there are fillings. It's done to counted threads (except when it's not) and in double running stitch — except when it's backstitch, or includes cross stitches or plain running stitch. About the only thing that *doesn't* seem to change is that historical blackwork is almost always worked in silk thread on white linen.

And yet, most of us know what we mean when we say “blackwork” — although our definitions may be wider, or narrower, or fuzzy around the edges, there is still a “core” of historical examples that most of us can agree on. The earliest of these examples in Western Europe appear in a few paintings by both Hans Holbeins (Elder and Younger), one of the first being the Saint Sebastian altarpiece of 1516. Certainly blackwork was tremendously popular and fashionable



in 16th-century England, Italy and Germany, appearing on the collars and cuffs of men's and women's shirts, nightshirts and smocks, on partlets worn over a shirt,

and on coifs and caps. Much of it was simple outlines worked in a single color (usually black), using the familiar double running stitch in counted-thread patterns as a major component of the embroidery, if not the whole.

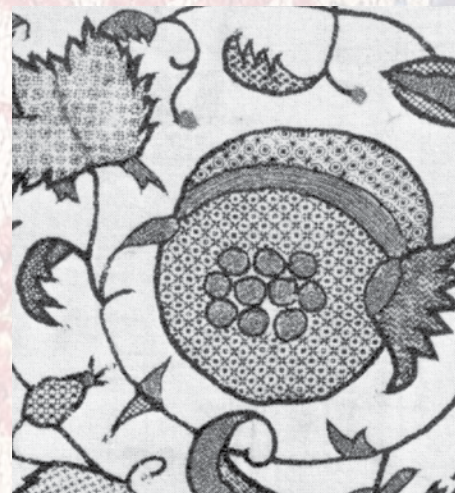
Definitions

After much contemplation, it seems to me that the problem is this: we are trying to define blackwork by describing it, but description doesn't really work here: there is too much variation. Instead, I think the image we all have in mind when we say “blackwork” is of a particular group of historical examples. And it is the *relationship* between these examples — the fact that people who worked them had seen others like them and been inspired by them — that really defines this style. These examples have a “genetic” relationship, and I think that is the real basis for our concept of blackwork.

Of course, without a time machine, our evidence for what is and isn't really related is never going to be perfect. Sometimes it's easy — when a piece uses the same threads, the same stitches, and motifs out of the same embroidery books, it clearly shares the “genes” we are talking about. Other times it's more difficult.

In the 17th century, for instance, the blackwork concept wanders off in some very interesting directions. One branch takes the sort of counted-thread borders that were earlier worked in just one color and works them using several colors in the same border — leaves in green, stems in brown, little strawberry fruits in red. Another branch, which is very popular

in modern revivals, outlines areas of the cloth and fills them in with counted double-running stitch patterns. Yet another goes off into flowering vines and scrolls worked in surface stitches that are not counted, and eventually includes realistic-looking birds and animals shaded from light to dark with little black speckle



stitches, so they look like an engraving on paper.

I tend to think of these as the “suburbs” of blackwork, where the one-color techniques using double-running stitch are the “central city.” Your definition of blackwork may include some, all, or none of these “suburbs.” (In this article, I'm talking mainly about the central “core.”)

Origins and history

More to the point for our purposes, what about the origins of blackwork? And how did it become so popular in the 1500s?

(continued page 3 —>)

Guild projects

A successful auction

The West Kingdom is purchasing a 52-foot trailer which will be kept on the Pennsic site to store all of the West Kingdom's Pennsic regalia. The Kingdom has offered to pay the yearly storage fee if enough funds can be raised by the populace to purchase the trailer. Viscountess Ysabella Dolfin coordinated a very successful fundraising auction for this project at June Crown of 2008. Isela di Bari coordinated the West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild offerings. The total raised was \$861!

The items donated were fantastic and there was a steady stream of bidders, despite the heat. Thanks to the long list of hugely talented needleworkers (at right) who contributed items for the auction. Photos of several of the contributions can be seen at the Guild website: http://www.bayrose.org/wkneedle/june_auction.html



Auction contributors

Aelia Apollonia
Annora de Montfort
Brid Hecgwilt
Chiara la Trombottiera
Elizabeth of the Blue Rose
Ellen of the Western Wind
Evaine ni MacGreger
Felicia Amondesham (*pillow at left*)
Jania of Call Duck Manor
Jena Whitehart
Jennifer Davies
Jocelyn of Rowanwood
Katrina the Prude
Michaela MacCallum (*napkins at left*)
Sorcha Fhionn inghean ui Ruairc
Theiadora Groves
Thyri de Peel

INTER-KINGDOM INTENSIVE NEEDLEWORK SYMPOSIUM

IKINS symposium

September 20-21 2008

The West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild and the Caidan School of Needlework invite one and all to come & enjoy classes designed for the embroiderer seeking more in-depth instruction and historical information. Registration is limited to 50 participants, and there *is* still space available.

Classes include: **Opus Anglicanum** (by Dame Richenda Elizabeth Coffin), **Elizabethan Sweetbags in Depth** (by Mistress Eowyn Amberdrake), **Elizabethan Raised Work** (by our own Baroness Sabrina de la Bere), **Or Nue** (by THL Teleri ap Gwynedd), and **Traditional Padded Goldwork** (by Countess Albra).

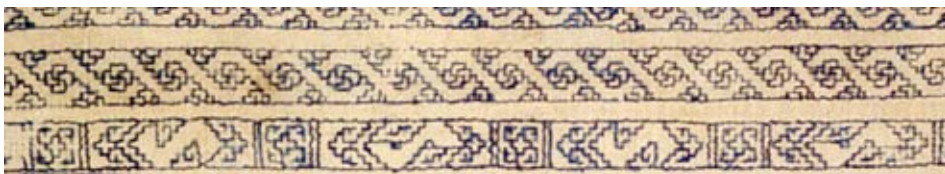
Classes are scheduled from 9:00am to 6:00pm on Saturday and 9:00am to 4:00pm Sunday. Most of these classes are half-day length. Several of them require purchasing a kit, transferring a pattern or doing some stitching ahead of time, so register as soon as possible! Registration is by paper mail, and forms and details are available on the IKINS website. Car pools can also be arranged through the IKINS mailing list.

IKINS is being held in conjunction with Caid's Fall 2008 Collegium Caidis, at the Calle Mayor Middle Shool in Torrance, California. Those attending IKINS will also be able to attend other classes at the Collegium if they wish, and spouses and families are welcome at the Collegium as well. (No pre-registration is required for the Collegium sections.) The Collegium schedule is posted at: <http://www.collegiumcaidis.org/>

The symposium will also offer an Inter-Kingdom display of needlework; optional excursions on Friday, September 19th to Hedgehog Handworks, Needlepoints West and the Getty Museum; and a needleworkers dinner at a local restaurant for the evening of Saturday, September 20th.

Registration forms and details about kits, field trips and much more on the IKINS website: <http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/IKINS> You must join this Yahoo group to have access to these files, but anyone is welcome to join.

For more information, you can also contact Isela di Bari, dcobb@meyernet.com; Eowyn Amberdrake, Melinda.sherbring@verizon.net; or Richenda Coffin, richenda@roadrunner.com.



Arachne's Web

Arachne's Web, the West Kingdom Lacemakers Guild, often shares the Needleworkers' Guild space and classes. Led by West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild Patron Sabrina de la Bere, Arachne's Web offers classes at Kingdom events and Collegiums, including one on **Beginning Bobbin Lace** at October Crown in the Needleworkers Guild pavilion at 2:00pm. Magdalena Klossen, who will be teaching the class, has also posted some helpful handouts at the Arachne's Web Yahoo group site.

Anyone is welcome to join the Arachne's Web mailing list at: WK_Lacemakers@yahoogroups.com

FILUM AUREUM

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Chronicler: Christian de Holacombe, claning@igc.org.

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!

Roots of blackwork (continued)

Here is where a time machine would really be useful.

A reference often cited as representing “blackwork” is Chaucer’s “Miller’s Tale” (1400), which describes a woman this way: “Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore, And eek bihynde, on hir coler aboute, Of col-blak silk, withinne and eek withoute...” a passage that has attracted much commentary. This is an isolated reference, and it’s at least 100 years before any evidence of European blackwork we can recognize. The fact that this passage refers to a white smock may be misleading, because it suggests a connection with the 16th-century blackwork embroidery on smocks, nightshirts and shirts. But as Robin Netherton has pointed out in a 2008 conference presentation, the “coler” referred to cannot be part of the smock, since 14th-century women’s smocks did not *have* collars. It was likely a separate garment. Further, the word “broyden” may have actually meant “braided” or “bordered” and not “embroidered.” And thus the only thing we know is that the decoration on the “coler” was black.

Clearly blackwork in the 1500s did not spring out of nowhere. But there is another and far better candidate for the origins of European blackwork: the embroideries done entirely in double-running stitch that we find in the Islamic countries south of the Mediterranean in the 14th and 15th centuries (like the one on this cover). How these came to be popular in Western Europe is still not entirely clear. A good possibility is that the connection is through Islamic Spain, where the last of the Moors were not driven out until 1492, and where many of the artistic motifs brought by Islam remained popular even after that date. One often-mentioned theory is that blackwork was brought to England and made popular by Catherine of Aragon, who married Henry VIII of England in 1509. The absence of any real evidence of blackwork in Western Europe before this date also suggests foreign origin.

Stitches and styles

Taking double-running stitch as the core of our definition, there are several recognizable “styles” of blackwork in the Islamic pieces that survive. One of the first to make its way to Europe is the “stair step” style, where all the stitches are either horizontal or vertical, and where diagonal lines are formed in a series of “steps.” This is the style of border

that appears on Anna Meyer’s dress in the Darmstadt Madonna altarpiece, which Aelia Apollonia in this issue has used as her inspiration for blackwork bands.

Another style is shown on our cover (and p.9), where the design in the blue borders is formed from lines of little hollow squares. The Germans refer to this particular type of blackwork as “Kastenstich” (literally “box stitch”). You can also see this in the strips of pattern on the Mamluk kerchief on our Projects page.

Early European blackwork has a number of examples of the “stair-step” style, such as those printed in Nicolas Bassée’s *New Modelbuch* of 1568. Interestingly, it’s quite noticeable (and understandable!) that the Islamic patterns contain relatively few crosses, which proliferate rapidly in the European examples. Later European work developed using more diagonal stitches, a trend already visible in Bassée. Islamic needleworkers tended to stick to strictly abstract and geometric patterns, due to the tendency of Islamic art to avoid representing real objects. But since European workers did not have this restriction, blackwork patterns depicting the flowers, leaves, and vines common in other European art rapidly became popular.



Blackwork myths

The Victorians, the Arts and Crafts movement and the 1970s craft revival all adopted blackwork as a favorite style for needlework, and true to their nature, each added their own ideas about how blackwork should, or could, be worked. People who have learned blackwork from modern embroidery societies or books are sometimes surprised to discover that some of these “rules” are not obeyed by 16th century and earlier blackwork.

One such “rule” is the idea that the back of the embroidery should be as

neat as the front. This seems in particular to be a Victorian obsession. Professional embroiderers in the Middle Ages and Renaissance were often aiming for speed and had deadlines to meet — and perhaps, didn’t feel it so important to put extra work into something that would never be seen. So there are quite a few examples of historical embroidery that have knots, thread skips, or even loops of thread on the back.

Allied to this, another shock to some modern embroiderers is that not all blackwork is, or can be, reversible or exactly the same on both sides. Embroiderers today have great fun puzzling out how to work things to be exactly reversible, and of course historical examples do exist — there’s one on the Project Page of this issue. But not all historical patterns *can* be worked reversibly. For any pattern that has motifs that are not attached to the rest of the pattern, the only way you can work it to be reversible is to cut your thread and start it again every time you start one of those motifs. That’s rather a lot of work. And flipping over historical examples of blackwork reveals that even patterns that *could* be worked reversibly sometimes were not. There are even sections worked in backstitch rather than running stitch — definitely not reversible!

This next note may seem a bit obvious — especially if you have seen the front cover of this issue — but blackwork is not always black! There are plenty of historical examples that are red or blue, and at least one 16th-century shirt very nicely embroidered in lavender. As you can see in Marianne Ellis’s book, quite a bit of Islamic blackwork is actually worked in blue. And as we’ve mentioned, the 17th-century developments of European blackwork include many borders worked in two, three or more colors.

Something that takes awhile to dawn on many people is that there are quite a few examples of “counted-thread” double-running stitch — which is the way we tend to assume the stitch was worked — that are not, in fact, actually counted. Especially in some of the later embroideries that use double-running stitch fillings inside an outline, it’s clear that there are examples where not every stitch spans exactly the same number of threads — the pattern was just “eyeballed” to look approximately right. If you have a trained eye, of course, this is a faster way to work it, and especially if the person you are doing the embroidery for does *not* have that trained eye, the result looks perfectly fine.

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Roots of blackwork (continued) Materials and methods


As with counted-thread cross stitch, not all historical blackwork was worked on fabric with exactly the same number of threads to the inch in both directions. The sampler analyzed in Kathleen Epstein's book (see Resources), for instance, is worked on linen that is 17 threads in one direction and 22 in the other. Of course, this is a sampler, where perhaps it doesn't matter so much, and some of the motifs in the sampler do look distorted. But working on linen that is just slightly "uneven" often produces work that looks quite all right, as long as you aren't working a motif that contains large squares or a border that turns corners.

This is an advantage for the modern embroiderer, because the difference in price between ordinary linen and specially woven "evenweave" linen can be quite startling. It's worthwhile sometimes to buy a small "linen counter" magnifying glass and take it to the fabric store to check the linen in ordinary bolts on the shelf. My magnifier sits on a little folding stand that has a hole exactly 1 inch square in the base, making counting easy. My experience is that anything less than about 10% difference in thread count (2 threads out of 22, for instance) is next to unnoticeable unless something about the motifs makes it particularly obvious.

Virtually all of the period blackwork I can think of was worked on linen with silk thread. Most of it seems — when we know the context — to be on "body linens," such as shirts, smocks, nightshirts, handkerchiefs and perhaps the ends of towels. In the Middle East, blackwork appears on under-tunics and children's tunics. These are things that come into close contact with bare skin and sweat, and so they are made to be washed. Silk thread is generally hand washable, so such garments were freely washed in the days before synthetic detergents and washing machines. Modern embroiderers sometimes choose to embroider in cotton thread so their work can be machine-washed.

Black silk in historical work is unfortunately prone to fading, breakage or both. When dyed with an iron mordant, the silk may disintegrate with age, leaving only stitch holes to mark the fact that the fabric was embroidered. Black dyed with natural dyes and *not* mordanted with iron tends to fade when exposed to light and washing. With modern black silk, the main problem is that the dye tends to rub off, or run, onto white fabric outside the

stitching. Washing the thread before using, especially with a dye-fixing detergent such as "Retayne," helps prevent this.

Patterns for blackwork are widely available, but it's not always clear whether they are taken from historical pieces or whether they are modern patterns made to look more or less historical. Some modern patterns, especially those used by modern embroiderers, have differences in style from the historical patterns, so checking sources is important. Some pattern sources are listed below. 



Resources

André, Paul, **Tissus d'Égypte: Témoins du monde arabe, VIIIe-XVe siècles.**

Éditions de l'Albaron, Société Présence du Livre, 1993, ISBN 2-908-528-525.

This book (in French) presents the Bouvier Collection of Arabic textiles, including a few pieces of blackwork.

Bassée, Nicolas; **German Renaissance Patterns for Embroidery, a facsimile copy of his New Modelbuch of 1568;** Curious Works Press, 1994, ISBN 0-9633331-4-3

Here's what period pattern books looked like. A fascinating collection of patterns for all sorts of embroidery, mostly counted-thread (canvas or cross stitch). There

are seven pages that are clearly blackwork designs.

Ellis, Marianne: **Embroideries and samplers from Islamic Egypt.** Ashmolean Museum Oxford, published in association with Curious Works Press, 2001, ISBN #1-85444-135-3

Epstein, Kathleen: **A New Modelbook for Spanish Stitch;** Curious Works Press, 1993, ISBN 0-9633331-2-7 and Epstein, Kathleen; **An Anonymous Woman, Her Work Wrought in the 17th Century;** Curious Works Press, 1992, ISBN 0-9633331-1-9

These two books are the best I've seen for documented blackwork patterns and a lucid discussion of their history. The first is hard to find; the second also contains a number of cross-stitch borders, some of them double-sided.

ON THE WEB:

Very basic blackwork

(a PDF class handout)

<http://chrislaning.googlepages.com/VeryBasicBlackwork.pdf>

This brief introduction contains graded instructions on different ways of working branching paths, several "practice" patterns, charts and a bibliography.

Medieval Egyptian "Blackwork" Embroidery

<http://heatherrosejones.com/egyptianblackwork/index.html>

Baroness Tangwystyl verch Morgant Glasvryn has a good discussion of these pieces and an excellent series of diagrams showing how to "decode" a pattern and figure out how to stitch it. Several pattern charts are included.

Blackwork issue of "Stitch On Line" by Linn Skinner

<http://www.skinneristers.com/stitch/issue1/index.html>

A FEW SITES WITH CHARTS:

16th Century Blackwork by Caryl de Trecesson

<http://www.dragonbear.com/sample1.html>

Jane Seymour's Blackworked Cuff

<http://www.elizabethancostume.net/blackwork/seymour.html>

Kat Rowberd's blackwork sources

<http://katrowberd.elizabethangeek.com/articles/blackwork/>

Fill-in Patterns from Sixteenth Century Blackwork Embroideries

<http://aeg.atlantia.sca.org/projects/howto/blackwork/index.htm>

Anna Meyer's embroidered bands

by Aelia Apollonia

From the moment I first saw Anna Meyer's dress in Holbein's Darmstadt Madonna, I knew I wanted it. It wasn't just because the warm white of the dress stood out against the muted colors of the rest of the painting, or that I was lacking in close-fitting garments. It was mostly because the dress was trimmed with three different bands of blackwork embroidery on the sleeves, as well as a fourth that ran around the entire neckline. It was an amazing challenge I knew I had to try.

But it was not until I met Marsailingen Andrais that this desire finally took steps toward becoming reality. I cannot sew to save my life, but Marsaili is an amazing seamstress. I showed her the painting and she said that it was easy. Easy! And to prove it, she made me a daily-wear dress in the style of Anna's with commercial trim in the place of where the finished hand-made trim would go. So I got started on my end of the project: the embroidery.

Marsaili gave me width and length measurements for all trim pieces which I cut out of 32-count white art linen. Although the fabric is most likely less dense than what would have been worked on in period, it was what I had and was comfortable working with at the time. In order to make the size of the end pieces come out right, I am working in over-two stitches. I decided to use black Splendor silk thread #801 because silk is period and Splendor is fairly sturdy stuff.

For the patterns, Catherine Lorraine was kind enough to send me the patterns from Margaret Pascoe's *Blackwork Embroidery: Design and Technique*. Pascoe's drawing, however, only had the three sleeve bands patterned out. The trim on the neckline would have to be made from scratch. Working with both Pascoe's drawing and close-ups of the



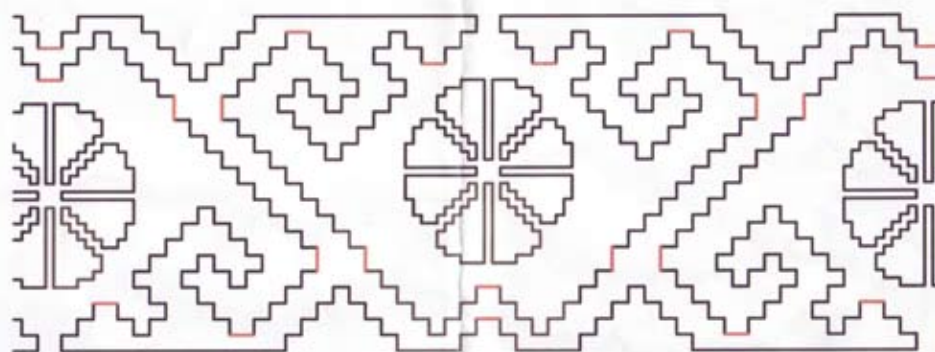
Detail of Anna Meyer from Hans Holbein the Younger's *Darmstadt Madonna*, 1526 and after 1528, oil on limewood, 146.5 x 102 cm, Schlossmuseum, Darmstadt. Web Gallery of Art: http://www.wga.hu/html/h/holbein/hans_y/1531/1darmst.html and [1darmst3.jpg](#)

original painting, I came up with a design that looks well enough like what Anna was wearing.

In my rendition, most of the lines are two stitches over two threads each. The exceptions to this are the roses which have many single stitches over two threads.

I have worked on the project on and off over the course of ten months or so, and have finished the neckline piece and a couple of the sleeve bands and gotten started on the rest. The bands are wide and are much less dense than I am used to, although I am fairly certain this re-

sembles the real-live trim that Anna wore. A sketch Holbein made of Anna in preparation for the painting shows the same size trim as in the painting with the same scale of the embroidery.



Pattern of neckline trim from Holbein's Darmstadt Madonna, by Aelia Apollonia (Krista Barber) made using PatternMaker 2.


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Anna Meyer (continued)

Anna's embroidery bears a resemblance to several patterns in Nicholas Basse's New Modelbuch of 1568 (see below). The rick-rack action of the lines and the overall wave-like organization of the pattern are common to the German style of the time. Although the fleur-de-lis is often thought of as a French motif, pattern books like these were popular in most European countries and patterns traveled freely across borders.

My only hesitation was on the pattern on Anna's cuff, which Holbein portrayed to look like bells. Although it is not impossible that the cuff actually had a bell design on them, according to the

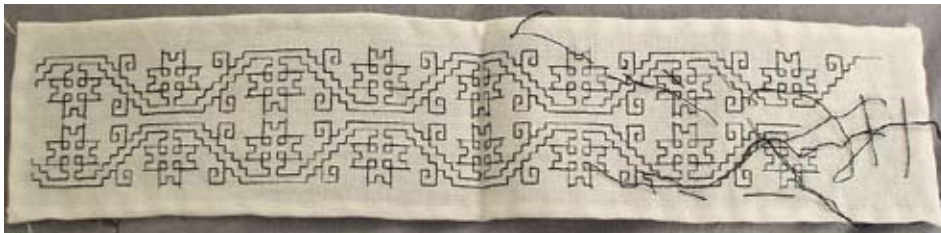
pattern books I've seen, the acorn is a far more popular motif. This and the single bare sketch of embroidery that Holbein repeated on every sleeve band in his sketch of Anna (at right) made me wonder if he made the pattern up. I have not begun this one yet.

Although I am only working on this project between other projects, it has been great fun taking steps towards a long-held desire of mine. I look forward to the day I can hand the finished bands over to Marsaili to be made into the final product. 

For further progress reports on this project:
http://www.casa-apis.net/aelia/sinisterstitches/current_eternal/anna_meyer/anna_meyer.htm



Sketch of Anna Meyer, by Hans Holbein the Younger c. 1526, Kupferstichkabinett, Basle. Web Gallery of Art: http://www.wga.hu/html/h/holbein/hans_y/2drawing/1530/09meyer.html



Some simple cross & acorn patterns

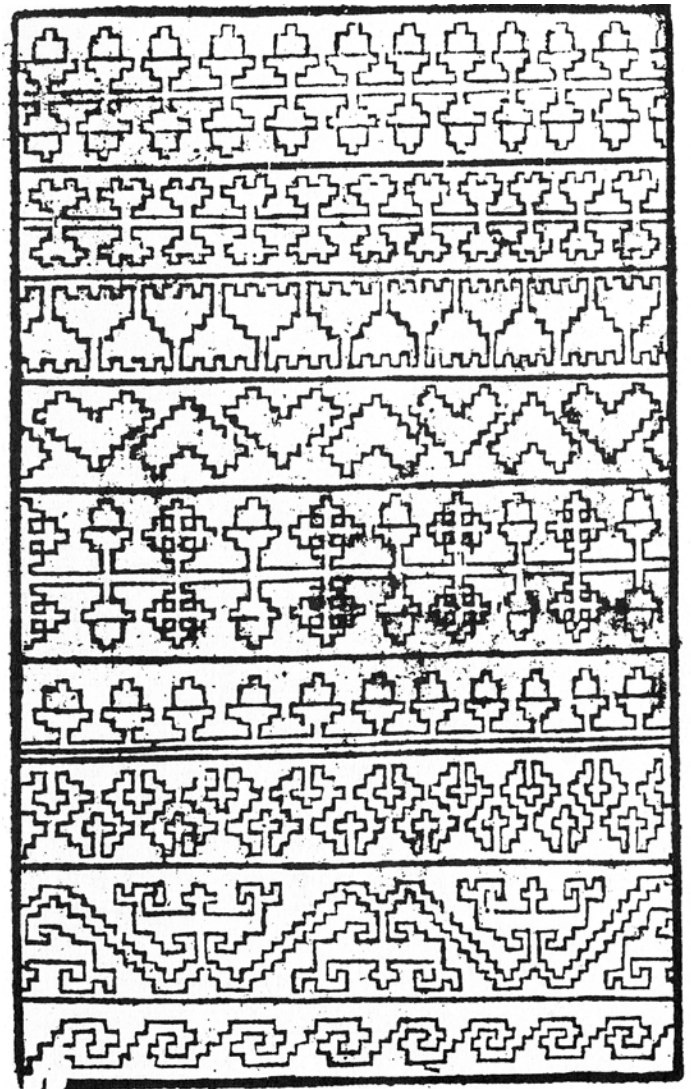
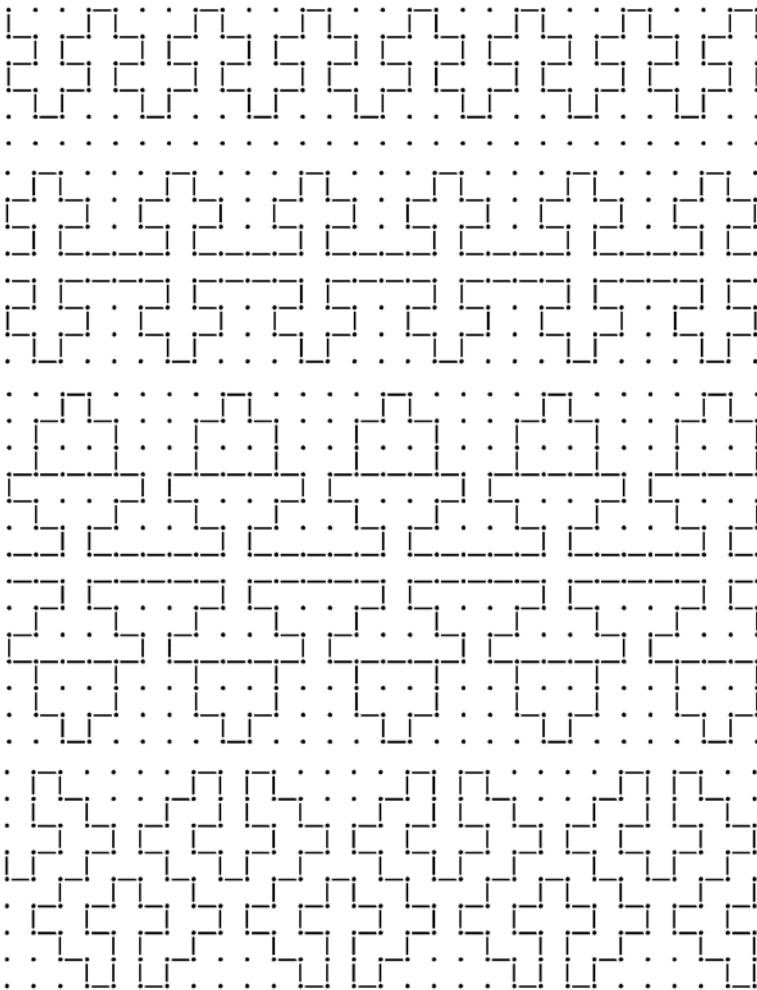


Plate and charts from Bassée (see Resources)

A Mamluk handkerchief

— by Christian de Holacombe, Guild Chronicler

The illustration here shows a simple square of linen from Marianne Ellis's **Embroideries and Samplers from Islamic Egypt**. It dates from sometime in the Mamluk period (1250-1517), and is carefully worked to be completely reversible. Ellis suggests it might have been "the equivalent of today's pocket handkerchief," but if so, it's a very decorative one. The embroidery gives the illusion that decorative strips of woven trim have been stitched down on the surface — two groups of three in one direction, two single bands in the other. This would be a nice sized project to practice reversible blackwork.

On reversibility and technique

As mentioned earlier, our ancestors in the Middle Ages and Renaissance did not always work reversibly. But it's fun to do, when a project lends itself to that treatment, and when you have a pattern that can be worked that way.

It's helpful to plan your work path before you start, so you know how you are getting from Point A to Point B in the design. There is an excellent discussion at the Medieval Egyptian "blackwork" website (see Resources).

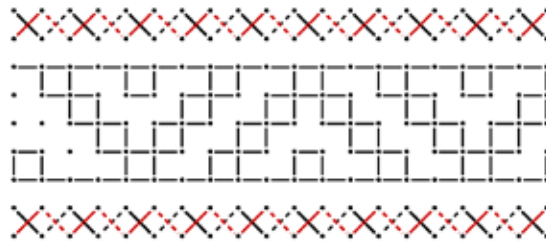
As with any project, it may be worthwhile to stitch some sample bits before you start, trying various threads and numbers of strands. Most of the historical blackwork was worked with each stitch spanning two, or occasionally three, threads in width and height. Getting the size right is an important part of blackwork; thread that is too thick or too thin, and stitches that are too long with respect to the background fabric, will not have a very period appearance.

A good way to start your stitching is to use a "waste knot" — which means, tie a good big knot in the end of your thread, put your needle down through the fabric several inches away from where you want to start embroidering, and come up in the spot where your pattern begins. The knot keeps the "extra" thread out of your way until you have worked a few inches of embroidery and are ready to deal with it. Then you can go back, cut off the knot, and just treat the extra thread the same way you do when you are ending a working thread.

It's often helpful to designate one side as the "wrong" side of your work,

even when your aim is to make the right and wrong sides as identical as possible. Do all your starts and endings on the "wrong" side and you will have one side that is slightly better for when you want to show it off.

Invisible endings are the tricky part of reversible work. Sometimes you can hide the ends of the thread in a seam or hem, if you are embroidering straight across a piece of fabric. More often you have to start or end threads in the middle.



Try a few different methods and see what works for you.


(1) Wrapping. Before you cut the thread, wrap your working thread several times around a nearby stitch or two. Then cut. This will often be enough to hold it — you don't have to knot it. If you are stitching with several strands, sometimes you can separate them and wrap one thread in one direction and another thread in the opposite direction. However you do this, you will have small areas of your work on one side (the "wrong" side) where the thread is double thickness, but this is nearly unnoticeable in many cases unless you look closely.

(2) Running stitches. Switching to a sharp needle, rather than the blunt-tipped one you've been embroidering with, move a nearby stitch aside slightly and take three or four really tiny running stitches through the surface of the background fabric *underneath* the stitch you



moved. When you cut your thread very close to the running stitches and let the other stitch move back into place, it will hide the running stitches and be next to undetectable.

Reversible cross stitches

The band pattern on this handkerchief shows a very clever use of spaced cross stitches. They can be worked in two passes, as shown here. On the first pass, take your thread diagonally across and down two threads, then on the back of the fabric go across and up two threads to make a diagonal on the back side. On the second pass (shown here in red), the diagonal stitches will cross those of the first pass, both on the front side and on the back. The result is a completely reversible row of cross stitches, spaced one stitch apart. The spaces on one side will be opposite the crosses on the other side, and vice versa. This pattern shows up in a number of Islamic embroideries, including the one on our cover. 

Islamic blackwork patterns


— by *Christian de Holacombe*

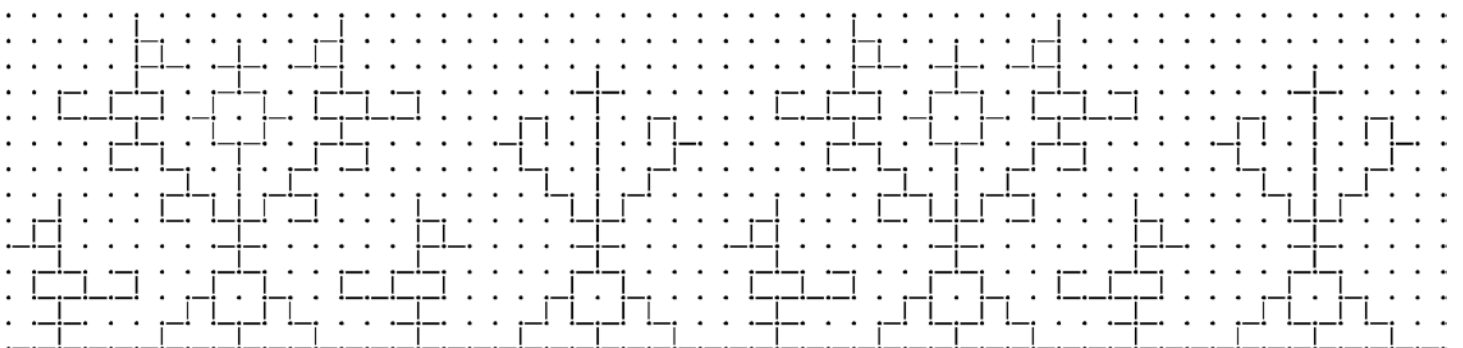
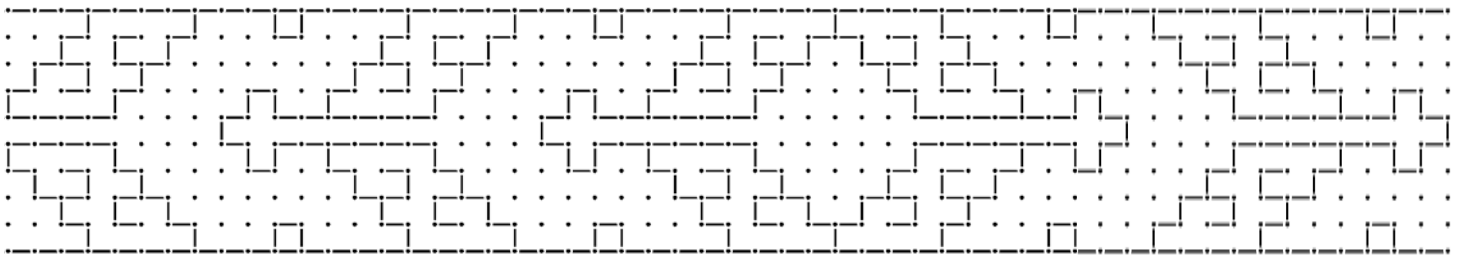
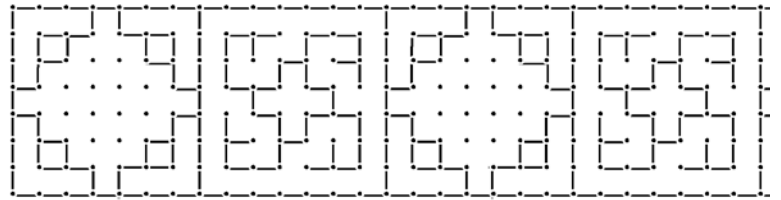
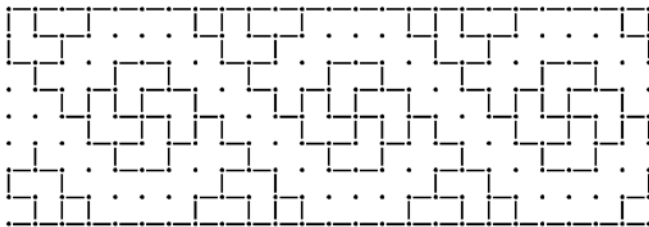
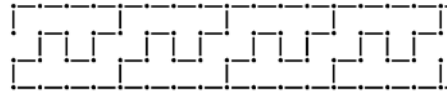
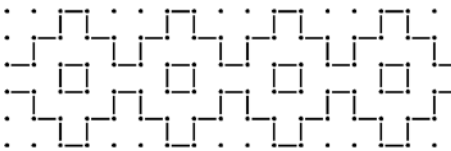
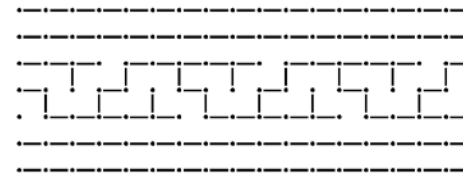
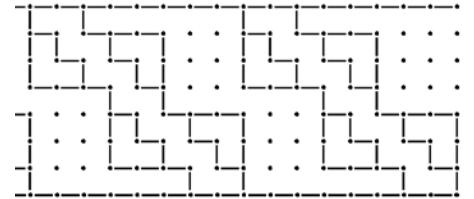
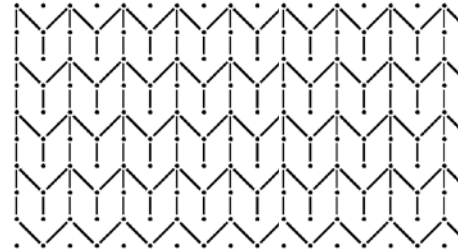
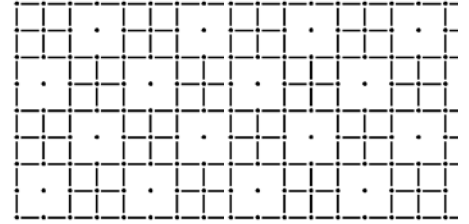
On this page and the next are charts for both border and fill patterns, most of them charted from pieces shown in Marianne Ellis's book (see Resources). Double running-stitch patterns like these are quite easy to chart with pencil and graph paper, since all the lines are composed of short segments of equal length, which can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal. These patterns are also available online as GIF files at the [WKneedle] Yahoo groups site, in the **Filum Aureum** folder. A ZIP file can be downloaded which has them all in one package.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKneedle/files/Filum_Aureum/Issue-34-Summer-08/BlackworkCharts.zip

My favorite charting tool is the very un-medieval computer that sits on my desk. If you have a "vector art" program on your computer and want to try charting your own patterns, you can also download a ZIP file containing several template formats:

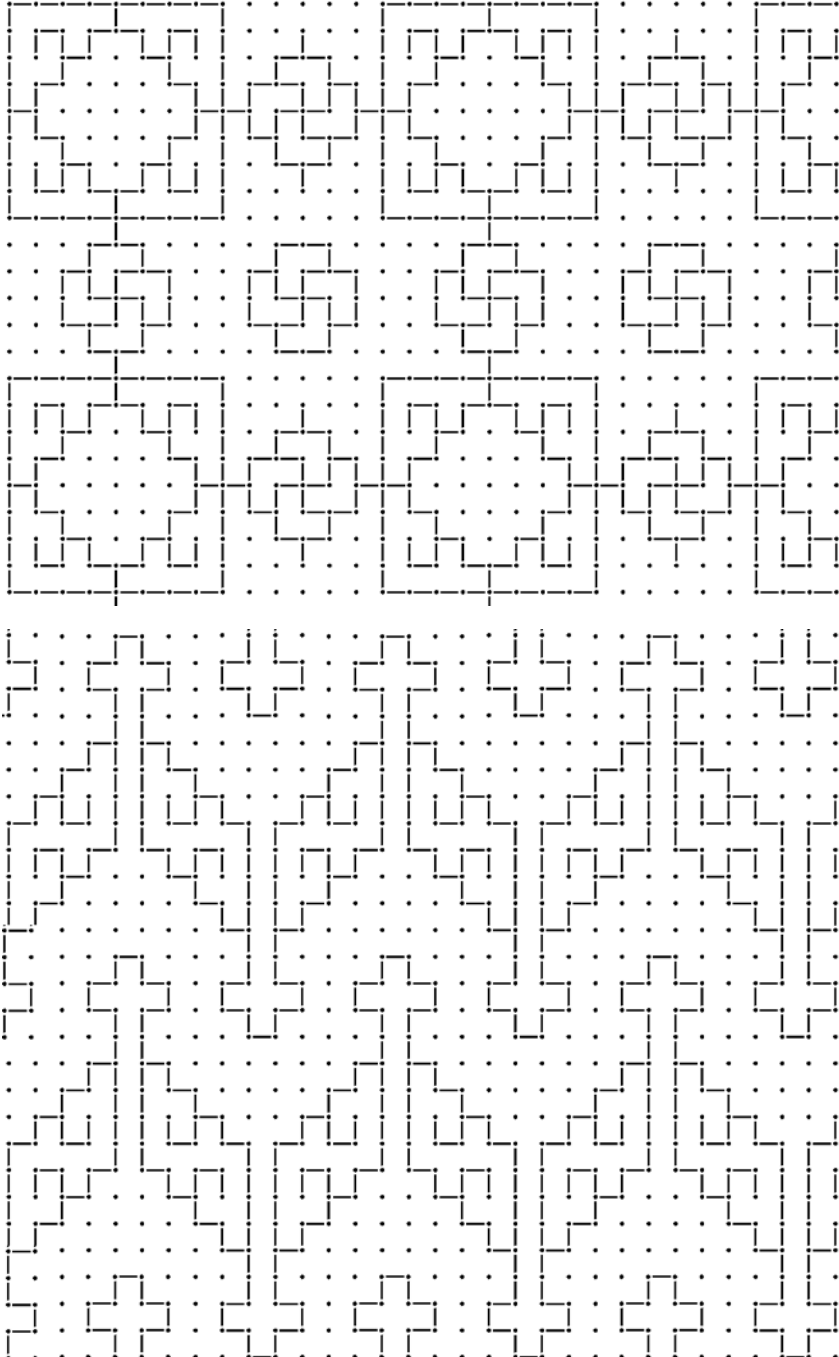
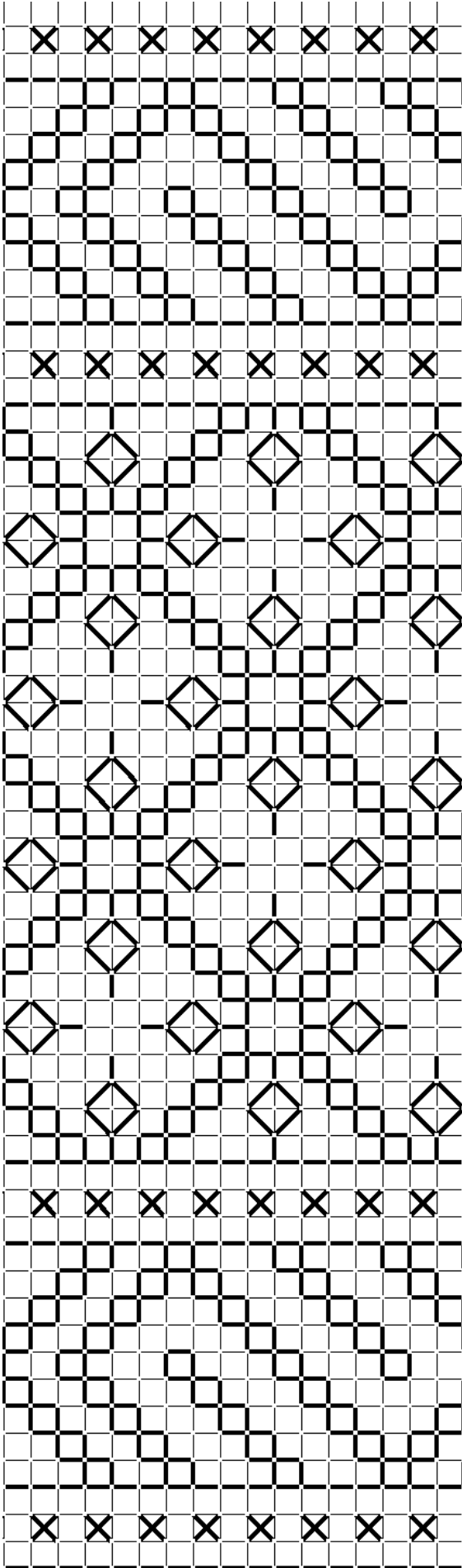
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKneedle/files/Filum_Aureum/Issue-34-Summer-08/BlackworkMasters.zip

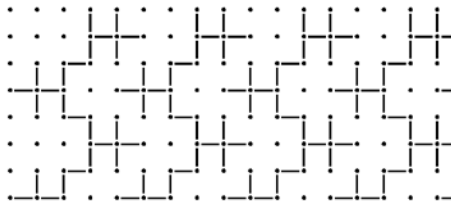
The Illustrator (.AI) and PDF versions of the template have three layers: a top layer of dots, a base layer showing the grid, and a middle layer that can be used to draw lines with the program's pen or line tools. The top and bottom layers are locked, so the dots can't be moved by accident. I like charting on the computer because I can print the charts in any size (including LARGE for my middle-aged eyes!) and because I can easily copy and paste sections of the chart for repeating patterns. 





Above, a detail of the pattern on our cover, from *Tissus d’Egypte* (see Resources) with a chart of the same pattern at right. Below, two fill patterns.






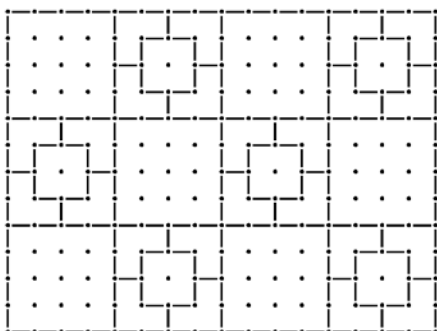
Royal gifts

The Guild Gift Project for 2009 will be scissors cases for Estrella. Since we don't know for sure how many kingdoms will be at this event, we will not require a particular design (i.e. Queen's Rose) or color scheme to be used. We would like to encourage you to use silver in your project in some way (buttons or thread or beads or fabric), in commemoration of next year being Estrella's 25th "silver" anniversary. So, how you want to stitch this project is totally up to you. You can do counted work, surface embroidery, metal thread, canvas work, etc — your choice of design is fairly open, basically any stitch or style as long as it is period. The deadline for this project is 12th Night 2009.

So far we have had 6 stitchers volunteer to make a scissors case; we need a total of 19 cases done. If you are interested in signing up for this project, you may email Felicia. Directions for the project are posted in the Files section of the Yahoo group & on the Guild Projects page of the Guild website: http://www.bayrose.org/wkneedle/2009_Estrella_Scissor_Case_instructions.pdf

Competitions

Congratulations to Sorcha Fhionn inghean uí Ruairc for winning the A&S Fine Art competition: A decorated bag or pouch. Sorcha created a pouch using a number of stitches & techniques, including intarsia (a type of reverse applique) and couched gilt leather. She was also kind enough to donate the knitted pincushions that were a part of the thank-you goodie bags given to the members who donated items to the Pennsic Auction. Brava Sorcha! 



Events & thanks

— by Felicia Amondesham, Guild Minister


Thanks to the teachers of our recent classes! These include Aelia Apollonia, who taught *Embroidery in Holbein's Paintings* at Spring Collegium — and at June Crown, *Wool Applique with Gold Leather Couching* — and Aldith Angharad St. George, who taught *16th Century Embroidered Buttons and Buttonholes* at Collegium.

Thank you to the following people who answered the Guild's call for teachers at A&S: Jaida al-Badawiya (for her trapunto class), Jenna Whitehart (for her beadwork class), Brid Hegwiht (for teaching Beginning embroidery stitches and designs), and I have to include myself, Felicia Amondesham (a class on Embroidery Tools & Materials). Thanks also go out to Caiterina nic Seamus for helping the West Kingdom Enrichment Project by teaching the embroidery segment.

Our Guild sponsors around 20 classes a year at various Kingdom Events, and I desperately need assistance in getting these arranged. If you love to talk to people, this is the job for you!

Guild service award

The Guild would like to announce the names of 2 of the 3 recipients of this year's Guild Service Award: **Theiadora Groves & Isela di Bari**. The third recipient was unable to make it to June Crown; her name will be announced at the next Guild meeting. Their arms were stitched by Micheila MacCallum (Isela's), Isela di Bari (Theiadora's) and myself (the mystery person's), and attached to the Service Banner, which will be displayed at all Guild functions.

Thanks to all those who brought items for the Guild display also: Catherine Lorraine, Duchess Kaaren Hakonsdottir, Duchess Ginevra da Ravenna, Duchess Eliana Fraser, Rowan of Hakesleah, Duchess Siobhan of Cloverdell, Duchess Mari Alexander, Duchess Constantina von Ravenna, Ceinwen ferch Belyn, Viscount Roric Skogan, Phaelan ua Hoegan. All the "Duchess Mantles" were created and embroidered by Duchess Letitia de Scotia. 

Felicia

GUILD • CONTACTS

GUILD MENTORS

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

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Sabrina de la Bere	El Granada	SabrinadelaBere@coastside.net
Jania of Call Duck Manor, Honorary Patron; Aelia Apollonia		

WEB PAGES

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

Photos not otherwise credited on pages 2, 3, 4 and 7 are from Marianne Ellis, **Embroideries and samplers from Islamic Egypt** (see Resources, p.4)