

CONGRATULATIONS

☞ to Elspeth the Semstress of Dunkel and Angustias McKeown, recent recipients of the Rose Leaf;

☞ to Anahita bint 'abd al-Karim al-Fassi on her Corolla Aulica;

☞ to Sabrina de la Bere and William Warren on receiving the Period Encampment Award at Missis Coronet!

PUBLICATIONS

The May/June issue of *PieceWork Magazine* features an article on the vestments from the Order of the Golden Fleece. As part of its writup on Goldwork, look for the project on the cover — a work by our Goldwork and Silk Shading teacher, Linn Skinner. (See note about her class below.)

Then mark your calendar to be sure to look at the Sept/Oct 2002 *PieceWork* as well! They will be printing an article on Medieval Islamic Knitting by Guild Deputy Christian de Holacombe (Chris Lanning).

SPECIAL CLASS: SILK

SHADING with Linn Skinner
Sunday, Sept 22

For those of you who attended last year's class in Goldwork with Linn Skinner, you already have an idea of who and what a treat we have in store. In short, Linn Skinner will be returning to teach a special class for us in silk shading.

Linn was trained at the Royal School of Embroidery in the UK in this method, where the same stitches on a flat plane are used to create a dimensional effect with color. The stitching is a combination of long-and-short and split stitch, also known as Kensington stitch.

The one drawback for us is that the technique here is definitely 18th century (after our period). It is beautiful and this "needlepainting" is the basis for all those wonderfully embroidered shawls, vests and coats. The bonus is that it is a wonderful technique and the training will help improve our understanding and use of these stitches, and of color overall.

The date is Sunday, Sept 22, 2002 at a home in Half Moon Bay, from 9:30 am - 4:30pm. We need 8 people minimum to hold the class, and 16 would be the absolute maximum. Cost is \$90. Lunch will be served for a \$5 donation, payable that day. We will be working on silk with, hopefully, Pearsalls silk. The pattern is a period drawing of a rose and leaf.

Your check is your reservation: first come, first served. Make the check payable to **Linn Skinner**. Checks will be held until July 15. Mail your check to Sabrina (Robin Berry) at PO Box 1809, El Granada, CA 94018.

RECOGNITION

Our Guild Minister, Sabrina de la Bere, has been recognized as a regional teacher for EGA (Embroiderers Guild of America). She's been teaching at several different California chapters and making converts to his-

toric style needlework. As a benefit to us, her teaching fees have been donated to the Guild and will finance one issue of *Filum*.

NEW KIT

Look soon for a new blackwork kit. Linn Skinner has graciously given some of her period blackwork charts to the guild to use in our kits. These patterns are ones that she has painstakingly charted from actual historic textiles. The kit will be developed by Sabrina de la Bere. ☞

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 comytiz@inreach.com
- Alidh St. George El Cerrito 510-215-5879 alidh@goldenstag.net
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- Katrin MacPherson Sacramento 916-331-8066 carolee@fentis.net
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Sabrina de la Bere El Granada 650-712-8405 Sabrinadelabere@coastside.net

GUILD PATRON

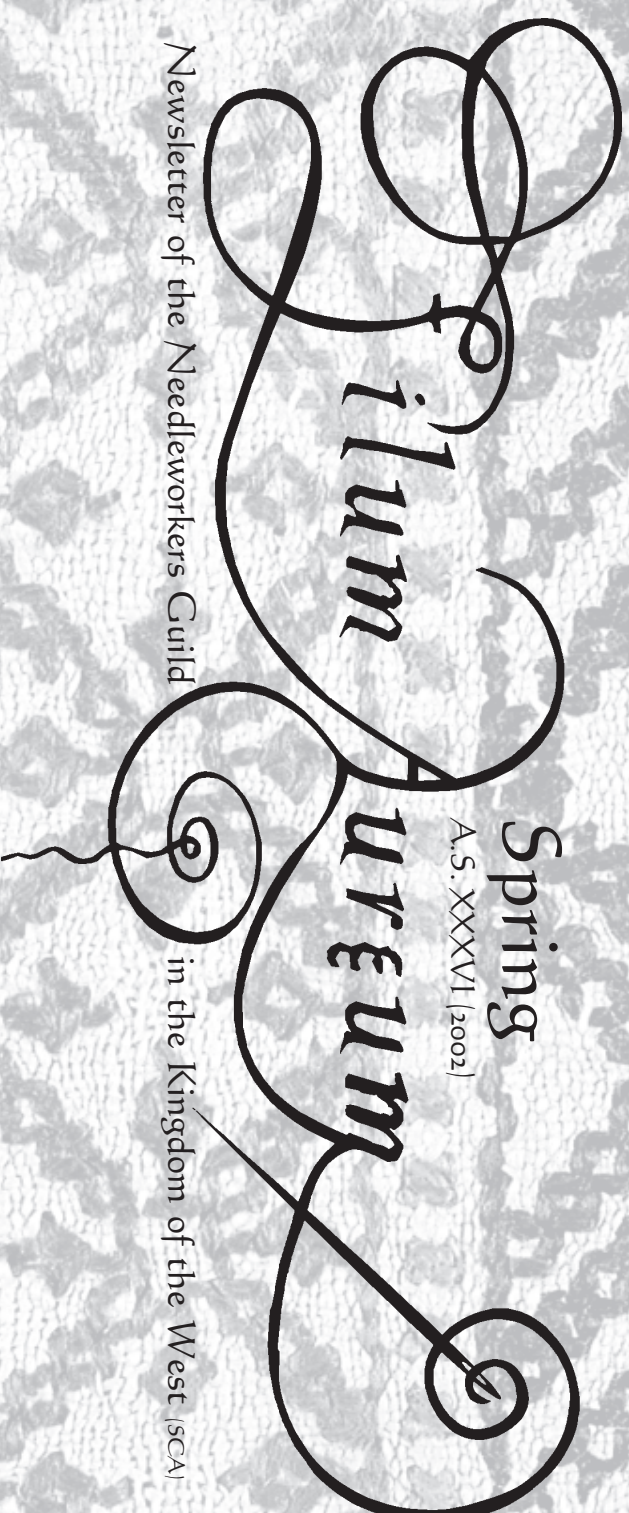
Isela di Bari Monterey 831-385-3040 dcobb@mani.meyernet.com

GUILD WEB PAGES

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

THIS ISSUE'S COVER is from *Tissus d'Égypte: Témoins du Monde Arabe*. On page 3, the "Ave Maria" border is from Elsa Gudjonsson's *Icelandic Embroidery*. On p.4, the purse with shields is from an article by Leonie von Wilckens in the essay collection *Documenta Textilia*. More pictures of Catherine Lorraine's purses (and other great stuff!) are at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKneedle/photos>. The rest of the pictures on pp. 3-5 are from *El Panteton Real de las Huelgas de Burgos* by Manuel Gomez Moreno (1946). The Sens purse photos on p.6 are from an obscure little booklet, *Inventaire du trésor de l'église primatiale et métropolitaine de Sens* (1897). ☞

Newsletter of the Needleworkers Guild



Spring
A.S. XXXVII (2002)

in the Kingdom of the West (SCA)

Guild calendar & projects

SPRING COLLEGIUM NEEDLEWORK TRACK

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2002
AMERICAN CANYON

LEARN 3 BASIC STITCHES &
EMBROIDER A SWETE BAG
Teacher: Catherine Mc Sheamus
Lmtr 6 FEE \$2
BRING 4-5" HOOP AND EMBROIDERY SCISSORS


PATTERN DARNING:
A centuries-old embroidery method
Teacher: Aya du Jardin
Lmtr 6 FEE \$2
Bring embroidery scissors

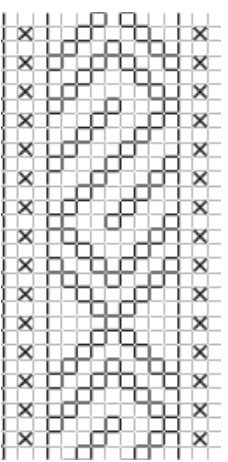
PADDED LAIDWORK:
An Intermediate Level Technique
Teacher: Octavia Jenon de Treves
Lmtr 6 FEE \$2
Bring embroidery scissors and hoop

WOOL ON WOOL APPLIQUE
with Leather Outline
Teacher: Kira Leonova Zemhadshina
Lmtr 12 FEE \$3
Bring fabric scissors

TWO PERIOD WAYS TO STITCH
JEWELS ON GARB (Advanced)
Teacher: Adith Anghard St. George
Lmtr 6 FEE: \$3
BRING 6" HOOP & EMBROIDERY SCISSORS









KITS

The Guild will have Kits available at all Crown events and A&S. There are several new ones in the works—and some of our old ones will be retiring soon! Come take advantage of this opportunity to try new techniques. 



JUNE CROWN (June 21-23)

Needleworkers will be the host for the
A&S Pavilion again at June Crown.

       
We will be looking to have a **LARGE display** of items showing our various projects AND the individual work of the members or our Guild. This is an opportunity for all to shine and we hope you will start planning now to take advantage of it!

We will also be doing a court presentation of Rose Pouches & the Lochac Gifts.

       
SATURDAY

12:00noon - 5:00pm
See our display of Rose Pouches, items for Lochac, Kingdom Pouch Project, ongoing Kingdom Travel Bag Project, and individual work of members.

12:00noon
Drop off of items for evaluation in the Apprenticeship Program

After Invocation until **2:00pm**
Mentors Corner: *one-on-one time to get advice on current projects, chat with knowledgeable members, or just come & sew.*

2:30pm
Meeting of the Guild: *All are welcome!*

3:00 - 4:30pm
CLASS: Pulled Thread with Sabrina de la Bere. *\$5 Kit includes handout, linen, thread & needle. Bring hoop & scissors. Some hoops may be available for purchase. First come, first served; auditors welcome.*

5:00pm
Pick up items from display and evaluations for Apprenticeship Program.

SUNDAY

10:00am-12:00noon
Additional Mentors Corner time including additional time to work on class project.

ARTS & SCIENCES TOURNEY: JULY 26-28

BORT MEADOWS (OAKLAND HILLS)

Last year all our classes filled and we hope to have a great track of classes this year. Mark your calendars!

INTRO TO CANVASWORK
Teacher: Julitta Rowan.

A 90% "how-to" class, looking at various canvases, how to pick the needle, how to pick the yarn, how to thread the needle, and six stitches including tent, basketweave, straight and slanted gobelin.
Lmtr 6 Krr \$5 (BRING SCISSORS.)

BLACKWORK FILLINGS

Teacher: Sabrina de la Bere.
Draw a design and fill with 5 different filling patterns taken from historic textiles. Done on linen, bring scissors, hoop, and magnification if you need it.
Lmtr 8, Krr \$5.

GERMAN WHITEWORK

Teacher: Christian de Holoacombe.
Introduction of the Guild's newest kit, a whitework bookmark. German Whitework is easy and fun, not to mention a good way to begin working with linen.
No Lmtr Krr \$5

VIKING HAVERSACK

Teacher: Kareina Talvi Tytir.
Make a useful large carrying bag with a simple Viking style seipent in wool on wool embroidery.
Lmtr 8, Krr \$5 (BRING SCISSORS)

INTRODUCTION TO GOLDWORK

Teacher: Sabrina de la Bere.
This class was requested at March Crown and so we hope you will come try working with purl purl, bullion, chipwork, and metal thread couching. This is designed as a technique class rather than creating a particular item.
Lmtr 10 Krr \$5

BRING 5" HOOP AND SCISSORS. 

2002: May all your stitches be true.

As the Guild grows, we are trying to find new ways to meet your needs and expectations. For example, we will be debuting several new kits this year — one cross stitch, one whitework, and one blackwork. Each issue of *Filum Aureum* also has projects. These projects are designed to be easy to do and a good way to learn or practice a technique. These are also suitable for one of the Royal Gift Chests. We also are working on the Guild website to provide more content and easily accessible information.

What we need to see from you is feedback as to what works and what does not work. For example, seeing these kits and projects appear in the Royal Gift Chests tells us that the projects were well received. Seeing greater traffic on the website, tells us that the information is being used. When classes fill, we know we are meeting your interests.

If we are missing addressing an area, or you know of another way of addressing an area of needlework, let us know. Classes are currently being developed for A&S and Fall Collegium: if you want to see something taught, or are willing to teach, let us know. We will do our best to incorporate your ideas.

Guild calendar & projects- continued

PROJECT CONTACTS

These projects are being coordinated by our Guild Patron, Isela di Bari, who can be reached at dcobb@meynet.com or (831) 385-3040; and by our Guild Minister, Sabrina de la Bere. If you would like to help with any of these, please contact them.

NEEDLEWORK FOR LOCHAC

On July 6-7, the Principality of Lochac will become the 17th Kingdom in the Knowne World. As the Kingdom of the West prepares to participate in this grand celebration, the Needleworkers Guild is busy preparing some handworked items for their Majesties to present to the new kingdom and their first reigning King and Queen.

So far we have two notebooks, napkins, a small table cover, a travel bag, and bookmarks, bearing Lochac's soon-to-be Kingdom arms. These have been completed by Judith of Stormholde, Penne Hawkes, John Paul Blacklore, Rosalie Ashleigh, and Anne Chevalle of Silver Oak.

QUEEN'S ROYAL ROSE

POUCHES: PENNSIC 2002

At June Crown, the Guild will present to Their Majesties the second set of needleworked rose pouches representing the 16 (plus Lochac) Kingdoms in the Knowne World. Their Majesties will take them to the great Pennsic War in August to present them to the Queens in those kingdoms.

Since the Guild would like to display as many of these pouches as possible at June Crown, before they leave the Kingdom, if you are working such a pouch,

Guild calendar & projects



Guild calendar & projects- continued

please either send it before June Crown to Sabrina or Isela, or bring it to June Crown to give to Sabrina directly.


So far, the Guild would like to thank for their completed and beautifully stitched rose pouches for 2002: Judith of Stormholde (who has worked the pouch for Aethelmaerc), Eliska z Jihlava (for Caid), Astrith Kjaransdottr (Merdis), Sara of Foxhaven (Aenveidtr), John Paul Blacklore (Middle), and Brid Hedgwith (West).

ROYAL GIFT CHESTS PROJECT (ongoing)


While we do many special projects, there are also a number of other opportunities for service to the Kingdom and Principalities. The Queen's Gift Chest for the West Kingdom is always in need of items for Their Majesties to use to thank people and show off the talent of the Kingdom. There are also Principality Gift Chests—one for the Mists, coordinated by Sabrina de la Bere, and one for Cynagua, coordinated by Judith of Stormholde. We hope you will give often and generously of your talent. (Besides — Gift Chest projects are a great opportunity to try new techniques in small pieces!)

FINISHED PRODUCTS

Want to see the finished products so far? Bask in our "Guild glory" by taking a look at our photos: on our Guild website at <http://lbayrose.org/wkneedle/> or in the photos section of our email list at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKneedle>. Many photos are also in our Guild memory book, which is on display at many events. (And do you have photos of your own work that you'd like to share?) 

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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The Needleworkers Guild of the Kingdom of the West


Embroidered purse from Sens

Here are pictures and two motifs from a purse solidly embroidered in long-armed cross-stitch, from the Cathedral Treasury at Sens, near Paris. Sens was for many years the premier archdiocese of France, and so has received gifts and collections from many other churches, especially those destroyed during the French Revolution.





I apologize for the poor photos; the original photos are very small and very old. I've given charts for a couple of the basic motifs; all four motifs, along with charts in color, will be posted on the [WKnneedle Yahoo](#) groups website along with the pages of this issue.

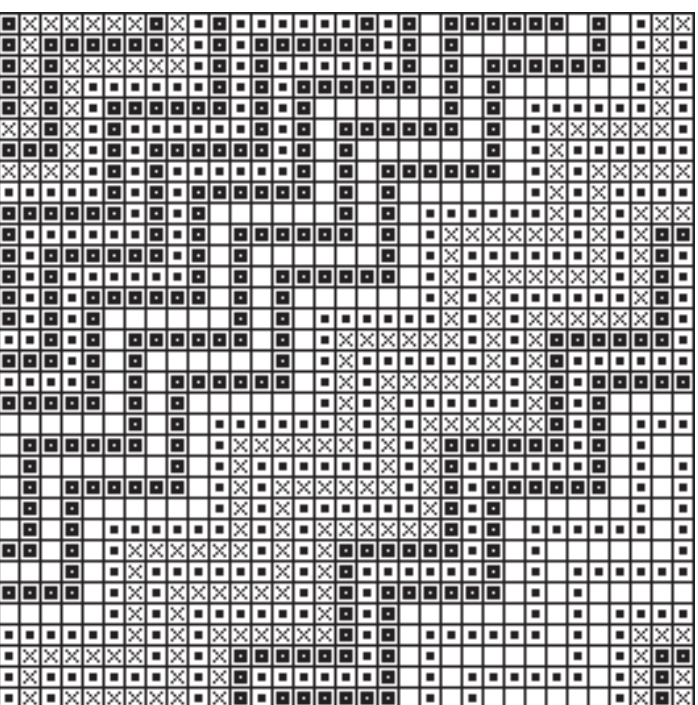
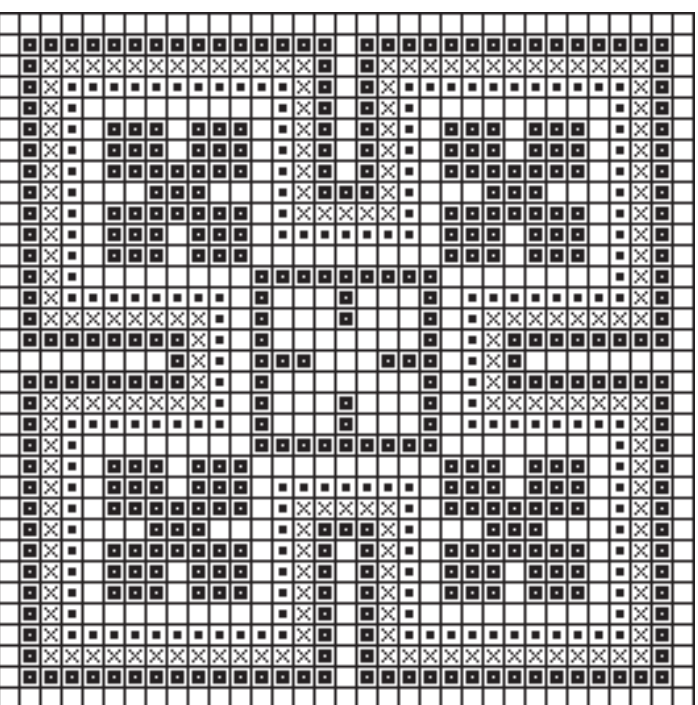
My thanks to Baroness Tangwysyl verch Morgant Glasvryn, who saw this purse in Sens and took extensive notes that enabled me to reconstruct all the patterns and colors.

Any of the patterns from this purse could be worked on linen in solid cross-

stitch, or like the originals in long-armed cross stitch, with the stitching following the lines of the motifs. They would make nice pin cushions, either backed with solid color fabric or as a hanging decorative pin-cushion or “scissors fob” with designs on both sides. 

COLORS THIS PAGE:

-  Dark red
-  Green
-  Gold
-  White

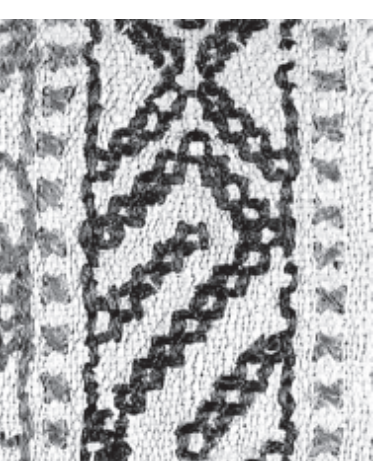


Cross: Cultural

—by *Christian de Holicombe*

Cross stitch is many people's first introduction to modern embroidery, and a pleasant one it is. The stitch itself is quite simple—just rows of X's—although of course there are refinements you can learn later. But once you master the mental ‘twist’ that lets you translate dark and light squares on a chart into X's across thread intersections on cloth, you can follow any chart and cover just about anything with your embroidery.

Did medieval people do cross stitch, and if so, how did they approach it? Here's where the ‘cross’ in our title becomes ‘cultural.’ Yes, cross stitch was certainly done in the Middle Ages—but identifying a stitch is not terribly meaningful outside of its cultural context and style. We not only have to ask *when* a certain style of embroidery was stitched, but in what cultures and by what kinds of people. What materials were used for thread and cloth, what kinds of stitches were used together, what kinds of motifs were considered suitable, and exactly how the stitches were constructed are also important parts of the cultural context.



Probably the most overlooked aspect of cultural context is what kinds of items were decorated with a particular style of stitching. In modern times, other than as an artistic exercise or as a joke, you'd probably expect to see canvaswork (‘needle-point’) chair upholstery but not canvaswork blouses; lace dresses or gloves but not lace dish towels—at least, not if you're actually going to use them to dry dishes. In the same way historically, you expect to see Elizabethan blackwork on collars and cuffs, but not on stockings or shoes.

So let's look at medieval uses of cross stitch, including its cultural contexts.

Probably the most common question we get in the Needleworkers Guild is “Is this stitch ‘period’?” This is the first in a series of articles exploring the historical uses of stitches and comparing them with modern uses.

Below, two motifs in long-armed and simple cross stitch from a wool cushion in the royal tombs at Las Huelgas, near Burgos in Spain.



Medieval uses

There has been a great deal written about cross-stitch and long-armed cross stitch toward the *end* of our period, in the 15th and 16th centuries, where it seems to have become increasingly popular. It's used then for canvaswork, on decorative towels, as a part of some embroideries worked in double running stitch, and as a background in “voided work” on linen (often called Assisi work), which Sabrina de la Bere will be discussing in our next issue.

I'm not going to say much about these later embroideries in this article, since there's a relative abundance of material about them. Instead I'm going to focus on the use of cross stitch in earlier centuries, especially the 13th and 14th, since I have some very interesting pieces from those centuries for us to look at.

Like many good ideas, including knitting and the number zero, cross stitch probably came to Europe from cultures to the east or south. Cross stitch embroidery is said to have flourished during the T'ang



dynasty in China (618-906 AD), and it could have spread westward from there to the Mediterranean along the Silk Road and other trade routes.

A piece sometimes cited as the ‘earliest’ evidence of cross stitch is an embroidered roundel, found in a Coptic cemetery in upper Egypt and dated to the 7th or 8th century. It's done mostly in split stitch and shows the Annunciation (i.e. the Virgin Mary and an angel); in fact, it's a very close copy of a slightly earlier woven silk fabric in the Vatican Museum. There are a couple of dozen cross- and star-shaped stitches, done *on top* of the split-stitch filling, decorating Mary's dress.



To my way of thinking, these are not really ‘cross stitch,’ because they are irregularly scattered, oriented at all angles, and have varying numbers of points (4, 6, or 8). It seems to me more useful to define “true” cross stitch as regularly spaced X's, worked in a pattern and oriented on the grain of the fabric (usually to counted threads).

One of the earlier pieces of embroidery I've seen that uses true cross stitch is the one on our cover (and in a detail at far left). You can see that there are carefully spaced rows of separated crosses decorat-

(continued next page —>)

Cross stitch on linens from Spain

ing a fragment that is mostly worked in double running stitch. This piece is also Coptic, from Mamluk-ruled Egypt in the 13th or 14th century, and was probably once part of a linen tunic or handkerchief. These same rows of detached cross stitches turn up from time to time in later embroideries too, most notably decorating the seams of a woman's smock embroidered with small animals in stem stitch from the early 1600s.

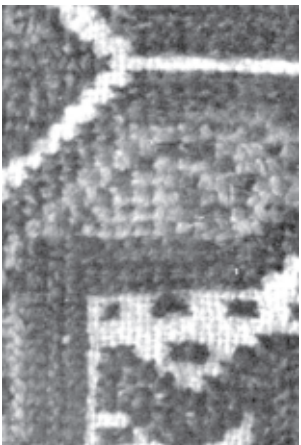
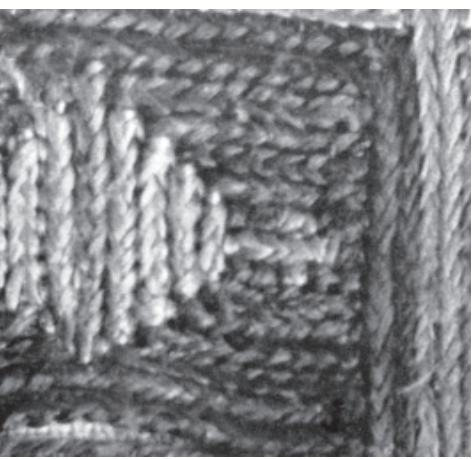
Simple cross & long-armed cross

More common than simple cross stitch in most of our centuries is the use of cross stitch's close cousin, long-armed cross stitch. The long-armed form seems to have been regarded as the "normal" form of cross stitch in many times and places in the Medieval and Renaissance eras. In the way it's worked (diagram, p.5), it's only slightly different from simple cross stitch: one of the two stitches is simply longer than the other, and as a row is worked, the stitches overlap, producing a nice braided effect. In these pieces, such as the 'Ave Maria' lettering illustrated on p.3, you very often see the long continuous lines worked in long-armed cross stitch, and the little isolated stitches that form points, tiny stars, or diagonals are simple cross stitches. (The piece shown here is a detail of an Icelandic altar frontal, of uncertain but probably medieval date.)

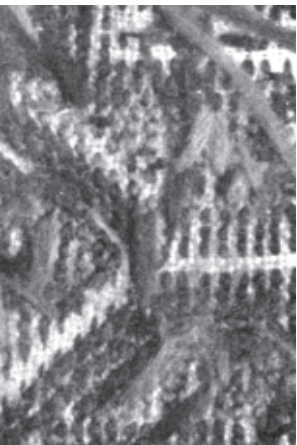
Solid stitching

From the 13th- and 14th-century royal tombs at the Monastery of Las Huelgas, near Burgos in Spain, come also several examples of a third style of medieval cross stitch, probably the one most often seen: long-armed cross stitch, in wool or silk, worked solidly in rows to cover the whole linen background, forming a smooth and


Below, a close-up of the stitching on one of the cushion covers from Las Huelgas.



Front (above) and back (below) details of the long-armed cross-stitch cushion cover on p.3)



Below, detail of a purse in long-armed cross stitch, worked around 1300.

Any pattern worked in long-armed cross stitch can also be worked in simple cross stitch, so it's easy to get started with projects based on medieval examples. We have extra pattern pages in this issue, along with more material on the Web, which should provide plenty of ideas. I look forward to seeing the results! 



colorful surface. In the Renaissance, solid stitching like this in wool is one of the techniques used to make table carpets: it proved to be a light-weight and inexpensive way to copy the designs of the costly and very heavy Oriental carpets then being imported. (In our own guild, Mistress Anne of Bradford has been working on a splendid example of such a carpet up in Oertha.)

The examples we have here of this technique and from earlier centuries are mostly used as bags and cushion covers. Because the long-armed cross stitch is worked firmly, and because the stitches overlap, with most of the yarn on the front of the fabric, it creates a very hard-wearing surface for these and similar uses.

With a bit of planning, this solid long-armed cross-stitch technique also provides a lot of freedom to vary colors, stitch directions and motifs. Long-armed cross stitch can be worked horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, and it's easy to change direction. As in the detail on this page, very often the embroiderers have worked different parts of the embroidery running in different directions. The zigzag motif on the purse on p.6 is also worked in continuous lines of color, which change direction at the corners of the zigzag.

Another source of variation is in the way the stitches are worked — whether back-and-forth or with all rows in the same direction, with stitches in succeeding rows crossing in the same or opposite directions. The surface can look startlingly like knitting at first glance — until you see a line of stitches turn a corner, or until you look at the back of the work, where you can see the linen it's worked on.

Below and at bottom, view and detail of a purse worked by our Guildmember Mistress Catherine Lorraine, in long-armed cross stitch and tent stitch.



These patterns are taken from the inner pillowcases, made of linen, that were found inside more elaborately worked outer covers on cushions from the 13th and 14th-century royal tombs at the monastery of Las Huelgas, near Burgos in Spain. The originals are worked in red or black silk in a combination of long-armed cross-stitch (the straight lines) and simple cross stitch (points and isolated stitches).

The castle motif is placed near each of the four corners of one side of the pillowcase, and as you can see, it's worked on linen that is not quite even weave. (In the center of this pillowcase is a motif in a different technique.) Another fragment has a border of very similar castles in solid cross stitch, with openings only at the doors and windows.

The other four patterns on this page are for simple borders, from fragments of the bottom edges of the same pillowcases. All of these can be worked either in the original combination of stitches or in simple cross stitch.

The diagram here illustrates how to begin, and continue, rows of long-armed cross-stitch in either a horizontal or vertical direction.

On the Web page:

The folder for this issue at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKneedle/files/Spring-2002/>

includes a folder called "Color-plates", which has color photos and charts for all these motifs and others — including a chart in color for the cover picture and an adapted chart for the wool cushion cover on p.3. There are also links to Web pages that provide further projects and information. 