

# **Worshipful Company of Broiderers of Lochac**

## **Information Handout 5 - Midwinter Investiture 1999**

### **From the Guildmaster**

Greetings all,

Unfortunately this issue does not contain the next installment of 'What I did on my holidays', which so many of you have told me you enjoyed. (Actually, so many of you have told me you're wild with envy, but I guess that amounts to the same thing!). The dreaded lurgy caught up with me, and I found myself racing the last minute deadlines - again. The saga will continue in the next issue.

Once again, huge thanks to Viscountess Keridwen who has been doing a fantastic job of keeping the Worshipful Company together for me while I try desperately to finish my thesis. The Company represents a major dream for me, and I am really looking forward to being able to put a lot more into it. Meanwhile, Keridwen's work has borne a lot of fruit, and I am thrilled to see the upsurge of enthusiasm for needlework in Lochac. The judges from the May Coronet competition tell me that they were very impressed with the standard of entries in the pouch competition - I was sorry not to see them, but Mistress Rowan has taken photographs, so I will see them eventually. Congratulations to Alarice Beatrix von Thal, Elayne Montjoye and Madilayn de la Mer for first, second and third places respectively.

We have been discussing ideas for a web-page for the Guild, and Mistress Kiriel du Papillon has agreed to do the designing for us, so that we can put up items of interest and hopefully pictures of members' work. I'll let you know when that's ready to go ahead.

I won't be at Midwinter, unfortunately, but will be at November Coronet in Politarchopolis, so please bring or send any work you wish to have graded. Remember that pieces for grading need to have supporting documentation. In the meantime, keep stitching.

Bess Haddon

### **Book Review**

"Needlework Patterns from Renaissance Germany" recharted by Kathryn Newell from "Schon Renes Modelbuch" by Johan Sibmacher (pub 1597). published by Costume & Dressmaker Press - 1999.

This is a very interesting book, and Kathryn's short account of how she came to prepare it was a hoot - and quite common for any SCA person to have the same sort of experiences in their researches.

It is professionally done, and the patterns are very clear and easy to follow - the ones done in 2 colours are terrific. It has completely restored my confidence in the "rechart" area - most people will be familiar with the "photocopy" style of many of these types of books, with their coil binding.

This book is a major difference - it is printed on high quality glossy paper (for my Lochac readers - much like the recipe books, and craft books put out by Women's Weekly and New Idea - that's the sort of high quality I am talking about). It's not a big book (only about 30 pages), but the quality of work is so high, and the obvious time and effort put into making it work is well worth the price (\$US10).

It does not have any "how to" sections in it, or any suggestions on uses for patterns, or stitches etc., but then it is solely a pattern book, and it is up to the user to let their imagination run riot with it. It may be an idea for a later edition to include in it some of the different stitches used at that time that may be used to work the patterns.

All in all, it is a very good book, and I would recommend it to anybody interested in or looking for historical patterns. I was also pleased to see her acknowledgments of those who have helped her - including a pair of librarians who tried to find various things for her through their databases.

Congratulations to Kathryn on great work. Now - waiting for the next ones.....

Megan McConnell  
(known in SCA as Madilayn de Mer)

## Results from the May Coronet Competition - Pouches

The pouches competition didn't have many entries, but the standard of entry was very high. I was despairing that we would be able to find a winner. I wanted them all to win.

However thanks to the diligence of the judges, Mistress Rowan and Mistress Gabrielle, we were able to decide on a winner. The winner was Baroness Alarice Beatrix von Thal with a neatly executed German counted thread pouch.

Once again I must say that we were very impressed with all the work presented, and I hope to see more in the coming competitions.

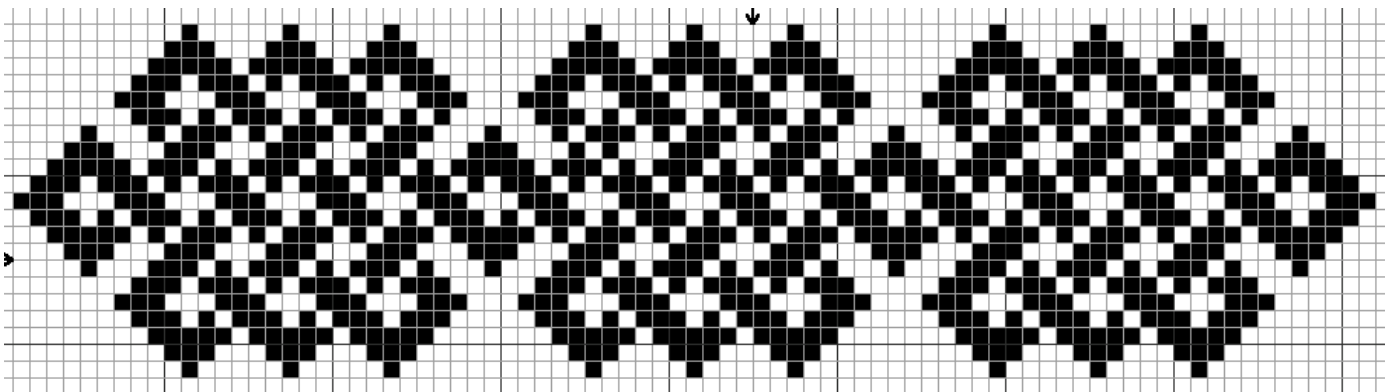
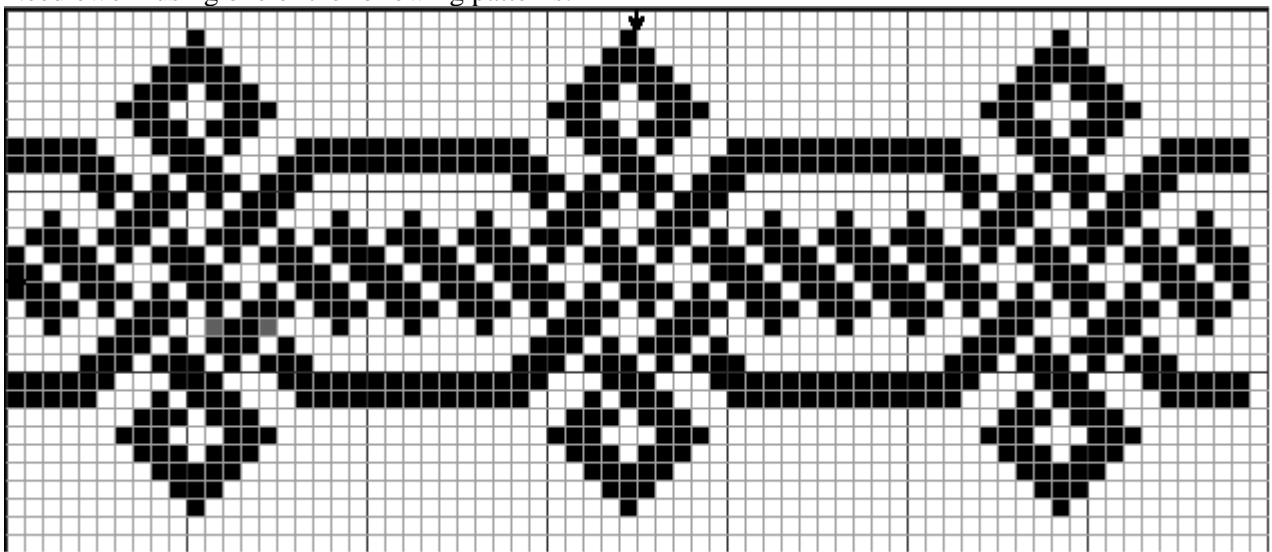
## Competitions

The next four competitions will go towards the Company of Broiderer's Championship. The points will be added up at 12th Night 2000 and the winner will be declared the Champion of the Company of Broiderers.

**Midwinter**  
Couching

### Spring Coronet

Needlework using one of the following patterns:



These patterns come from "The True Perfection of Design by Giovanni Ostaus, In Venice 1567". These patterns were redrawn by Susan J. Evans and put into a book published by Falconwood Press.

### **12th Night**

Needleworked lace (filet lace, reticillia, punto in aria, not bobbin lace)

### **Scoring**

To bring us into line with the Lochac A&S competition, the scoring is out of 50, broken up as follows. The intention is that the Lochac A&S will also use our scoring forms when they have a needlework related competition.

- 10 points doco
- 10 points use of sources
- 10 points technique
- 10 points use of materials
- 10 points presentation

## **West Kingdom and Lochac Arts and Sciences Competitions**

Needleworkers should note that your work can also be submitted for Kingdom or Principality competitions. There are a few needlework related competitions coming up.

West Kingdom - A&S Tourney

Needlework: Portraiture. Techniques and style should be appropriate for the period chosen. Min 3"x3"

West Kingdom - October Crown

Embroidery pre-1000AD

Lochac 12th Night

Needlework: Blackwork handkerchief

Trim: Lace (minimum of 6 inches. Note: This competition is not restricted to needlemade lace. However if you do make needl lace, you can enter same piece work in the Principality competition and the Broderers competition.

## **Renaissance Pattern Books and Embroidery**

The competition for the Company of Broderers for November Coronet has been set as any work based on one of the two patterns from period sources which has been provided. We haven't set a style, and the patterns can be worked in any appropriate technique, and for any appropriate purpose.

These patterns are both taken from sixteenth century printed pattern books. The first of these books that we know about was printed in Augsburg, Germany in 1523, by Johann Schönsperger. In the next few years, a number of new editions of the same work were made, under the title *Furm oder modelbüchlein*, and the patterns in them were copied and adapted and reprinted by publishers all over Europe, in particular Germany, Italy, France, Holland and England. Some of the patterns in these books were for free-form (non-counted) embroidery, and some, like the ones chosen for the competition, were for counted thread techniques. These books clearly sold well and had a significant impact on the types of embroidery which became common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe. It is clear from the introductions to some of the books that they were intended for the amateur rather than the professional embroiderer. Many of them have titles like *Ornamento de le belle donne* (ornament of the beautiful lady), and the comment in the dedication to one of Vinciolo's pattern books: "insomuch as those matters [embroidery patterns] pertain principally to the ladies", which show that the pattern books are clearly aimed principally at women. Such statements that the purpose of the books is to provide ladies with an opportunity to "while away your time and occupy your mind" (Vinciolo), indicate that it is specifically ladies of the upper classes who are expected to use them.

What the books do not contain is any explicit instruction on how the patterns should be used, or to what purposes they should be put. The publishers of the pattern books expected their audience to be experienced needleworkers who already knew the possible techniques, but this also meant that the books were not prescriptive and the patterns could be executed in a number of different styles and techniques. We can gain an understanding of how they can be used by looking at examples of existing sixteenth century embroideries, some of which can be linked to known patterns. The patterns shown on square grids, like the ones chosen for the competition, would have been worked using counted thread techniques. These include using cross-stitch to fill in the pattern elements, or as voided work where the background is filled in and the pattern left unworked. (This is sometimes known as Assisi work, because the technique underwent a modern revival in Assisi in the nineteenth century.) The design elements could also be outlined in double-running stitch, sometimes known as Holbein stitch since the artist Holbein painted many portraits with clothes in these styles. Other examples show that these patterns were frequently used for openwork styles, sometimes considered needlelace, such as filet lace, where the design elements are embroidered over net, or drawnwork where selected ground threads are drawn out, making a similar net like basis for embroidery. One form of drawnwork, known as 'fili tirati' involves cutting and drawing threads so that the design is left as whole cloth, and the background becomes a net. (Some of the patterns were also used for weaving designs, although that is not in the scope of this competition.) Most, although by no means all, of these embroideries were executed as monochrome (ie. single colour) work.

The two principle uses of these woodcut patterns seem to be for embroidery which was used on clothing, and on domestic articles such as tablecloths and towels. There are many portraits showing embroidered clothing, particularly collars and cuffs, in designs based on pattern books. It is interesting to note that some of these are close to but not exactly the same as the printed versions. This may be because the design was adapted by a different printer and we no longer have the adapted pattern, or it may be because the embroiderer adapted the design herself. It is quite likely that the spread of designs went in both directions - just as embroiderers copied designs from the pattern books, publishers may well have based their designs on existing embroideries. So feel free to adapt these patterns to suit your own purposes.

Some of the period pattern books have been re-printed as facsimiles, including some by SCA publishers, and are available for us to use. I have also tracked down a few more facsimile editions published in the 1890s and on microfilm, which I hope to make available to members of the guild next year.

I look forward to seeing your entries.

Bess

### **Bibliography**

Abegg, Margaret, *Apropos Patterns for Embroidery, Lace and Woven Textiles*, Abegg-Stiftung, Bern, 1978

(This is probably the best book available on the subject of the printed pattern books and the embroideries made from them. Unfortunately it's out of print, but you might be able to find a copy in a library or second hand.)

d'Averaigne, Ianthe, *The New Carolingian Modelbook: Counted Embroidery Patterns from Before 1600*, Outlaw Press: Albuquerque, NM, 1995. ISBN: 0-9642082-2-9

(This is an excellent book from an SCA author, which includes re-charted patterns from a number of period sources, including both pattern-books and extant embroideries. She also includes a section on period embroidery stitches, a discussion of the historical context, and a bibliography and glossary. This book is not cheap at current exchange rates, but I'd recommend it highly.)

Knight, Pauline, *The Technique of Filet Lace*, Batsford, London, 1980

(Good how to information and some great period examples, together with some fairly hideous modern ones. Spot the difference!)

Levey, Santana M., *Lace: a history*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1983

(While this book is mostly about lace, it includes some of the needle styles which can also be considered embroidery, and some of which are based on printed patterns.)

Lotz, Arthur, *Bibliographie der Modelbücher: Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Stich- und Spitzen Musterbücher des 16 und 17 Jahrhunderts*, Anton Hiersemann Stuttgart/Holland Press, London, 1963.

(Also well and truly out of print, but if you can lay your hands on it, very worth while. It is a history of printed pattern books, and shows an example from each extant book. You don't need to read German to get the benefit from it.)

Newall, Kathryn, *Needlework Patterns from Renaissance Germany*, Costume and Dressmaker Press, Boulder CO, 1999. Contact: <http://www.costumemag.com>.

(Hot off the press! See the review elsewhere in this issue. This a recharted version of Johan Sibmacher's *Schon Neues Modelbuch* of 1597, by Baroness Kathryn Goodwyn, O.L.)

Vinciolo, Federico, *Les Singuliers et Nouveaux Pourtraicts*,

Jean le Clerk, Paris, 1606, reprinted as *Renaissance Patterns for Lace, Embroidry and Needlepoint*, Dover, New York, 1971.

(I think that Dover has recently re-printed this one – it's still around. A facsimile reproduction of the original work.)

## **From the Patron**

As usual, thank you to Mistress Bess and to Madelin de Mer for their contributions to this handout. Bess managed to write for the handout from her sick bed. This newsletter would be much much thinner without her contributions.

Please let me know if there is anything else you would like to see in this handout. Also please feel free to write articles and book reviews, or just use this as a forum to share ideas.

Speaking of ideas...

The Charter of the Company of Broderers states that the Company will make a presentation to the Prince and Princess each reign. This was included so that the Company would maintain a high level of visibility within the Principality and also that the works of the members of the Company would also get more attention. Please let me know if you have ideas for projects we could use as presentations. These should probably be personal gifts, rather than items to be added to regalia (I'm sure the Keeper of Regalia would ask the Company when embroidered items are required).

Please send your ideas to the Guildmaster for approval, and she will let you know when your work will be needed.

In the next newsletter in November, we will be announcing the competitions for next year. Please let me know if there is any category you would like to see included. I know that some people need a deadline to help with motivation, so if there is a project you have always been meaning to start!

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