

Florentine Scuffia with Reticella Insert

Baroness Rainillt de Bello Marisco

Materials: Handkerchief weight linen, Linen thread 120/2

Background and Inspiration

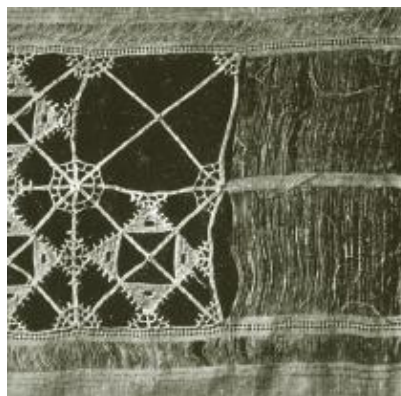


The cap was inspired by the portrait of a Lady c 1490 by Ghirlandaio (Image 1). In the process of developing my Italian persona, I found myself in need of a cap to wear with my gamurra. This portrait provided the foundation for the right “look”.

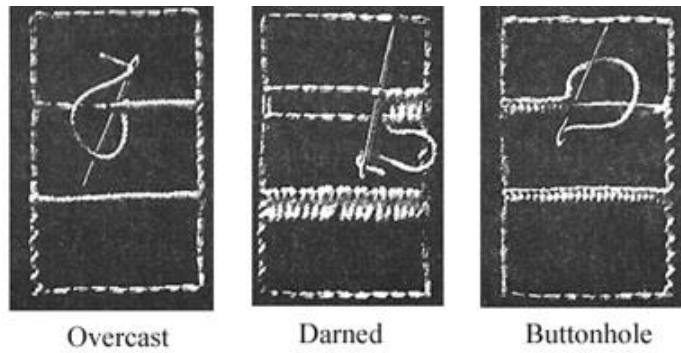
In addition I had wanted to learn to do Italian lace and the idea of doing a period handkerchief with the reticella insertions and punto d’aria edgings was too daunting of a task so I sat down with a piece of linen and was determined to try my hand at the lace. Ten hours later with a small square of finished lace, I had to find something do with it. Thus the idea of making the linen sample into a cap came about.

Embroidery

The lace was made by mounting the linen in a small hoop and with tension on the fabric, cutting threads and drawing them out until a grid was formed. The grid was 8 threads cut and leaving 4, repeated in both directions to a size of about 1”. This is a technique that was commonly used in the early forms of the needlelace. This extant piece of reticella lace never completed dates from the 16th century shows the drawn threads and the foundation bars. (Image 2)



The lace itself was made with one strand of 120/2 linen thread. The grid threads were then interwoven (darned) over 2 threads to form the stabilized bars for the rest of the lace. Foundation threads were laid using two strands of the linen thread forming the circles and half rounds throughout the pattern. These were covered by wrapping the thread around the foundation threads (overcast) or using buttonhole stitch as seen below (Image 3).



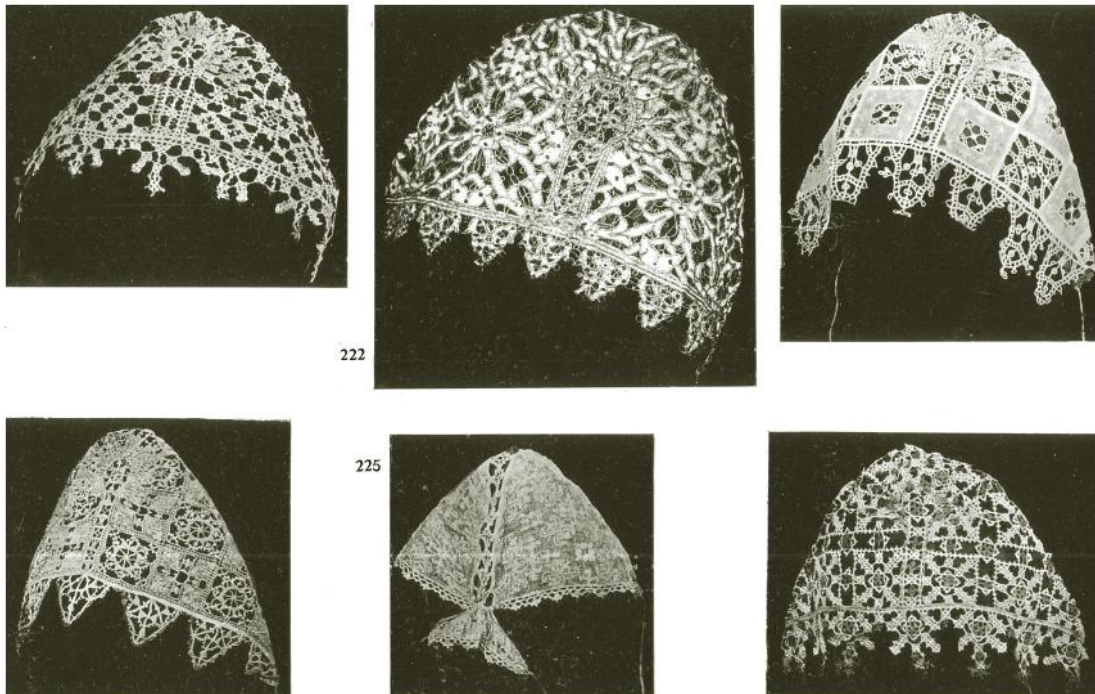
Finishing

The cap itself was based on a simple pattern provided by Baroness Kamilla van Anderlecht which is a simple circle placed into a band. This particular shape is not accurate to the Ghirlandaio portrait but it did provide a foundation for further research.



The shape of this cap shows up about a century later in this form in some of the images by Joachim Beuckelaer in his Flemish market pictures. (Image 4)

The usage of reticella however in caps is shown in this series of lace caps from the 16th century. (Image 5)



Six Caps.

No. 221 — *Reticello*. No. 222 — Cot linen and gold thread. No. 223 — Ivory stitch. No. 224 — *Reticello* and embroidery.
 No. 225 — Satin and curl stitch on transparent linen. No. 226 — *Reticello*, white and gold.
 All Antolini, Macerata.

Conclusions

Finally making the lace was a big accomplishment for me. I had made numerous attempts previously to do a sample of reticella, each ending in disaster. The linen stretched the stitches not precise enough. I finally realized that I was not working with fine enough threads. By using the handkerchief linens and the 120/2 lace thread it finally produced a sample closer to what the extant laces look like. More than anything this project gave me a new appreciation for the amazing lace pieces seen in the 16th century.

Images

Ghirlandaio, Domenico. **Birth of St John the Baptist (detail)**. c1486-90

Cappella Tornabuoni, Santa Maria Novella, Florence

Web Gallery of Art Access Jan 2005.

<http://www.wga.hu/art/g/ghirland/domenico/6tornab/62tornab/3birth1.jpg>

1. Ghirlandaio, Domenico *Portrait of a Lady c1490* Clark Art Institute.

Image accessed 11/12/2004.

http://www.clarkart.edu/museum_programs/collections/early_eur/content.cfm?ID=23&marker=4&start=4

2. Ricci, Elisa. *Old Italian Lace*. London and Philadelphia. 1913. pg 122

3. Kliot, Jules and Kaethle. *The Needle-made Lace of Reticella*. Lacis Publications. Berkley CA. 1994. pg 11.

4. Beuckelaer, Joachim. *Market Woman with Fruit, Vegetables and Poultry*. 1564. Staatliche Museen, Kassel. Image accessed 11/12/2004. Web Gallery of Art.

http://www.wga.hu/art/b/beuckela/market_w.jpg

5. Ricci, Elisa. *Old Italian Lace*. London and Philadelphia. 1913. pg 122

Futher References

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Herald, Jacqueline. *Dress in Renaissance Italy, 1400-1500*. Humanities Press. NJ. 1981

Schuette, Marie, and Signid Muller-Christensen. Text translated by Donald King. *A Pictorial History of Embroidery*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964.