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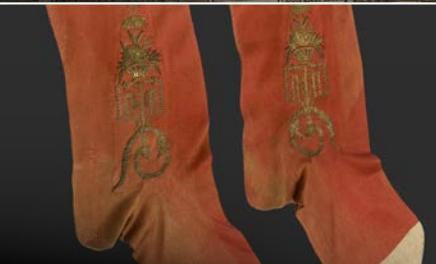


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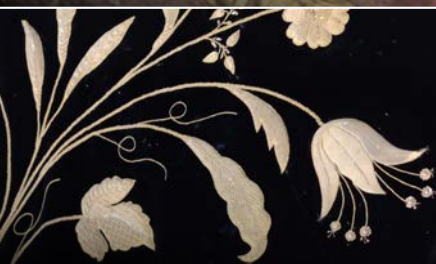
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Textile collection of the Colegio de San Ignacio de Loyola Vizcaínas of Mexico City

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by LIZZETH ARMENTA

Director of the Colegio de San Ignacio de Loyola Vizcaínas Museum

The School's foundation, dedication and purpose

1 Josefina Muriel de la Torre, “El Real Colegio de San Ignacio de Loyola 1734-1863” in *Los Vascos en México y su Colegio de las Vizcaínas*, [The Basques in Mexico and their Vizcaínas School], coord. Josefina Muriel de la Torre (Mexico: CIGATAM – Nacional Autónoma de México – Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas – Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1987), 15-16.

2 Josefina María Cristina Torales Pacheco, *Ilustrados en la Nueva España. Los socios de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País* [Erudites in Nueva España. The members of the Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País] (Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana – Real Sociedad de los Amigos del País – Colegio de San Ignacio de Loyola Vizcaínas I. A. P., 2001), 23. / Josefina Muriel *op. cit.* 3-4.

In order to understand the creation, transformation and current state of the Vizcaínas textile collection, it is necessary to contextualise its spatial and temporal origins in 18th-century New Spain society, particularly in the field of female education, as it was in this sector that Colegio Vizcaínas, the institution to which the collection in this case study belongs, was founded. During the first half of the 18th century, female education in New Spain was developed through different institutions: the cloistered convents of nuns who admitted very small groups of girls and who requested an entrance dowry and the popular schools called “*amigas*”, or friends, where the imparting of knowledge was precarious, as well as paid schools with teachers who lacked adequate preparation, giving few options to the women of the time.¹

It is necessary to know the role played by the Basques in New Spain, as it was they who founded and devised the project of the Colegio de Vizcaínas. Since the mid-16th century, the members of the Basque community that settled in New Spain had achieved significant economic and social power as businessmen, government officials and members of the clergy. They showed interest in acting in favour of female education by sponsoring various educational centres. For example, the School for indigenous girls founded by Fray Juan de Zumárraga, which taught manual arts, or the Colegio de Belén, which focused on music. Later in the 17th century, this group gathered in the Brotherhood of Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu, which distinguished itself by carrying out pious works, allocating its donations to pay for the education of orphan girls and provide them for marriage, favouring the adoption of religious habits, supporting widows or burying the poor, actions that would precede its greatest work: Colegio Vizcaínas.²

3 Josefina Muriel *op. cit.* 16 a 20.

4 *Ibidem* 26-27. / Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, a specialist in the cultural history of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, argues that education consisted of providing the individual with the resources to integrate into society: knowledge, beliefs, behavioural values and prejudices. There was an effort to promote knowledge of the essential dogmas needed for salvation from the catechism.

5 *Ídem* / An obligatory practice was the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, which consisted of going to the Exercise Chapel of the school, where they would remain for four weeks, fasting and carrying out specific readings and silences that would promote in the participants a profound analysis of their actions in order to achieve the reflection that would lead them to live “to the greater glory of God”, the charisma of the Society of Jesus.

In 1729, Don José de Garante, of Basque origin, made a donation to support twelve orphan girls placed in the Colegio de San Miguel de Belén, a fact that inspired other members of his community to create a place that would be both a school and a pious retreat for girls, maidens and destitute widows descended from the “Biscayan nation”. In 1732, the confrères of Aránzazu, led by their president, Dr. Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren, embraced the cause of the foundation and never abandoned it. This school would prepare women to build up their lives in order to opt for marriage or religious life. The founders gave the title of the school to the Basque saint Ignatius of Loyola. The brotherhood declared that the maintenance of the schoolgirls would be covered by their families, by monthly allowances from their benefactors, or by the sale of the manual work they would produce.³

Analysis of the Constitutions: In search of the origin of the textile collection

At this point, it is necessary to study the constitutions of the College approved in 1766, as this document concentrated the regulations that outlined the daily life of its inhabitants and where the importance of the teaching of embroidery can be noted, this being the first indication of the textile collection’s origin. The founders asked the lawyer Francisco Xavier Gamboa to create the *Constituciones del Colegio de S. Ignacio de Loyola*, the school’s constitutions, to establish: the purpose of the institution, its educational ideals and its patronage. The first was related to the Ignatian motto “to the greater glory of God”, attainable via the promotion of the virtues. With regard to educational ideals, it established the promotion of moral and religious values within the Christian faith in order to transcend in society and as a basis for national well-being, in which the schoolgirls assumed the need to function well as part of the Novo-Hispanic machinery. The third constitutional issue was the government of Vizcaínas, which was independent of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, established by means of an independent patronage.⁴ From this point onwards, aspects of educational ideals will be highlighted.

Constitution XIX sets out the importance of embroidery, describing the characteristics and responsibilities of the “first housemaids”, women who were in charge of a group of schoolgirls within the living quarters of the college, where they had to take great care in the upbringing and education of embroidery work, as well as other skills.⁵ Constitution XXV specifies that at 5.30 a.m. they were to wake up to attend mass at 6 or 7 o’clock. From 9 a.m. to midday, they retired to their quarters to attend lessons in sewing, embroidery, reading, writing, Christian doctrine, housework and music. At noon, each

6 It is important to note that this model may have been borrowed from the *beaterios*, places founded and used to spread Western culture and Spanish customs in New Spain. The *beaterios* were schools or boarding schools where the students were taught Spanish, religion, reading, writing, singing and needlework, and were not run by nuns.

7 Josefina Muriel, *op. cit.* 30 to 48 / Father Ripalda's Catechism is one of the most important textbooks in the history of education in Mexico, not only because it was a manual for religious instruction, but also because it was used for learning Spanish and civics. It described the universal prayers, commandments, sacraments, works of faith, sins, virtues, powers, beatitudes, confession and the act of constriction. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru talks about Ripalda's catechism and the impact it had on women's lives, as it indicated that they should treat their husbands and their neighbours with love and reverence, as the Church treated Christ, these being the attitudes recommended for women in colonial society, whose rules of conduct emanated from Christian doctrine; women and wives assumed a role of submission in the patriarchalist model, a situation that was made even more difficult by the lack of legal and economic capacity. / Francisco Javier Gamboa *op. cit.*

8 *Ibidem* 27. / The Workroom or Sewing room was located on

group ate in their respective quarters and then took a siesta. Sewing and embroidery work was to be resumed by 3 p.m. and finished by 5 p.m. in winter and until 6 p.m. in summer. At the end of the day, they would perform their prayers until they received the signal for supper, for at 9 o'clock they had to start tidying up and putting everything away so that they could go to sleep. In conclusion, 5 to 6 hours a day were devoted to perfecting manual skills.⁶

According to Constitution XXV, at the beginning or during the break of the afternoon session of sewing and embroidery, Christian doctrine was to be reviewed, with the schoolgirls taking turns reading for half an hour from "a spiritual book" to be listened to by the companions who were doing their work. A recurrent reading was the Catechism of Fr. Jerónimo Ripalda S. J. There were two types of schoolgirls within the institution: endowed, supported by the pious works of benefactors, and boarders, whose families paid for their stay at the college. Constitution XXVI provides a third modality for those who made use of the proceeds from the sale of their sewing and embroidery work. In 1766, the King of Spain, Charles III, issued a Royal Decree confirming the constitutions drawn up by Gamboa, while in the same year, Pope Clement XIII issued a papal bull granting the school autonomy from ecclesiastical jurisdiction, allowing the school to open on 9 September 1767.⁷

Once the school started its activities with 70 students, the teaching of sewing and embroidery was of particular interest. The Workroom or Sewing Room was created for this purpose, a large gallery where this educational space was established and in which the students worked as a community.⁸ The Vizcaínas textile collection not only comprises the objects that were generated in this Room, but also pieces that formed part of the vestments worn by the chaplains of the College, which were necessary for the services that were part of the life of the Vizcaínas community. It should be noted that the collection has grown thanks to donations of textile pieces that have increased and enriched the collection in terms of typological, material, technological and ornamental variety. Examples include: samplers, folders, a bed cover, clothing for sculptural images, women's underwear and outerwear, accessories, and other objects associated with the textile collection: a sewing machine, report cards of former schoolgirls showing their sewing qualifications, and photographic portraits.

the ground floor of the building, next to the living quarters in the central courtyard. It had a particularly elongated rectangular plan, with large windows that allowed natural

sunlight to enter. In the 1960s, architect Ricardo de Robina, a member of the school's Board of Directors, undertook a series of adaptations to the building to enable Vizcaínas to meet

the demands inherent in the educational model of the time. This space was adapted to be a chemistry laboratory and is still in use today.

The Workroom or the Sewing room

9 The first house mistress, or *nanita*, was one of the homeless widows staying at the school. These women were in charge of one of the houses and had under their care a group of younger schoolgirls whom they had to teach housework.

10 According to the classification of the Valencia de Don Juan Institute in Madrid. Scholarly embroidery is made by using high-quality and fine materials to create designs that imitate the effect of a painting.

11 Josefina Muriel, *op. cit.* 54-55.

12 *Ibidem* 58. / Frances Erskine Inglis Marchioness of Calderón de la Barca, *La vida en México durante una residencia de dos años en ese país* [Life in Mexico during a two-year residence in that country] (Mexico: Ed. Porrúa, 2017), 94 y 95.

The original plan of the school did not envisage a community training space, since, as already mentioned, the teaching of manual work was carried out in the homes under the tutelage of the first house mistress or *nanita*.⁹ The authorities of the institution noted that the practice of these activities in a same space would reinforce the moral and Christian values that were instilled in them. The decision was made to create a Workroom or Sewing room where communal benches and high tables were installed for setting up the work frames. The schoolgirls began with the so-called “popular embroidery”, which involved making a “dechado”, a canvas on which they executed the first and simplest stitches, usually on very open weave fabrics and using thick, coloured threads and stamens to create letters, numbers, flowers and even animals. As they perfected their skills, the materials they worked with were selected with greater and greater finesse, and the designs they created also became more complex, reaching the level of so-called “scholarly embroidery”.¹⁰

They worked with embroidery in white, colour, cotton, silk, gold and silver threads, they also worked with applications of precious stones and pearls. They produced birettas, handkerchiefs and vestments for devotional images (virgins, baby Jesus, saints) using silks, brocades, velvets and gold and silver lamé, with which they also made sacred vestments, always in accordance with liturgical regulations. They made bobbin lace and tatting, knitted with needles and hooks to make stockings, caps and shawls, as well as fabric flowers and pleats. By 1798, they had set up workshops to make braids and lace, which they incorporated as ornamental elements in liturgical vestments and also for men’s coats and ladies’ dresses. They also made cigarette cases, cigar cases and *chaquira* bags.¹¹

Despite the isolation that institutional enclosure implied, the schoolgirls had contact with society because “distinguished personages” asked to meet the *Vizcaínas*. One of the high-profile visitors was Frances Erskine Inglis, Marchioness Calderón de la Barca, who in 1843 wrote her memoirs of what she observed in the Workroom and the textiles: “Here are some boarders who embroider marvellously. We saw some singularly beautiful samples: surplices, altar frontals and all the church vestments in silk and gold (...) One of the teachers had a girl offer me a little chain made of hair she had just finished”. The visitors’ tour of the courtyards, gardens, houses and corridors was convenient for the schoolgirls, as it allowed them to promote their embroidered works for sale.¹²

The sale of the school’s products generated resources that were destined for the “Montecillo”, an internal bank from which funds were taken to order higher quality materials with the intention of being at the forefront of embroidery



Workroom or Sewing room. Author: Unknown. Photography. End of the 19th century. Photographic collection of the Vizcaino Historical Archive. The Workroom or Sewing room can be seen with the schoolgirls seated on communal benches practising embroidery.

13 Antonia Pi-Suñer, “El Colegio de la Paz 1861-1981” in *Los Vascos en México y su Colegio de las Vizcaínas* [The Basques in Mexico and their Colegio de las Vizcaínas], coord. Josefina Muriel de la Torre (Mexico: CIGATAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México – Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas – Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1987), 76.

14 *Ibidem*, 79-84.

production centres in Mexico City, the high material value of which can be seen today in the historical textile pieces of Vizcaínas. In 1861, the Reform Laws issued by President Benito Juárez were promulgated. This led to the Lerdo Law on the nationalisation of ecclesiastical property, which led to the suppression of the Brotherhood of Our Lady of Aránzazu, thereby extinguishing the school’s Board of Trustees, which was replaced by a Board of Directors made up of Mexicans of Basque descent. In the case of Vizcaínas, the schoolgirls foresaw the closure of their school, but a supreme order was issued guaranteeing its survival due to its feminine, free and independent character from the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the State. The name of the school was changed from *San Ignacio to de la Paz*.¹³

The official regulations had an impact on the school’s teaching plans, but did not mean a change in its teaching of embroidery. By 1867, Vizcaínas had to be incorporated into the Organic Law of Public Instruction, which established free, compulsory and secular primary education, as well as the model of the Secondary School for Young Ladies. From 1870, the classes were writing, reading, Spanish grammar, arithmetic, geography and general and Mexican history, Christian doctrine, sacred history, music, drawing and embroidery.¹⁴

By 1883, Manuel Rivera Cambas visited the school and of the manual labours wrote: “They make bouquets of flowers on shells; they are taught embroidery and

15 Manuel Rivera Cambas, *México pintoresco artístico y monumental: vistas, descripción, anécdotas y episodios de los lugares más notables de la capital y de los estados ... Las descripciones contienen datos científicos, históricos y estadísticos* [Artistic and monumental picturesque Mexico: views, description, anecdotes and episodes of the most remarkable places in the capital and the states... The descriptions contain scientific, historical and statistical data] México: Imp. de la Reforma, 1883), 235.

16 Graciela Romandía de Cantú, "Los bordados" en *Los vascos en México y su Colegio de las Vizcaínas* [The Basques in Mexico and their Vizcaínas School], coord. Josefina Muriel (Mexico: CIGATAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México – Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas – Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1987), 239-262. / Antonia Pi-Suñer, *op. cit.* 88 a 91.

sewing in white, the embroidery with gold thread and silk being remarkable, and the worsted weaving attracts attention".¹⁵ Rivera's account, forty years after Madame Calderón's visit, is evidence of the permanence of the teaching of embroidery as a fundamental axis of training at Vizcaínas, which survived the vicissitudes suffered by the institution during this period. From a sociological point of view, this means that it was still considered that learning these manual tasks still fulfilled the function of reinforcing in the schoolgirls the moral and Christian values with which the institution sought to turn them into virtuous women.

During the mandate of President Porfirio Díaz, Vizcaínas' embroidery was known worldwide. This period saw an extraordinary stage of development in the cultural sector; Mexico was able to participate in the Centennial International Exhibition of Philadelphia in 1876 and Paris in 1889, with the intention of integrating our country into the enlightened nations that rescued and investigated the remains of its past through the exhibition of recently excavated archaeological vestiges. But Díaz also sought to present Mexico as an avant-garde country, with the incorporation of the most outstanding embroidery of the schoolgirls in the Mexican pavilions, making known an educational model strongly influenced by French positivism and which succeeded in positioning Colegio Vizcaínas as an institution that was an indispensable and irreplaceable part of the process of national modernisation.¹⁶

Embroidery collection: between the popular and the scholarly

As already mentioned, the objects that were manufactured in the Workroom or the Sewing Room at Colegio Vizcaínas form a considerable part of the textile collection that this case study seeks to investigate through the process of museum documentation. These textile objects are a source of information with data on materiality, technology, design, and ornamentation which, if properly interpreted, will be a resource available to researchers interested in these subjects.

The Vizcaínas embroidery collection has been classified into: popular embroidery and scholarly embroidery, according to the model developed by Ma. Angeles González Mena for the Valencia de Don Juan Institute in Madrid. It is important to point out that this model has been selected to give continuity to the proposal of Graciela Romandía, who was a pioneer in the study of Vizcaínas embroidery. This model adequately delimits the typological groups in the collection, which is why it is particularly worthwhile to continue to use it.

The implications of using this classification proposal for embroidery is that it considers two large groups that present general characteristics, but it is this widespread character that makes it useful to place any piece within either of the

17 *Ibidem*, 229.

two groups. Bringing Gonzalez Mena's classification criteria together with the objective data derived from the scientific analyses to which the works could be subjected would represent the possibility of generating a database that compiles information on the constituent materials to verify the statements made by Gonzalez on the relevance of using certain fibres, threads, fabrics, and elements for certain pieces of popular embroidery or scholarly embroidery, as specified below.

It should be clarified that other bibliographical sources were used, for example, *Colección pedagógico textil de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* [the Textile Pedagogical Collection of the Complutense University of Madrid], also written by González Mena. With respect to embroidery, it only focuses on the *dechados*, or samplers, and a specific classification for this type of work. On the other hand, access was gained to local bibliography, consulting the book *México bordado* [Embroidered Mexico] by Gimena Romero, subtitled *De la tradición al punto contemporáneo* [From tradition to the contemporary stitch], which focuses its study very specifically on Tenango, street, Mazahua, pansy, Mixe, Purépecha and Lavin embroidery, so no relationship can be found between this proposal and the Vizcaínas collection.

Since the documentation held by the Colegio de las Vizcaínas Museum on the donations it has received in recent years makes it possible to identify which pieces have been integrated into the collection, it is possible to hypothesise that the embroideries previously found in the collection were manufactured in the Workroom or Sewing Room of the Vizcaínas. It is important to mention that the embroidered pieces, on very few occasions, have a record of authorship, date, and place of creation, but there is still the possibility of carrying out an exhaustive search in the José María Basagoiti Noriega Historical Archive, to consult documents that hold information about the pieces in the collection. This will enable establishing a relationship between the two and establishing, with documentary support, the origin of the textile works.

The popular embroideries and the first textile samples generated by the schoolgirls were made with perishable materials, with simple techniques and representations, for everyday garments and domestic clothes, such as samplers. The scholarly embroideries were executed with delicate and valuable materials, employing professional techniques, to decorate liturgical objects which were used to decorate the furnishings for secular celebrations. This was accompanied by trends and fashions that influenced embroidery on an international level.¹⁷ The Vizcaínas embroidery collection includes examples of five types of embroidery:

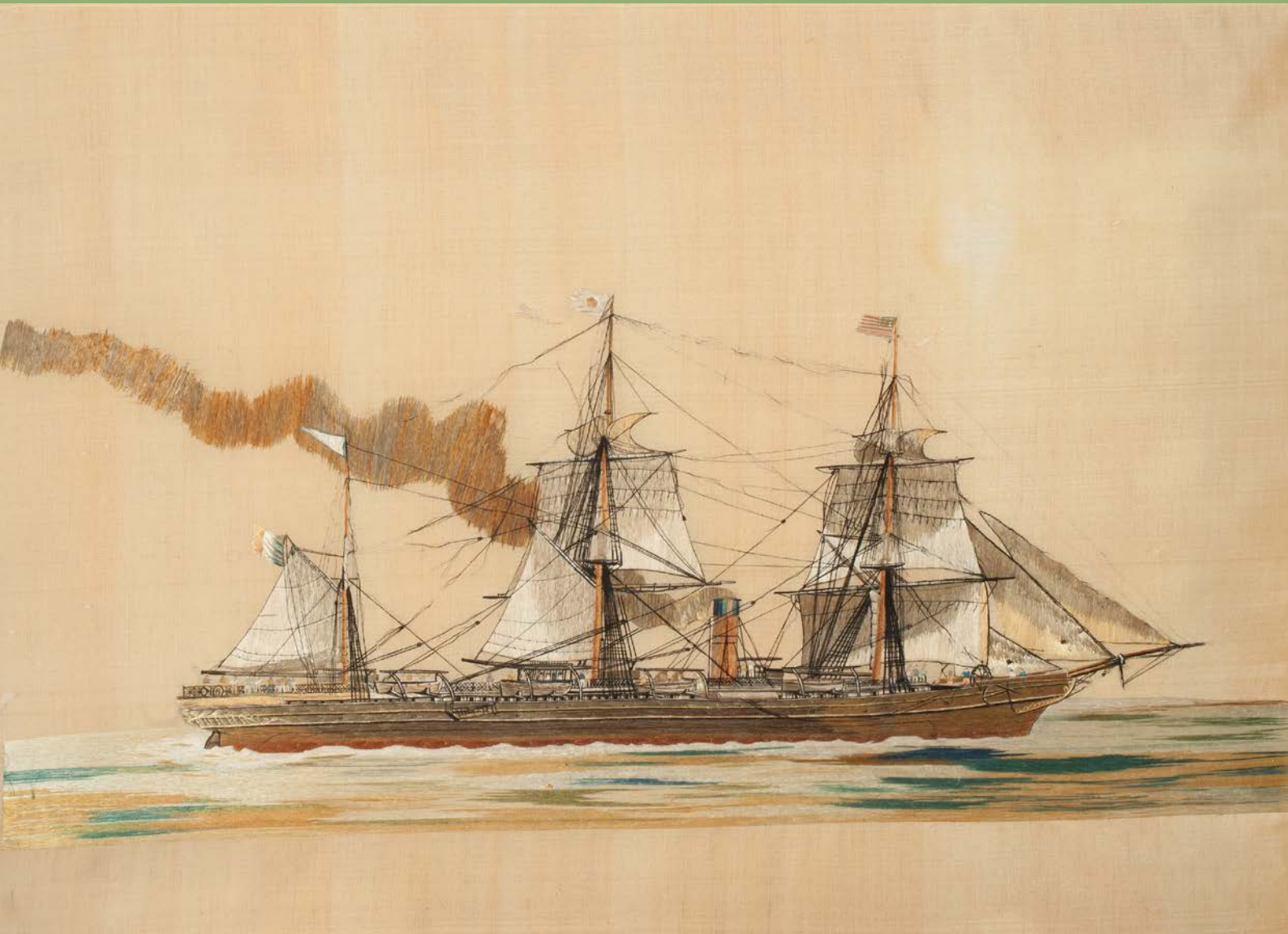


Robe of the Infant Jesus, corresponding to the Holy Week vestments.

Author: Unknown. Metallic thread embroidery on silk satin. End of the 19th century. Vizcainas Textile Collection

18 *Ibidem*, 229 y 230.

1. **Embroidery of noble metals.** Gold and silver threads and gimps were used, and their production was almost exclusively for liturgical pieces, although they may also have been used for military garments, albeit there is no evidence of this. In addition to the metallic threads and gimps, sequins of the same metals, rhinestones, pearls and silk threads were also used, which were worked on velvet and satin. Some embroideries had volume, which was achieved by using cotton, cardboard, or parchment as stuffing. Religious images were produced which showed the students' extensive knowledge of Christian, Marian and Ignatian iconography.¹⁸ As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the lack of physical records of authorship, date, and place of creation on the pieces leaves open the possibility that there are works in the collection that may have been manufactured in other precincts and that, for some reason, ended up in the Vizcainas collection. Once again, the possibility of special research is left open for this purpose.



Barco de velas y de vapor [Sailing and steam ship]. Author: Unknown. Embroidered with nuanced polychrome silk threads. It was part of the Centennial International Exhibition of Philadelphia in 1876. Vizcaínas Textile Collection

19 *Ibidem* 230-234.

2. **Polychrome silk embroidery or “chinos” [Chinese]**. Named after the use of silk threads brought from China on the Manila Galleon. Skeins for embroidery could be loose or twisted. The technique was also known as needle painting, as the threads were embroidered with tonal variations to obtain nuances, giving the appearance of painting on canvas. These types of pieces were also enriched with the application of sequins, paint, threads, fringes and metallic lace. Two types of works were produced using this technique: decorative works with flowers, birds and animals, and religious works: covers for liturgical vessels, tabernacle curtains and palliae.¹⁹



Equestrian sculpture of Charles IV at Reforma & Bucareli. Concepción Pérez. Embroidery with black hair or filament on silk taffeta. 1852. Vizcaínas Textile Collection

²⁰ *Ibidem* 234.

3. “Lausin” or “lithography” embroidery. It was used for the embroidery of initials on handkerchiefs for personal use, using human hair or very fine black filaments instead of threads. In the Vizcaínas collection there are two examples that reproduce lithographs, which achieve the perspective and the effect of light and shade of a real engraving.²⁰ It is about the “Equestrian Sculpture of Carlos IV”, also known as “El caballito “ of the needle and thread of Concepción Pérez and the “Palacio de minería “ executed by Rita Robles.

Detalle de la túnica interior de la Virgen de la Inmaculada Concepción [Detail of the inner tunic of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception]. Author: Unknown. Embroidered with cotton threads on silk satin. Beginning of the 20th century. Embroidery of a bouquet of white flowers showing the phytomorphic anatomy with stems, leaves, open flowers with pistils and buds. Vizcaínas Textile Collection



²¹ Romandía de Cantú, *op. cit.* 236-237.

4. Embroidery on white. It was applied to “white clothing”, i.e.: underwear, shirts, sheets, towels, tablecloths, baptismal robes, first communion trousseaux, matrimonial and mortuary clothes. The canvases used as support were fabrics such as holland and batiste, selecting threads of any material, as long as they were white. Rococo patterns, floral themes, medallions, bows, ribbons, and cords were made. The embroidery styles used were: English, Richelieu or “buttonhole”, Venetian, tulle and “floating”. Drawn-thread work technique is included in this typology.²¹



Dechado [Sampler]. Author: Unknown. Upholstery techniques on canvas. Beginning of the 20th century.

22 *Ibidem*, 234-236.

5. Hand-made tapestry. It is a technique that was done with counted stitches on a coarse weave, with thread and needle, creating floral and geometric designs. Gobelin, *petit point* and cross-stitch stitches were used to make covers for domestic furniture, as well as cushions, curtains, and wall hangings.²² ●

The knitted skirt of the National Museum of Decorative Arts: a children's garment?

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Introduction:

Previous historical considerations and knitwear nomenclature

Knitting is a method of textile creation in which, from a yarn manipulated with two or more needles, a highly elastic mesh is obtained, formed by successive loops arranged in parallel rows. Depending on the direction in which the rows are woven, we can distinguish between two types of weaving: warp weave, when they are woven lengthwise, and weft weave, when they are woven horizontally. The first variant can only be produced by a mechanical process and dates back to the technical research carried out in France and England between 1768 and 1780, which led to the construction of the warp knitting or chain knitting machine (*ketten machine*). It is estimated that weft-knitted fabrics appeared during the early Christian era, in contrast to warp-knitted fabrics.

The oldest known knitted sample is a fragment from the old city of Fustat (now part of Cairo), dating from between the 7th and 9th centuries. It is approximately 6.5 cm wide and is made of red and gold silk thread at a density of 15 stitches per centimetre². This fragment belonged to the collection of the

- 1 jose.fernandezf@urjc.es – ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8152-5284>
- 2 Rutt, 1987, p. 33.
- 3 See Rutt, 1987, p. 33, fig. 24.

Fig. 1. Textile fragment from the ancient city of Fustat, 7th-9th century. Plain cross stitch and silk thread. Width approx. 6.5 cm. Former collection of Fritz Iklé (1877-1945). Photograph from *Mary Thomas's Knitting Book*, 1938, p. 91. © Hodder & Stoughton Ltd - Hachette, UK.



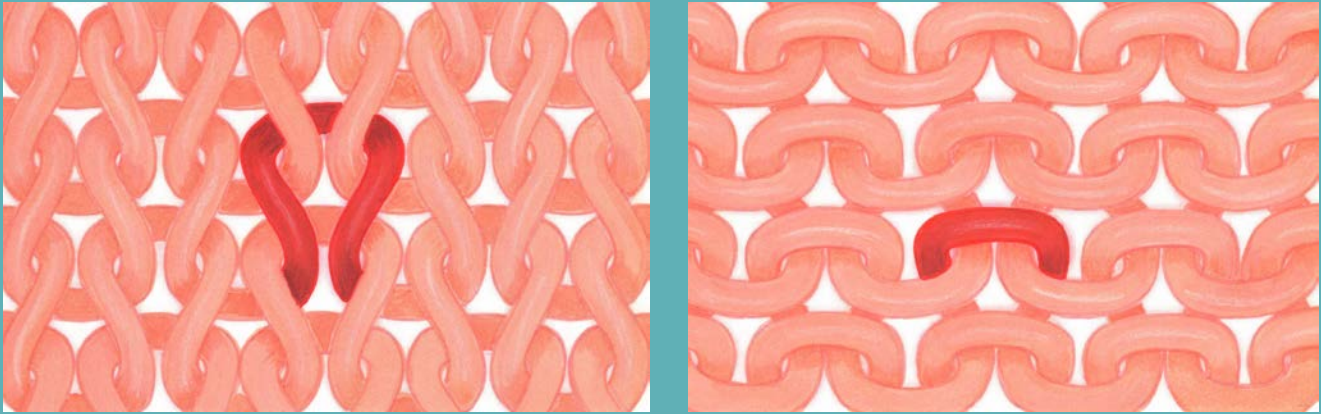


Fig. 2. Plain or jersey stitch. Appearance of the beam (left) and the underside (right). Source: own elaboration. © José Antonio Fernández

4 The lack of clarity on the part of some authors as to how *nålbinding* and knitting are executed justifies the widespread belief that the latter originated before the Christian era, however, there is no conclusive proof of this. Two representative Coptic examples of the *nålbinding* technique, often misidentified as knitted garments, are a pair of red woollen socks held by the Victoria & Albert Museum (4th-5th century AD, Inv. no.: 2085 and A - 1900), and a striped children's sock from the British Museum (3rd-4th century AD). Inv. No.; EA53913).

5 Covarrubias, 1611, p. 53 (see "aguja").

6 General Palace Archive (hereinafter AGP), General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 4, Account of the hosier Catalina de Camargo. On knitted hoses, Herrero García (2014, pp. 53 ff.) provides numerous examples found in old inventories.

Swiss textile expert Fritz Iklé (1877-†1946), and although its whereabouts are unfortunately unknown today, a photograph of it is preserved in the *Mary Thomas's Knitting Book*. Richard Rutt, in his *History of Hand Knitting*, provides a graphic reconstruction of his pattern with the geometric motifs that decorate it³.

This type of textile should not be confused (as is often the case⁴) with those obtained by the *nålbinding* technique, because although their appearance is similar, the manufacturing process is very different: *nålbinding* fabrics involve a single needle threaded with a thread of limited length, whereas knitted fabrics require a minimum of two needles and a continuous thread.

Weft-knitted fabrics are made using two basic loop types: purl stitch and stockinette stitch. Essentially, the former is obtained by crossing the needles and passing the thread in a clockwise direction, unlike the latter which describes a counter-clockwise movement. Different structures can be obtained by choosing one of these two stitches or combining them. In other words, when all the rows are knitted on the right side, it is called a garter stitch structure; and if we alternate consecutively one row on the right side and another in the purl, it is called plain stitch; also called stockinette stitch in recent years. The appearance of the plain stitch is herringbone-shaped on the beam (generated by the V-arrangement of the foot of the meshes), and in horizontal waves on the underside, so that only the crowns of the meshes are visible. Although this structure is very simple in its execution, it allows for a great variety of colour combinations and, at the same time, complex decorative motifs.

It should be clarified that, in its traditional application, the hand-made stitch is called a stocking stitch or stockinette stitch, and, in popular usage during the Spanish Golden Age, it was referred to as needle stitch. Covarrubias recorded this in his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (Treasure of the Castilian language), referring to the term *aguja*s, or needles, as "the thin pieces of iron used to make knitted stockings, which are called *de aguja*⁵, and it also appears in the inventories of the period, in which we can read, for example, that in 1580 "two pairs of crimson needle stockings"⁶ were made for the Infantas Isabel and Catalina, eldest daughters of Philip II.

By one name or another, what is relevant is that the production of knitted fabrics was a completely manual process until 1589, when the English Reverend William Lee of Calverton, a mechanical enthusiast, created a loom capable of



Fig. 3. *Medias de punto realizadas a máquina* [Machine knitted stockings], 1750. Silk thread and embroidered decoration with metallic thread and sequins, length 61 cm, place of production: Belgium. On the back the legends "UBON" and "MADRID" embroidered in cross-stitch, Inv. no.: MTCE01172. Madrid, Museo del Traje [Garment Museum]. ©Museo del Traje. Ethnological Heritage Research Centre, Madrid. Photo: Lucía Ybarra Zubiaga

⁷ Hollen, 2010, p. 206. Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012, pp. 219-220.

⁸ Cited in Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012, p. 220.

⁹ Montero Hernández, 2018, p. 82.

¹⁰ On 18th century hoses, see the study by García Navarro, 2006.

knitting hoses⁷. However, the invention did not gain special consideration until the mid-17th century, as Queen Elizabeth I rejected the patent application filed by the clergyman, arguing that for the hosiery guild "it would ruin them by depriving them of employment and turning them into beggars"⁸. Lee insisted on his request in 1605 to James I, Elizabeth's successor, but he was not granted the privilege for the same reasons. Logically, the refusal of both sovereigns did not respond to a real concern for the fate of the artisans, but to the fear that unemployment would generate a climate of social instability - expressed in mobilisations and economic losses - which could become a serious threat to royal power.

In the case of Spain, we know that as early as the late Middle Ages, it achieved great fame for the skill of its craftsmen, capable of weaving very fine hoses thanks to the fine steel needles manufactured in Toledo⁹; a notoriety that lasted throughout the reign of the Habsburgs. Some knitting looms were introduced in our country at the end of the 17th century, and by the middle of the following century, mechanically knitted hoses were already fully accepted¹⁰. This fact, in addition to the decline of trunk-hoses that had dominated the



Fig. 4. Mortuary pillow of the Infante Don Fernando de la Cerda (first side), h. 1275. Plain knitted fabric with silk thread, 36 x 36 cm, Inv. No.: 00651901. Burgos, Museum of Medieval Textiles. © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Fig. 5. Mortuary pillow of the Infante Don Fernando de la Cerda (second side), h. 1275. Plain knitted fabric with silk thread, 36 x 36 cm, Inv. No.: 00651901. Burgos, Museum of Medieval Textiles. © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

¹¹ Diccionario de autoridades, 1729, see “calcetero” (hosier).

¹² Gómez-Moreno, 1946, p. 85.

¹³ Monteverde, 1949, pp. 242-243.

male wardrobe during the Golden Age, led to a notable decrease in the volume of orders placed with hosiers, and the *Diccionario de autoridades*, the first dictionary published by the Royal Spanish Academy, gives a good account of this by stating that the work of these craftsmen had been practically relegated to the patching and mending of hoses, and that *por ser oficio que da [ya] poco útil, están siempre en la calle o en algún zaguán* [as a trade that is of little use, they are always in the street or passageways]¹¹.

The mortuary pillows of the Infantes Fernando and Mafalda of Castile

One of the oldest knitted pieces preserved in Spain is a Hispano-Arabic pillow belonging to the grave goods of the Infante Don Fernando de la Cerda, currently on display in the Museum of Medieval Textiles at the Las Huelgas monastery in Burgos. It dates from before the death of the prince in 1275 and was extracted from his tomb in 1943, along with his clothes, sword, sword belt and other accessories, such as a gold ring inlaid with garnet and silver-plated spurs. Its iconography is different on each of its sides, with one side depicting eagles and fleurs-de-lis framed in slanted grids, and the other side showing castles with three towers (the heraldic emblem of Castile since the 12th century) alternating with fleurons inserted in octagons and the perimeter decorated with a border repeating the motto *baraka* (blessing) in Kufic calligraphy¹². Thanks to the high quality of its silk thread, this mortuary cushion (on which the young prince’s head rested) was found to be practically intact, with only a few stains¹³. But perhaps the most interesting aspect of this piece is that it shows the early integration of stitch techniques into the sumptuary arts and the spread of sericulture as a result of Islamic expansion.



Fig. 6. Mortuary pillow found in the tomb of the Infanta Mafalda of Castile (first side), h. 1204. Plain knitted fabric with woollen thread, 28 x 28 cm, Inv. No.: 00651911. Burgos, Museum of Medieval Textiles. © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid



Fig. 7. Mortuary pillow found in the tomb of the Infanta Mafalda of Castile (second side), h. 1204. Plain knitted fabric with woollen thread, 28 x 28 cm, Inv. No.: 00651911. Burgos, Museum of Medieval Textiles. © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

¹⁴ Gómez-Moreno, 1946, pp. 84-85.

¹⁵ I am grateful to Paloma Muñoz and Félix García (Conservation and Research Department of the National Museum of Decorative Arts) for allowing me to inspect this piece, as it is not on display.

¹⁶ The set up on a flat surface, or, according to sartorial jargon, *a pla*, is a textile technique that consists of making a garment, or part of it, with a double layer of fabric to give it more body or rigidity. This is a variant of interlining, in which the textile reinforcement under the main fabric is initially pinned to a flat surface (hence the name) and then a tack or baste is passed through the seams. In this way, the two overlapping fabrics act as if they were one.

A second pillow, also made in plain stitch, was found in the tomb of the Infanta Mafalda of Castile¹⁴ (1191-†1204), daughter of the founders of the monastery of Las Huelgas, Alfonso VIII and Eleanor of England. The elaborate ornamentation is arranged in grids alternating between eagles, fleurs-de-lis and lions *passant guardant* on one side, and on the other, groups of four doves and octagons enclosing stars and fleurons. A border of squares surrounds both surfaces.

The knitted skirt of the National Museum of Decorative Arts

An invaluable example of the handing down of craftsmanship knowledge is the front part of the knitted skirt, dated between the last decade of the 16th century and the end of the following century and preserved in the National Museum of Decorative Arts¹⁵. The work is made with fine plain stitch and silk thread and, curiously, it has the same eight-petal fleurons that we see on the pillows of the Infantes Ferdinand and Mafalda of Castile, although on this occasion, sumptuous metallic entwining has been applied to the contours of the decorative motifs. This is a unique piece that was mounted *a pla*¹⁶ on linen burlap, presumably the result of a later adaptation or a different craftsman, as there is a notable contrast between the high quality of the mesh and the crude stitching of adhesion to the base that can be seen on the reverse. Its height is 38.5 cm and the waist length is 21.5 cm, to which must be added a further 3 cm from each of the two folds (1.5 cm each) which have been artificially folded towards the underside, making a total of 24.5 cm.

In December 2005, the Real Fábrica de Tapices in Madrid (Royal Tapestry Factory of Madrid) hosted the exhibition *El Quijote en sus trajes* (Don Quixote

Fig. 8. Spanish Manufacture, *Front side of the skirt*, ca. 1590-1690. Plain knitted fabric with silk yarn and gimped, height 38.5 cm, minimum width 21.5 cm, maximum width 57 cm, Inv. No.: CE27777. Madrid, National Museum of Decorative Arts. © Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid. Photograph by Masú del Amo



Fig. 9. Spanish Manufacture, *Front side of the skirt*, ca. 1590-1690. Madrid, National Museum of Decorative Arts. © José Antonio Fernández



Fig. 10. Spanish Manufacture, *Front side of the skirt* (detail of the burlap on the back and one of the 1.5 cm pleats at the waist), ca. 1590-1690. Madrid, National Museum of Decorative Arts. © José Antonio Fernández

17 Vila Tejero, 2005, p. 121.

18 It is ruled out that this could have belonged to a boy, since it is part of a *saya* (female Spanish Court dress composed of skirt and bodice). The *saya* was only used by women and girls, unlike the *baquero* (smock for children), which was a unisex dress. On this garment, see Fernández Fernández, “El baquero infantil en la corte española de los Habsburgo (1556-1665)” [The Children’s *Baquero* in the Spanish Court of the Habsburgs (1556-1665)], 2019.

19 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 4.

20 Simancas General Archive, Casa Real, leg. 37, fol. 1.

21 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 4.

22 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 4 and leg. 5247, exp. 2.

23 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5249, exp. 1.

24 AGP, Personal, box 525, exp. 30.

25 AGP, Personal, box 525, exp. 30.

26 AGP, Personal, box 16503, exp. 8.

27 AGP, General Administration, box 10278.

through his clothing), which resulted in the publication of a catalogue analysing the various garments, textiles, footwear, armour and accessories that made up the exhibition, and which, in short, constituted a fairly complete sample of clothing in Cervantes’ Spain and its influence on the international scene. Among the pieces on display was the skirt under study, raising the question of whether its small size, in addition to the richness of its materials, served an exclusively liturgical function, or whether it may have been made for a child¹⁷, in which case it must have belonged to an aristocratic or royal girl¹⁸.

In order to shed light on this issue, it is necessary to know exactly what children’s work was carried out by the hosiers of the Golden Age. In this respect, the documentary archives that offer us the most information are undoubtedly those housed in the Royal Palace in Madrid and Simancas Castle, where the serial accounts of the House of Austria are kept. The first question we must address is who were the hosiers in the service of the royal chambers. Through the aforementioned accounting records, we can establish that Juan de Villadiego was the hosier of the Chamber to Philip II from at least 1563, a position he held until his death in December 1592¹⁹. Pierre Pery²⁰ (active between 1560-1568), Juan de Escobedo (active around 1568-1585), Lucia de Plasencia (active ca. 1564-1582) and Catherine de Camargo (active ca. 1579-1587), carried out identical work for Queen Isabella of Valois and Queen Anne of Austria, as well as their progeny²¹.

Lesmes de Ayala, on the other hand, occupied the position of hosier of the Royal Stables to Philip II and Philip III, the latter while in his early childhood, when he was still Prince of Asturias²². The hosier of the Royal Stables would be in charge of making and providing hoses to those employed there. After the death of Juan de Villadiego in 1592, he also took on the duties of hosier to the King’s Chamber. Ayala died in 1616²³ while he was Philip the Third’s tailor-hosier, which meant that Ursula de Iraña, his wife and also a craftswoman, carried on the trade alone. Ursula’s death took place two years later, in February 1618²⁴. On the following 9th of March, his nephews, Juan de Iraña and Pablo de Ayala, were sworn in as hosiers to the King’s Chamber and the Royal Stables before the Duke of Lerma. Both continued to work for Philip IV, the former dying in July 1639 and the latter in March 1643²⁵. The vacancy was filled on 18 June of that year (1643) by Juan de Ayala, son of Pablo de Ayala²⁶.

Marcos de Benavides was the hosier of the Chamber to Margaret of Austria for a period of eight years, from the beginning of her reign in 1599 until 1607, when he died²⁷. At the beginning of 1608, his son, Nicolás de Benavides, took over from him, sharing the office of hosier to the Queen’s Chamber and the Royal Stables with his wife, Ana de Pinto. She was widowed in 1620 and



Fig. 11. Annibale Carracci, *Calcetero* (Stocking Knitter), engraving from the album *Le Arti de Bologna o Diverse figure da Annibale Carracci* (created in 1585 and printed posthumously by Simon Guillain in 1646), 27,6 x 16,7 cm, Inv. no.: P7992. Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland. © National Galleries Scotland, Creative Commons - CC by NC

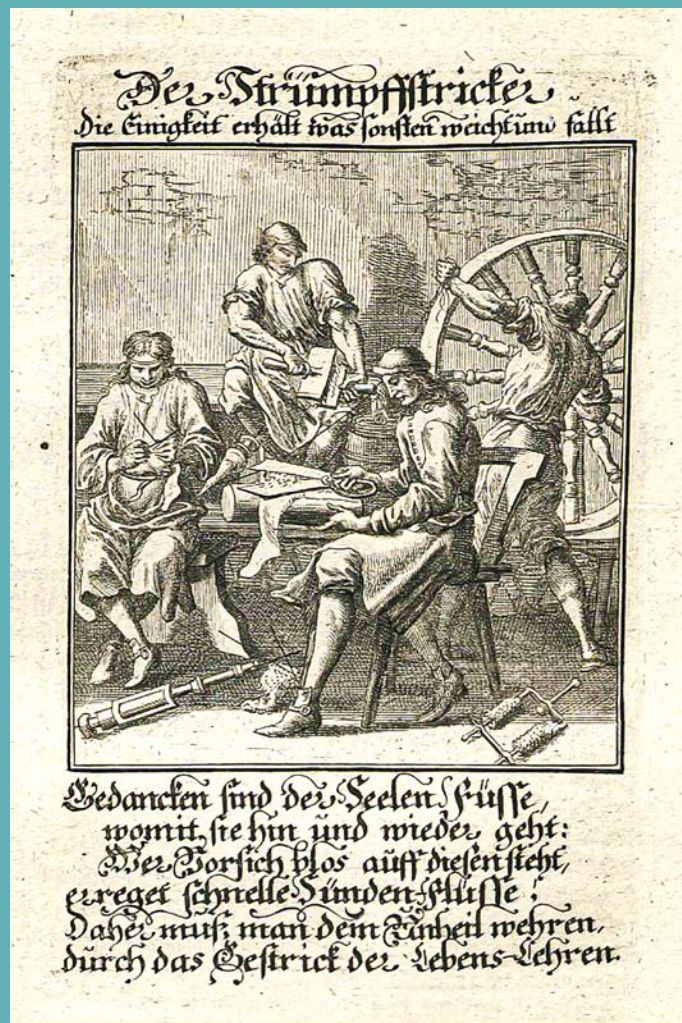


Fig. 12. Christoph Weigel, *The Hosiers*, engraving from the album *Ständebuch*, 1698, 33 x 21.3 cm, catalogue number 38.8.1471. Dresden, Saxon State Library. © Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden

28 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 5.

29 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 5.

30 On this point see Bernis, 1990, pp. 70-73.

31 Alcalá, 1505, fol. 95.

32 Covarrubias, 1611, p. 268 (see “calças”).

remarried to Alonso López, who took up the post of hosier of the Royal Stables to Isabel de Borbón in 1623²⁸. The sisters Beatriz and Isabel Briceño de Ribera, who were also hosieresses of the aforementioned Queen consort, should also be taken into account. The former spent only a few years in her service, as she died in 1626, while the latter continued until at least 1633, when we lose track of her²⁹.

As we can guess, the designation of “hosier” was due to the fact that this type of craftsman was involved in the manufacture of hoses in both versions, i.e. knitted garments, generally made of silk, cotton or wool, which covered the legs up to mid-thigh (also known as half tights or simply stockings), and trunk-hoses, which were originally attached to the doublet with laces³⁰. This is already recorded in 1505 by Pedro de Alcalá, who defined calcetero (hosier) as *[el] que haze calças* [[he] who makes hoses]³¹, and, likewise, Covarrubias in 1611 as *el maestro de hazer calças* (the master of making hosiery)³². However, the list of

33 “The aforementioned Catalina de Camargo made for Prince Don Diego our Lord a pair of crimson silk muffs, two ducats worth of workmanship. She also made for the most serene prince Don Felipe [the Third] another pair of knitted tight sleeves of crimson silk, twenty *reales* worth. She also made for their Highnesses two pairs of green silk stockings, each pair costing two and a half ducats” (AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 4).

34 AGP, General Administration, leg. 5218, exp. 5.

35 The measurements of a girl of 6 to 9 months are between 38 and 40 cm in leg length and 48 to 50 cm in waist circumference (24-25 cm in the semi-perimeter). See Fernández Fernández 2019 (b), p. 18.

36 In 1634, Mateo Aguado, the tailor of Isabel de Borbón, “made for an image of Our Lady located in the room of His Highness [Prince Baltasar Carlos], three quarters [of a rod] long [62.7 cm], a mantle trimmed with two golden braids, a *saya* with hanging sleeves, and [the] doublet with [another] two [gold braids], lined, worth six ducats, priced at five ducats, [it amounts to] 66 *reales*” (AGP, Administración General, leg. 5272, exp. 2).

manufactures covered by this trade was much broader, as it also included other garments such as Spanish trunk-hoses, *zaragüelles* (underpants, made of cotton fabric, which reached down to mid-thigh or knees), trunk-hoses, pants, vests, cannons, tight sleeves, and gloves. But if we stick to those garments that were specifically made by needlepoint, the list is reduced to the last four garments. For example, in 1579, there is record that Catalina de Camargo made for Prince Diego Félix and his brother Felipe (the Third) a pair of crimson tight sleeves and green silk hoses³³, or that, in 1633, Isabel Briceño knitted for the young Prince Baltasar Carlos “six pairs of silk gloves, the four pairs with full fingers and a little gold at the wrist, and the two pairs with the fingers cut off at the middle”³⁴ (fingerless mittens).

It cannot be a coincidence that when reviewing the accounts of the hosiers of the House of Austria, not a single reference has been found to knitted skirts. Therefore, considering that during the Ancien Régime the fashions emanated from the court, it is unlikely that the *sayita*, the little skirt, held in the Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas could have belonged to a little girl. Furthermore, if we examine the dimensions of the garment, we can see that both its height (38.5 cm) and waist circumference (24.5 cm) correspond to a girl of between 6 and 9 months³⁵, and in the 16th and 17th centuries, the *saya*, a female Spanish Court dress composed of skirt and bodice, was not part of a woman’s wardrobe until she was a year old, after taking her first steps. Based on the above, we can conclude that the above-mentioned garment could not have been made for a child, but must have corresponded to a cult image about 60 or 70 cm high, such as the carving of the Virgin that Prince Baltasar Carlos had in his bedroom during his childhood³⁶. ●

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Modifications in the Textile Heritage

The case of the Neoclassical *Terno* de la Virgen del Carmen located in San Fernando (Cádiz)

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1 *Obediencia* is the name given to the extension that hangs from the belt around the tunic, symbolising respect for the Prior or Prioress of the Order, in this case for the Virgin as principal Prioress of the community.

2 For more information on embroidery techniques, see GONZÁLEZ, M^a Ángeles. *Catálogo de bordados* [Embroidery catalogue]. Valencia de Don Juan Institute. Madrid. 1976. Page 53.

3 Studies determined that the yarns used have an inner core of silk, wrapped by a foil with an inner core of silver, showing gold on the surface. Studies determined that the yarns used have an inner core of silk, wrapped by a foil with an inner core of silver, showing gold on the surface. Likewise, the poly-lobed studs contain silver on the reverse side and gold on the obverse. The links setting the little mirrors show copper in their inner core and silver on their surface. All these data are compiled in the report issued by Doctor Laura Osete, from the University Institute of Heritage Conservation of the Polytechnic University of Valencia, where these analytical studies have been carried out.

Over the centuries, many pieces of heritage — paintings, textiles or sculptures, among others — have undergone modifications to their original appearance due to changes in location, fashions or religious motifs.

Of all of them, textiles are among the most likely to undergo this type of alteration or modification due to use, the extreme fragility of their constituent materials or the ease with which seams and decorative elements can be damaged, added or removed.

To give a more specific description of a particular piece, the following are the results of the research carried out on an interesting textile ensemble from the end of the 18th century, which we had the opportunity to conserve in our studio last year 2021.

This is the so-called “Neoclassical *Terno*”, whose function is to dress the Virgen del Carmen in San Fernando (Cádiz), a figure acquired in Genoa in 1708 and donated by the first Elder Brother of the Brotherhood, D. Luis de Ardila.

The *terno* is a garment ensemble that reproduces the habit of the Carmelite Order, usually worn by the images of the Virgin under this invocation, and consists of eight pieces: the cloak, the dress, the scapular, the two sleeves, the two cuffs and the strap with the *obediencia* [obedience]¹.

The motifs with which all the pieces are decorated reproduce stylised vegetal and floral forms, with a wealth of detail. All of them are worked using the technique of pieced embroidery or *trevesado*², for which gilded silver wires were used, as well as sequins, beads, poly-lobed studs and small mirrors. The high quality of the different constituent elements was determined by the scientific analyses carried out on them.³

As for the textile supports, the cloak and scapular are made of a silver lamé fabric, while the rest of the garments that make up the tunic are made of a silk fabric with a weave in *Gro de Tours*.

Curiously, the stylistic characteristics, materials and techniques of the embroidered motifs of this *terno* are clearly parallel to those used to decorate the civilian garments that prevailed in the second half of the 18th century, moving away from the style and technique used to decorate and adorn sacred



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Fig. 1. Virgen del Carmen of San Fernando wearing the Neoclassical Terno after its conservation by CYRTA.
Photograph: © Andrés Quijano de Benito

4 Historical Archive of the Brotherhood of Carmen de San Fernando, *Minutes of the Chapter of 9 September 1798*.

5 Historical Archive of the Brotherhood of Carmen de San Fernando, *Inventory Book of 23 November 1800*.

images. However, given that the authorship is unknown, this detail only allows us to hypothesise that the ensemble came from a workshop specialising in the manufacture of French-style jackets, waistcoats or dresses, which were so popular in the last decades of the Age of Enlightenment.

It is precisely these features that make it possible to link the aforementioned textile collection with a donation made in 1798, which is recorded in the Brotherhood's Book of Accounts and Councils No. 2⁴, in which it is quoted verbatim:

Al mismo tiempo hizo presente a la Hermandad el Hermano Mayor la donación que a favor de dicha Hermandad hizo D. Antonio Marzán vezino de la Ciudad de Cádiz de un Vestido bordado completo que estrenó la Virgen y el Niño en este presente año...

[At the same time, the Elder Brother presented the Brotherhood with the donation made by Mr. Antonio Marzán, a native of the city of Cádiz, of a complete embroidered dress which the Our Lady and Child wore for the first time this year...].

Likewise, the inventory book of the same institution, dated the twenty-third of November 1800⁵, records:

“Un vestido nuevo completo para Ntra. Sra. Y el Niño siendo el Manto en Tela de plata Bordado en oro, como igualmente el Bestido del niño y la túnica de la Virgen de Sto color carmelita también bordado en oro como igual el escapulario y los que tiene la Virgen en la mano y el niño. Cuyo vestido lo regaló D. Antonio Marzán, vezino de la ciudad de Cádiz y costó diez y seismil reales de vellón”
[A complete new dress for Our Lady and Child, the mantle being in silver cloth embroidered in gold, as well as the dress of the child and the tunic of the Virgin of Sto, of Carmelite colour, also embroidered in gold, as well as the scapular and those that the Virgin has in her hand and the child. The dress was given by D. Antonio Marzán, a native of the city of Cádiz and cost seventeen thousand “reales de vellón”].

Despite the brief description of the donated ensemble, there are details, such as the mention of the silver cloth of the cloak or the gold embroidered decoration, that do coincide with the pieces studied. The high cost of this ensemble, as recorded in the inventory book, is also worth bearing in mind, a fact that is also compatible with the richness of the piece in question. For this



Fig. 2. Front and back of the dress showing the different shades of brown in different areas.

reason, we believe that it is not unreasonable to link the donation reflected in reflected in the books of the Brotherhood, with the recently conserved ensemble.

Focusing on the studies carried out, it is worth mentioning that a series of particularities were noted, mainly centred on the presence of different shades of brown in the brown pieces that make up the tunic of the Carmelite habit. This fact led us to believe that the whole ensemble had undergone an intervention after it was made, specifically a dyeing process, which resulted in its current appearance.

The following are the insights that helped to consolidate this theory:

- Throughout the different textile surfaces of the aforementioned pieces, it was possible to observe a lack of homogeneity in the brown tone of the dye, showing areas with darker and more intense tones as opposed to others with less colour. This same detail was observed in the Hessian supports that internally reinforce all the garments. In these cases, the brown colour was much less intense and also distributed unevenly over the surface. This could also be documented in the remains of the original lining that were found inside the garments after they had been dismantled for conservation.

Fig. 3. Remains of original lining found in the dress.





Fig. 4. Details of the hessian sections where the dye bath did not reach.

- Subsequently, when accessing the reverse side of the hems of the main fabric, i.e. the surfaces that could have been better preserved from the dye bath, it was found that this area had a yellowish colour, far removed from the intense brown that could be seen on the rest of the surfaces.
- Something very similar occurred in those areas where embroidered elements had been lost. In these specific areas of the fabric that had been preserved until the elements were lost, the yellowish tone was again more faint than that seen in the rest of the fabric. This detail undoubtedly showed the possibility that the dyeing was carried out after the garments had already been embroidered, which is why the areas of the textile preserved by the metallic elements lacked the brown dye.

Fig. 5. Traces of original colour under the missing metal elements.



- In connection with the loss of the silk threads used to fix the decorative elements, there were subtle whitish marks in the form of rows. These would indicate that, at the time of dyeing, these areas were still preserved by the threads, so that the dye did not impregnate the entire Hessian support.



Fig. 6. Mark left by the threads which are now lost but which at the time prevented the dye from reaching the reinforcing fabric.

- On the other hand, the yellow cords and felts that make up the rough preparation of the embroidered trimming, which were visible because the elements of the embroidery that concealed them had been lost, showed traces of brown dye on their surfaces, which were very superficial and not very homogeneous. However, in some places where the losses were not complete, but where the elements were partially unbonded, the felt support was visible without any traces of brown, indicating its original colour and thus reinforcing our hypothesis.

Fig. 7. Preparation and felts stained brown due to the loss of some of the metallic elements prior to staining.



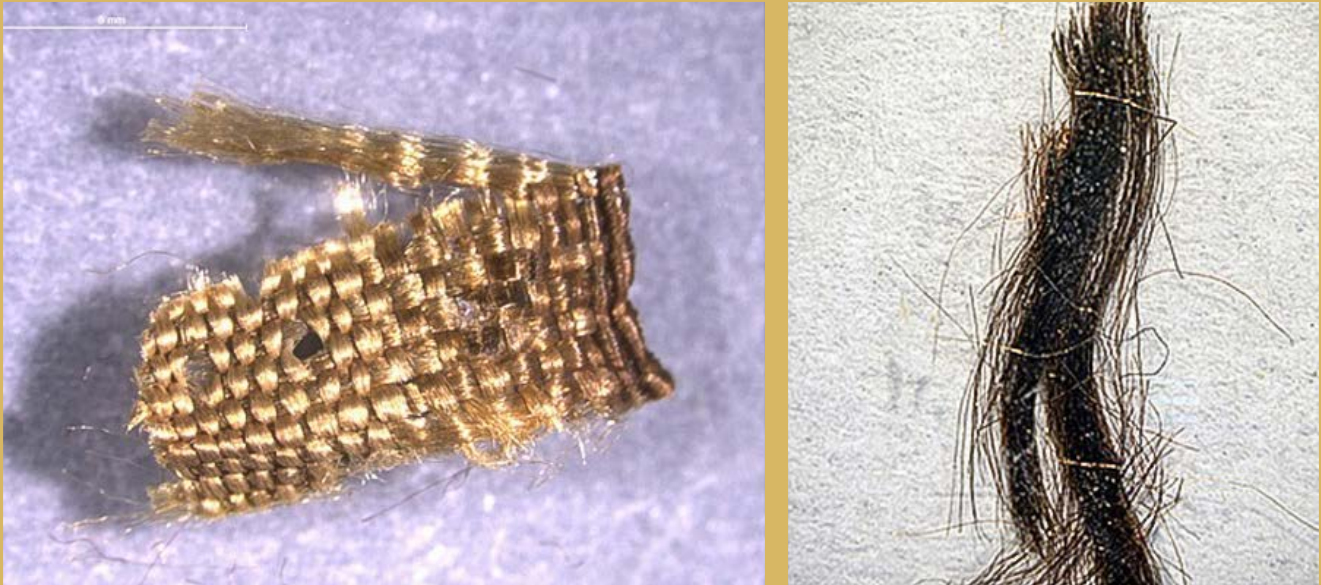


Fig. 8. M1 and M2.

⁶ As well as the analysis of the metallic threads, these were carried out by Dr. Laura Osete Cortina.

⁷ ROQUERO, Ana. "Aproximación a los tintes históricos" [Approximation to historical dyes] in *Textil e Indumentaria: materias, técnicas y evolución* [Textiles and Clothing: materials, techniques and evolution]. Grupo Español del IIC (IPH) Madrid. 2003. Pages. 29-43

The results of the scientific analyses⁶ carried out to clarify the dyeing aspects of the garments were also very interesting.

It was necessary to take two samples of the textile supports, one from the most preserved areas (M1), where the yellow colour predominated, and the other from those showing a deep brown shade (M2)

Both samples were subjected to **Thin Layer Chromatography** (TLC) analysis as well as **Scanning Electron Microscopy with X-ray Microanalysis** (SEM/EDX). The first would identify the dyes used in the dyeing process, while the second would identify the mordants used, i.e. the substances that facilitate the fixation of the dye on the fibres⁷.

■ **M1:** Analyses determined that it was a flavonoid-type yellow dye of natural origin, which conformed to the pattern of the **smoke tree** (*Cotinus coggygria* Scop), a shrub from the stems and leaves of which the dye is obtained. Potassium Alum ($KAl(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$) and Iron Sulphate were identified as mordants.

It is not unreasonable to think that these textile pieces were originally yellowish or golden in colour, as there are other examples preserved in Cádiz, Granada and Murcia, which can be placed in a similar chronology to ours, and whose supports show this tonality and not the intense brown colour so common in this type of representation.

■ **M2:** In this case, the presence of a dye of a synthetic nature was revealed, meaning that it must have been added to the collection after the 1950s, the time when this type of dye was discovered by the British chemist William Perkin.



Fig. 9. Virgen del Carmen of Murcia (author of the photograph Fco. Nortes Tornel) and Virgen del Carmen of Granada.

Fig. 10. Digital recreation of the original appearance that the neoclassical *terno* of the Virgen del Carmen may have had, based on the data obtained in this study.



This last fact, together with the fact that the oldest graphic documents in which the image is depicted wearing the aforementioned *terno* date from the 1970s, allows us to hypothesise that the dyeing took place at that time.

For this reason, and in the light of all that has been explained above, there is every reason to believe that this ensemble underwent an intervention at an undetermined date, although presumably not too distant, which completely changed the general appearance of one of the most outstanding neoclassical ensembles of all those preserved in the Bay of Cádiz. ●

The embroiderers Antonia and Mercedes Janín Monferrín: two unknown sevillian artists of the 19th century

by JOSÉ MANUEL GARCÍA RODRÍGUEZ,
Conservator-Restorer of Cultural Heritage

1 To learn more about this liturgical ensemble: GESTOSO, José, *Sevilla Monumental y Artística*, T. II, Sevilla City Council, Sevilla, 1890, pp. 418-420.

2 Francisco Espinosa placed her birth in 1825, a date which, although we don't know where he could have found this information, we can confirm in these pages that it was inaccurate.

3 HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF THE PARISH OF SAN VICENTE MÁRTIR (AHPSVM): Box 312, Baptisms, Book 29 (1816-1825), f. 33v.

4 AHPSVM: Box 312, Baptisms, Book 29 (1816-1825), f. 190v.

The book *Sevilla Monumental* [Monumental Sevilla], by José Gestoso, contains a wealth of interesting information on the arts of Sevilla throughout the ages. Among the many topics covered are fascinating and previously unpublished data from studies on fabrics and embroidery. When it came to the Cathedral of Sevilla, there was mention of the Pontifical robes (1886), stating that it was made by “Ms Antonia Janín y Monserrat (sic.), who directed the endeavour, and with her, her sister, Ms Mercedes, and Ms Antonia Jiménez Izquierdo, with seven other officials”¹.

In view of the discovery of these names, and intending to find out more about these unknown artists who worked for the Cathedral of Sevilla, these pages provide unpublished information about Antonia Janín and her sister, unknown embroiderers from Sevilla in the 19th century.

Brief notes on the life of the Janín sisters

Thanks to a recent study I have been conducting on Antonia Janín, I am in a position to provide the unpublished baptismal certificates of both her and her younger sister Mercedes, located in the Sevillian parish of San Vicente.

The first of these hitherto unknown documents is dated 19 January 1817. It states that on that same day, Antonia de Padua Trinidad Fulgencia Margarita Lutgarda, legitimate daughter of Antonio Janín and Rafaela Monferrín, born on the 16th of the same month and year², was baptised, with her older sister María del Rosario and her uncle José³ as her godparents (Document 1).

The second is dated 26 September 1821 and states that María de la Merced was baptised the day after her birth, her sister Rosario acting as godmother⁴. This last document also provides the names of the family's ancestry, being Antonio Janín and María Prensiz the paternal grandparents and Francisco Monferrín and Antonia Fernández the maternal grandparents (Document 2).



Figure 1.

DOCUMENT 1. 19/01/1817
Baptismal certificate of Antonia Janin

HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF THE PARISH OF SAN VICENTE MÁRTIR
 AHPSVM, Box 312, Baptisms, Book 29 (1816-1825), f. 33v. © José Manuel García Rodríguez

Antonia de/ Padua, /daughter of/ D. Antonio/ Janin and D.ª/ M.ª Rafaela/ Monferrin.

En diez y nueve de Enero de Mil ochocien/ tos diez y siete años Yo D.ª Juan Toscano Cura/ en esta Ygl.ª Parroq.ª de S.ª S.ª Vicente de esta/ ciudad de Sevilla, Baptisé Solemne.ª a/ Antonia de Padua, Trinidad, Fulgencia, / Margarita, Lutgarda q.ª nació el día diez y/ seis de este dcho. Mes y año hija legitima/ de D.ª Antonio Janin, y de D.ª M.ª Rafaela Monfer/ rin, fueron sus p.ª D.ª Jose, y D.ª M.ª del Rosario/ Janin a quienes adverti sus oblig.ª y Exp.ª su par/ entesco Fho up Supra=. Enmendado seis Vale=/ Juan Toscano/Cura [Rubrica]

[On the nineteenth day of January of eighteen hundred and seventeen, I, Don Juan Toscano, Priest in this Parish Church of San Vicente of this city of Sevilla, solemnly baptised Antonia de Padua Trinidad Fulgencia Margarita Lutgarda, who was born on the sixteenth day of the said month and year. Legitimate daughter of Don Antonio Janin, and of Doña Maria Rafaela Monferrin, her godparents were Don Jose and Doña Maria del Rosario Janin to whom I warned of their obligations and explained their kinship Dated above. Amended six Valid=/ Juan Toscano/ Priest [Signature]

5 AHPSVM: Box 312, Baptisms, Book 28 (1802-1815), ff. 292r, 330v, 228v. Book 29 (1816-1825), ff. 104r, 190v.

Manuel Janin is known to have been a painter. He was married to María Trujillo and it seems that they had no sons, at least not in their care. Rosario and Amparo were single; Rafaela on the other hand was married to Juan Jurado, and in 1859 they had a son they named Juan Antonio. No information has been located on the other two sisters.

These books also contain details on the other children of the Janín-Monferrin family: Rosario, Dolores, Manuel, Amparo and Rafaela; Antonia being the fifth and Mercedes the last of the couple's seven children⁵.

Little is known about the life of both sisters. However, it is known that Antonia never married, taking the vows at the age of 30 in the Venerable Third Order (V.O.T.) of Capuchins in Sevilla⁶. After a year and a half of probation, she managed to be professed as a tertiary on the 7th of January 1849. She

MUNICIPAL ARCHIVE OF SEVILLA (AMS): Population census 1859, vol. P/3980 (Sta. Catalina), pp. 332-333. Population census 1861, vol. P/4359 (Sta. Catalina), pp. 14-15. Birth Register

of Juan Antonio Jurado Janín, Book of Births 1859 (July-September), vol. 128-129, p. 367.
 6 VALIENTE, Antonio, MARTÍNEZ, Isabel, *La VOT entre dos siglos: la Hermandad*

de Capuchinos de Sevilla [The VOT between two centuries: the Brotherhood of Capuchins in Sevilla], in *Estudios Franciscanos*, 2008, pp. 1-32.

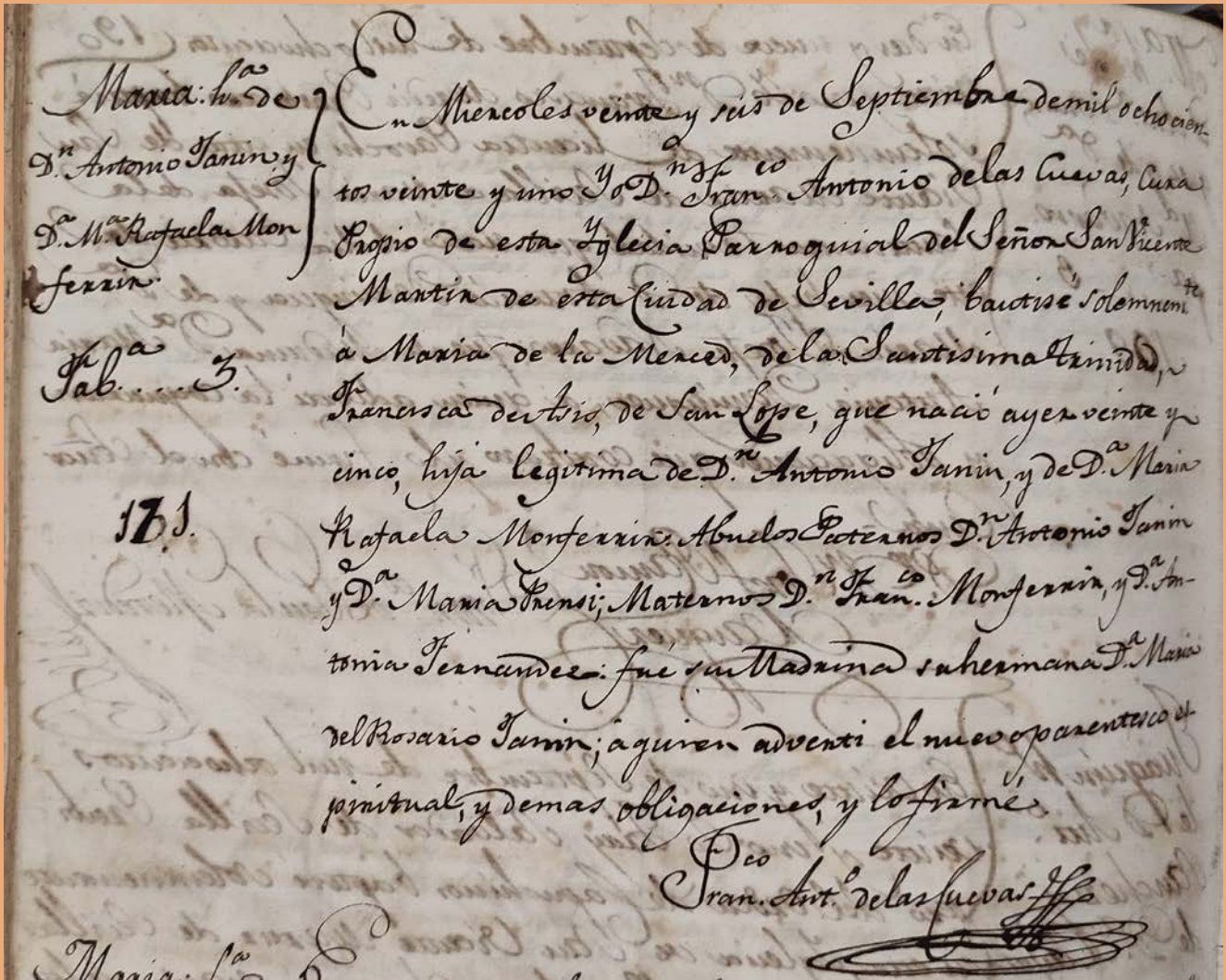


Figure 2.

DOCUMENT 2. 26/09/1821
Baptismal certificate of Antonia Janín

HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF THE PARISH OF SAN VICENTE MÁRTIR
 AHPSVM, Box 312, Baptisms, Book 29 (1816-1825), f. 190v. © José Manuel García Rodríguez

En Miércoles veinte y seis de Septiembre de mil ochocientos veinte y uno Yo D.n Fran.co Antonio de las Cuevas, Cura/ Propio de esta Yglesia Parroquial del Señor San Vicente/ Martir de esta ciudad de Sevilla, bautise solemnem.te/ á María de la Merced, de la Santísima Trinidad,/ Francisca de Asís de San Lope, que nació ayer veinte y/ cinco, hija legitima de D.n Antonio Janin,/ y de D.ª María/ Rafaela Monferrin. Abuelos Paternos D.n Antonio Monferrin y D.ª Maria Prensi; Maternos D.n Fran.co Monferrin, y D.ª Antonia Fernandez: fue su Madrina su hermana D.ª María/ del Rosario Janin; a quien adverti el nuevo parentesco es-/piritual, y demás obligaciones, y lo firmé./

Fran.co Ant.o de las Cuevas [rúbrica]

On Wednesday, the twenty-sixth day of September, eighteen twenty-one. I Don Francisco Antonio de las Cuevas, Proper Priest of this Parish Church of Señor San Vicente, Martir of this city of Sevilla, solemnly baptised María de la Merced de la Santísima Trinidad Francisca de Asís de San Lope, who was born yesterday, twenty-fifth, legitimate daughter of Don Antonio Janin and Doña María Rafaela Monferrin. Paternal grandparents, Don Antonio Monferrin and Doña Maria Prensi; Maternal, Don Francisco Monferrin, and Doña Antonia Fernandez: her godmother was her sister Doña María del Rosario Janin; whom I advised of the new spiritual kinship, and other obligations, and signed it.

Francisco Antonio de las Cuevas [signature]

7 For more precise information please refer to: GARCÍA, José Manuel, *Antonia Janín Monferrín, sevillana bordadora del siglo XIX. Nuevos datos biográficos y atribuciones de obras para Sevilla* [Antonia Janín Monferrín, embroiderer from Sevilla in the 19th century. New biographical data and attributions of her works for Sevilla], *Boletín de las cofradías de Sevilla* [Bulletin of the Brotherhoods of Sevilla], year LXIII, issue 756, Sevilla, January 2022, pp. 30-34.

8 This interesting piece of information is provided without mentioning the source in: ESPINOSA DE LOS MONTEROS, Francisco: “On the authorship of the Coronation mantle”, *Mater Desertorum*, issue 29, 2019, s. p.

9 AMS: Population census 1859, vol. P/3980 (Sta. Catalina), pp. 332-333. Population census 1861, vol. P/4359 (Sta. Catalina), pp. 14-15.

10 Check:

<http://bit.ly/3XYCrck>.

11 CAÑIZARES, Ramón, “Soledad de Paterna del Campo”, en *Soledad Universal*, Sevilla, 2019, pp. 94-95.

In all references to this ensemble, her surname appears as “Jané”. I consider this to be a transcription error of the successively repeated documents, since reading the original manuscript, one sees it written as “Janí”.

went on to hold important positions in the women’s branch of this secular institution, which suggests that she was a person of strong religious convictions⁷. Mercedes, on the other hand, seems to have married the builder Antonio Jiménez Moreno, although there is no record, for the moment, of whether they had children⁸. It is possible, therefore, that she did not take part in her sister’s workshop in a regular way, limiting herself to helping her in occasional jobs as she would have had to attend to her family duties, although this is only a mere hypothesis.

Her professional work, as was customary for women at the time, does not appear in the municipal registers⁹, although part of her work was recorded in the chronicles of the period. Thus, works such as the mantle of the Centenary or the Coronation of the Our Lady of the Forsaken of Valencia (1867)¹⁰, the set of Our Lady of Sorrows of Paterna del Campo, in Huelva (1876-1880)¹¹, and the Pontifical robes of the Cathedral of Sevilla (1886) are recognised as works by Antonia Janín. The latter is the only work in which the participation of Mercedes Janín is also acknowledged, suggesting that she learned the same trade as her sister and that she also developed it, managing to work with her for the Cathedral of Sevilla¹².

Also, due to the characteristics of Antonia’s documented works, the light blue mantle of the Divina Pastora Coronada de Capuchinos of Sevilla (ca. 1860), some embroidery on a similar piece for the Hermandad de la Exaltación (Brotherhood of the Exaltation) (1866)¹³, the vestment of the Our Lady of Sorrows Servite of Carmona (Sevilla) (mid-19th century) and the tunic *de las Uvas* [of the Grapes] for Jesús Nazareno of Lucena (Cordoba) (1861)¹⁴ have all been attributed to her. The aesthetic and technical coincidences with the documented works are more than evident.

12 GESTOSO, José, op. cit., pp. 418-420.

13 GARCÍA, José Manuel, op. cit., pp. 30-34.

14 PÉREZ, Pablo, *Informe de restauración del terno de la Virgen de los Dolores*

(Carmona) [Report on the restoration of the robes of Our Lady of Sorrows (of Carmona)], Sevilla, 2021. I would like to thank Pablo Pérez and Pablo J. Portillo, from the company CYRTA-

Restauración de Tejidos Antiguos [Restoration of Antique Fabrics], for their total willingness, help and sincere advice every time I turn to them.

15 ESPINOSA DE LOS MONTEROS; Francisco: “Nuevas aportaciones a la vida y obra de la bordadora Teresa del Castillo: Datos biográficos y artísticos” [New contributions to the life and work of the embroiderer Teresa del Castillo: Biographical and artistic data], *Boletín de las cofradías de Sevilla* [Bulletin of the Brotherhoods of Sevilla], issue 728, 2019, pp. 684-686.

16 MAÑES, Antonio, “Transformación estética de los bordados: Gremios, talleres y bordadores”, en *Sevilla, Aguja y Oro* [Aesthetic transformation of embroidery: Guilds, workshops and embroiderers, in Sevilla, Needle and Gold], National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions, Rome, 2006, pp. 71-142. CABALLERO, Moisés y SANCHÍZ, Hipólito, *Assumpta Regina in Cielum*, issue 1, 2014, p. 19.

17 GARCÍA, Vladimir, “Dos céntimos para el manto de la Virgen...” [Two cents for Our Lady’s mantle...], *Soledad*, issue 36, 2022, p.15.

On the training of Antonia Janín

According to the assessments that have emerged from the works documented and attributed to Antonia Janín, her professional activity took place during the third quarter of the 19th century. It is striking to note the advanced age at which she began to receive important commissions. This raises the possibility that she trained and spent most of her working life in the same workshop.

From the aesthetics, both formal and technical, of her works, it is possible to link her apprenticeship and professional maturity to the Sevillian embroiderer Manuel María Ariza Campelo (1798-1877). This master enjoyed fame and renown in Sevilla and had his workshop at 56, San Eloy Street¹⁵, an area very close to the San Vicente district, where our artist was born and grew up.

On this hypothesis, although the embroiderer Ariza continued to work until the mid-1860s, it would not be strange if, in the years prior to his professional retirement, Mrs Janín became independent of him and carried out commissions very similar to those of her master’s reputed works, although without achieving his technical neatness, at a much more affordable price. This occupational emancipation also coincided with the period of splendour that began in the confraternities of Sevilla after the arrival of the Dukes of Montpensier, which led to a boom in the religious sumptuary arts and, consequently, a considerable increase in the number of craft workshops, which logically included embroidery¹⁶.

A new attribution to the catalogue of works by Antonia Janín: the mantle of Our lady of Solitude of Bollullos del Condado

The mantle of Our Lady of Solitude of Bollullos del Condado, in Huelva is a work purchased by the Hermandad del Santo Entierro [Brotherhood of the Holy Burial] of the aforementioned town in 1923¹⁷. Although it is currently classified as anonymous, it could be related to Janín’s workshop, and it is proposed in these pages that it be included in the catalogue of attributions thanks to recent studies carried out on several documented pieces by this artist. Examination of the present example, which is intact on its original support, has also made it possible to date its execution by at least five decades.

This mantle, made of black silk velvet, boasts exuberant embroidery in golden metallic threads, which, under a symmetrical and bilateral design, are distributed in three distinct areas. Firstly, there is a double neo-baroque trimming of nineteenth-century appearance that runs around the entire length of the perimeter. Thus, a phytomorphic meander with a helical pattern frames another more complex composition on the border, with large thistle leaves and



Figure 3. Mantle of Our Lady of Sorrows. Antonia Janín Monferrín (attributed here). Ca. 1870. Hermandad del Santo Entierro [Brotherhood of the Holy Burial], Bollullos Par del Condado (Huelva). © Hdad. del Santo Entierro de Bollullos. [See detail \(fig. 4\)](#)

stylised scrolls distributed like rapports that rise from the tail to the head. In addition, a large bouquet emerges from the lower area, which develops in the typical forms of Sevillian embroidery from the last third of the 19th century. From here, it extends to the sides in the form of wide scrolls from which roses, bluebells, daisies, violets and chrysanthemums blossom, surrounded by acanthus and vine leaves.

All these elements are worked with traditional and simple stitches from Sevilla, although discreetly treated, such as the *setillo*, the *ladrillo*, the *media onda* or the *puntita*, both simple and double, with a profusion of sequins, metallic beads and crystals that enhance them, as well as the immense number of pieces treated with the cardboard technique, which give the whole a resounding vision.

Figure 5. Detail of embroidery developed in the field of the mantle. © Hdad. del Santo Entierro de Bollullos. [See more \(fig. 6\)](#)



If we observe this piece, it can be seen that the aforementioned meander that surrounds it is related to those of the mantles for Valencia, that of the Capuchins and the Exaltation of Sevilla which Antonia Janín made in the 1860s; especially taking into account the design of the clumps of thistles, solving the directions of the threads in a crude and unnatural way. Also, the small poly-lobed leaves are treated with card and some flowers, such as the chrysanthemum, at the tail of the mantle of Bollullos. Each petal, executed independently with sequins and beads, corresponds to those found in the mantles of Valencia and Sevilla.

There are also similarities in the stylised acanthus leaves that are distributed around the field of the cloak with those found on the *saya* of Paterna del Campo. However, although some years apart, there are some technical solutions common to the Pontifical robes located in the Cathedral of Sevilla.



Figure 7. Detail of the embroidery of a bouquet of thistles on the border of the mantle.
© Hdad. del Santo Entierro de Bollullos



Figure 8. Detail of the embroidery of a bunch of thistles in a documented embroidery by Antonia Janín. © Pablo Pérez Díaz



Figure 9. Diagram of the thread directions in the piece shown in fig. 7, belonging to the mantle of Our Lady of Sorrows of Bollullos. © José Manuel García Rodríguez

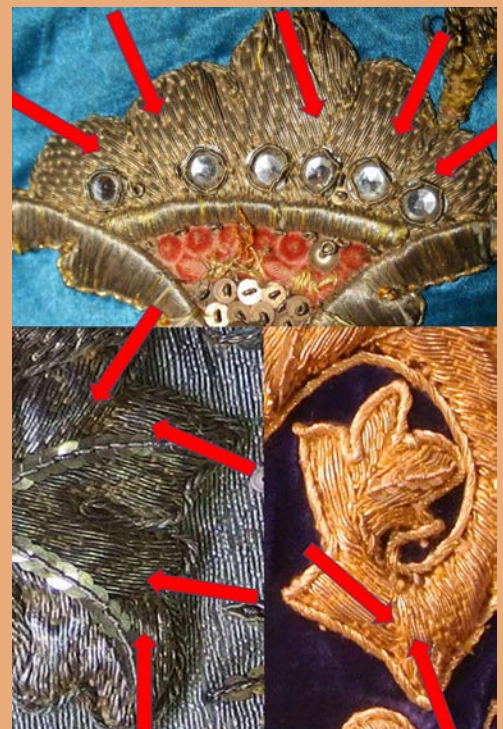


Figure 10. Diagram of the thread directions in various documented embroideries by Antonia Janín. © José Manuel García Rodríguez



Figure 11. Detail of the chrysanthemum embroidered in relief on the mantle of Our Lady of Sorrows of Bollullos. © Hdad. del Santo Entierro de Bollullos

Figure 12. Details of several chrysanthemums in some of Antonia Janín's documented embroideries. © José Manuel García Rodríguez



Figure 13. Skirt worn by Our Lady of Sorrows in her Solitude. Antonia Janín Monferrín. 1876. Hermandad del Santo Entierro [Brotherhood of the Holy Burial], Paterna del Campo (Huelva). © José Manuel García Rodríguez



Figure 14. Detail of the embroidery on the Pontifical robes. Antonia and Mercedes Janín Monferrín. 1886. Cathedral of Sevilla, Sevilla. © Pablo Pérez Díaz



Likewise, the ornamental motifs on the piece could date its manufacture to the early 1870s, as the neo-baroque forms of the first half of the 19th century and the Romantic-style designs that prevailed in Sevilla from 1870 onwards are arranged in an eclectic manner, as has already been mentioned.

Hence, all of the above suggests that Antonia Janín is the author of this important mantle of the village of Condado, in Huelva. If so, its arrival in Bollullos, in 1923, could be explained by the sale of this piece by its previous owner, either directly to the Brotherhood or through an intermediary, for reasons that are unknown. However, although there is much that is hypothetical in what has been proposed here, what is indisputable is that at least, as far as the personal aspects of both artists are concerned, the information provided helps us to know a little more about their lives and to value their significant work. ●

The origins of white in royal wedding dresses (16th-19th century)

by BÁRBARA ROSILLO,
PhD in Art History

The way we dress is closely connected to each historical moment and is a crucial reference point for understanding the aspirations of society. Clothing holds clues to sensibility, taste, technological advances and even political changes. If we stop to think about it, there is nothing closer to us than clothing in the tangible world around us. Both body and clothing merge, giving rise to the image we project to the outside world.

Over the centuries, clothing has played with appearances. Male and female silhouettes have been altered by enhancing shapes and volumes, sometimes non-existent, whose aim was to portray concepts such as power or beauty. The attire is a magnificent vehicle for externalising wealth and social position. Its forms and ornaments have sometimes been associated with a particular body language with which the elite distinguished themselves from the common people. In the privileged classes, clothing was of the utmost importance, as a large number of economic resources and time were devoted to it, especially in the case of women. Throughout the Modern Age, clothing was a highly prized commodity, and its economic value was high, which is why it had many lives. It was recycled, inherited and was of paramount importance in the dowries that women gave at marriage.

In this sense, one of the most luxurious garments throughout history has been the wedding dress, a model that followed the prevailing fashions, both in silhouette and colour, until it was consolidated in white in the mid-19th century. Numerous sources attest to the luxurious wedding dresses worn by queens, princesses and leading ladies throughout the Modern Age, and the wide range of colours used for such attire, from red, purple, and pink to black and white.

The first documented example of a royal bride dressed in white is believed to date back to 1406. In that year, Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of Henry IV of England, married Eric of Pomerania, King of Denmark. The princess wore an outfit consisting of a tunic and a silk mantle embroidered with squirrel and ermine fur. Anne of Brittany also chose the same colour for her wedding to Louis XII of France in 1499. In the 16th century, both princess Margaret of



Wedding dress by Helena Slicher.
1759, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam,
Wikimedia Commons.

Valois, daughter of Henry II of France, in her wedding to Henry of Navarre, and Queen Mary Stuart, when marrying dauphin Francis in 1558, opted for white. It should be noted that the colours of mourning in France was white, so the young Scottish queen, when she was widowed in 1560, was dressed entirely in white. Since the Middle Ages, it had been customary for queens to wear white mourning for the death of the monarch. In Spain, black and white were used as the colours of mourning until the Royal Pragmatic Decree of 1502, which established black as the colour of mourning.

We know that, in Spain, the Infanta Catherine Micaela, daughter of Philip II and Isabella of Valois, married the Duke of Savoy in white in 1585. According to the chronicle of Henrique Cock, who witnessed the event, “when everything was going well, after half an hour, and Her Majesty came down again, they all came out of the hall, the Duke was at Her Majesty’s right hand. From the other side of the great hall, they were also met by the Most Serene Infantas of Spain,



Jacques Laumosnier. *Meeting on the Isle of Pheasants*. 17th century, Musée de Tessé, Wikimedia Commons.

Doña Catalina and Doña Isabel, the latter dressed in red, the wife in white with many golden braids, like her sister Doña Isabel. The Duke of Savoy imitated the colour of his bride, except for the cloak made of black velvet and covered with pearls and precious stones. Only the king was very plain, wearing a black garment, which was common with the citizens at this betrothal of his daughter.

A few years later, in 1615 to be precise, the Infanta Anne of Austria, daughter of Philip III, married Louis XIII of France dressed in purple. According to a missive written by Don Carlos de Arellano to the Duke of Lerma, “the dress was of purple velvet, embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, and a royal mantle of the same lined with ermine with more than five to six rods of skirt”. And he adds: “The Queen wore a heavy crown, so heavy that it fell off and unravelled her headdress”.

A few decades later, a new marriage was arranged between the Spanish and French crowns. After the signing of the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659, Maria Theresa of Austria, daughter of Philip IV and his first wife, Isabella of Bourbon, was betrothed to Louis XIV. They were both the same age and were first cousins twice removed. The betrothal ceremony took place on Pheasant Island, an event of great historical significance, as it marked the end of a long period of hostilities between the two nations. The young princess, accompanied by her father Philip IV and a large entourage, which included Diego Velázquez as her attendant, was presented wearing an exaggerated *guardainfante* or pannier, the customary female attire at the Spanish court. The French entourage was astounded by the size and complexity of the dress. Maria Theresa wore a model consisting of a doublet and satin *basquiña* (outer

Diego Rodríguez de Silva Velázquez. The Infanta Maria Theresa of Austria. 1652-1653. Kunsthistorisches Museum. Vienna.



skirt) adorned with silver ribbons over an “elbow-length” *guardainfante*, an evolution of the *guardainfante*, which became wider to allow the elbows to rest on it. The impression made by the Infanta’s outfit was rather negative; Madame de Motteville, in her memoirs, called it a “monstrous machine”. In Spain, too, the *guardainfante* was fiercely criticised. In his *Discurso contra los males trajes y adornos lascivos* [Discourse Against Bad Costumes and Lascivious Adornments] (1636), Antonio Carranza claimed that women: “walk heavy as if they were made of earth. It happens that this unbalanced external width is accompanied by a great diversity of things that have been given the name of skirts or low skirts, with which the devil (to whom belongs this new usage) has not been able to invent a more binding and painful garment.

The *guardainfante* consisted of a frame placed around the waist, in the shape of a large inverted basket and made of metal or wicker hoops joined with ribbons or ropes, whose function was to hollow out the *basquiña*. This costume,

William Hogarth. *The Wedding of Stephen Beckingham and Mary Cox*. 1739, Metropolitan Museum, New York. [See detail](#)



which was conceived in a global sense, consisted of a bodice and a skirt on the outside. The bodice or doublet, which ended in wide skirts, was very close-fitting and flattened the chest. The female bust was presented as completely flat, a whalebone bodice was used to achieve this effect. The sleeves of the doublet were open lengthwise to reveal the shirt, and a wide, flat collar, called a *valona cariñana*, was worn above the chest, with a brooch in the centre of the collar. The hairstyle was of vital importance, as the head had to be of a size in keeping with the large *basquiña*, so as not to appear ridiculously small. For this reason, it was widened by means of wigs and hairpieces that were attached with wires and adorned with flowers, feathers, and jewels. A few years earlier, the Infanta Maria Theresa was portrayed by Diego Velázquez wearing a white *guardainfante* costume, in which we can see the characteristics described above.

After the initial surprise that the Infanta's attire aroused in the French entourage and Louis XIV himself, the young woman was then entirely dressed in the French style. It consisted of a magnificent blue cloak embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, the emblem of the Gallic monarchy, to celebrate her religious wedding to the King of France in the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Saint-Jean-de-Luz on 9 June 1660.

Élisabeth Louis Vigée-Le Brun.
Marie Antoinette in a chemise-dress. 1783, Hessian House Foundation, Schlob Wolsfgarten, Wikimedia Commons.



The dress habits of the various European courts were of considerable significance. The princesses Anne and Maria Theresa of Austria had to abandon Spanish fashion when they became queens of France, a circumstance to which must be added the fact that women's dress in the two countries followed very different patterns. These events, which might seem anecdotal to us, had a profound significance during the Ancien Régime. The presentation of Archduchess Marie Antoinette a century later is a case in point. In his biography of the queen, Stefan Zweig recounts the significance of these usages and their strong symbolism: "Marie Antoinette's surrender is meant to mark her farewell to everything - and everyone - that binds her to the house of Austria. Here, too, the masters of ceremonies have devised a special symbol: not only may no one from her entourage accompany her across the invisible border line, but etiquette demands that she may not even keep on her naked body a thread of her native fabric, not a shoe, not a stocking, not a shirt, not a ribbon. From the moment she becomes Marie Antoinette, Dauphine of France, she will only be able to wrap herself in French fabrics. The fourteen-year-old girl has to undress completely before the entire Austrian entourage in the Austrian antechamber".

Marie Antoinette of Habsburg-Lorraine embodied the Rococo ideal. According to Madame de Staël, who knew her personally, "it is impossible to put more grace and kindness into politeness. She possesses a kind of sociability that never allows her to forget that she is a queen, and she always pretends to forget it". The very famous queen, whose role in the history of the costume is decisive, married the dauphin in white.



Evening dress. France, ca. 1805,
Metropolitan Museum,
New York.

It is worth noting that a series of historical circumstances led to its systematic use in women's clothing throughout the last third of the 18th century. Marie Antoinette was one of its main advocates through a new model, intended for her private life and characterised by its simplicity, known as the chemise-dress. Her painter, Élisabeth Vigée-Le Brun, portrayed her in this white dress in 1778. When the painting was exhibited at the Paris Salon, it caused a real scandal, as the Queen of France could not present herself in such simplicity. Society was not yet ready for such a radical change. In the words of Caroline Weber in *Queen of Fashion* (2007): "Paradoxically, for a woman who became famous for her alleged frivolity and exaggerated commitment to excessive luxury, she preferred to dress casually [...] One of the ironies of the French Revolution was that this little white dress became the uniform of the revolutionaries. The women who thought Marie Antoinette had been terrible for France and clamoured for her head to be cut off, and bayed for her blood, were the same women who were enchanted by the little white dress because of its simplicity, and because it was quite cheap".

But the use of white also arose at other junctures. The discoveries of Herculaneum (1738) and Pompeii (1748) led to a better understanding of classical antiquity. This affected all the arts and, consequently, the way of dressing. There was a desire to emulate Greek and Roman sculptures, so Empire fashion recreated this aesthetic concept, abandoning artifice and opting for clean silhouettes. White became the colour par excellence, imitating the marble of the statues, and the cylindrical silhouette of the new fashion emulated the caryatids of the Erechtheion, whose dresses allowed the female form to be appreciated. This fashion was, in some cases, quite scandalous, as it left little to the imagination. In fact, the dresses had to be lined because of the extreme lightness of the fabrics used, mainly muslin, a remarkably fine cotton fabric. This simplicity when dressing had already been advocated by Rousseau, who believed



Photograph of Queen Victoria of England dressed as a bride. 1840.

that human beings should free themselves from the rigid constraints imposed by fashion in order to achieve greater physical and moral freedom.

Neoclassical brides adorned their heads with a garland of flowers and a veil of tulle or chiffon. In order to give the dress a certain amount of volume, it was adorned with long tails for very important events. It reached its peak around 1804, coinciding with the coronation of Napoleon. Empire fashion remained in force until the 1920s, when the waistline returned to the waist, and women once again wore steel cages.

It was precisely at the height of Romanticism that the concept of the wedding dress was codified and has survived to the present day. The protagonist of this historical turning point was Queen Victoria of England. Victoria of Hanover (1819-1901) was not destined to reign, but a series of family vicissitudes placed her on the British throne at the age of eighteen. She married her cousin, Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, in the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace in 1840. It was a wedding of love that received enormous media coverage, and the photograph of the bride was widely circulated around the world.

Royalty is a source of inspiration for society, a phenomenon to which the media have made a decisive contribution in the contemporary era. The reign of Victoria marked a whole era and was accompanied by a puritanism that affected almost all social spheres. For her bridal attire, Victoria opted for white, considered a symbol of virginity and purity, an original decision for that historical moment. The dress, which was fashionable with a wide neckline, wasp waist and voluminous skirt, was not excessively luxurious by the queen's



Photograph of the wedding of George V of the United Kingdom and Princess Mary of Teck. 1893, Wikimedia Commons.

choice. The dress, which was made by the designer Mary Bettans, had political connotations, as it was made solely of materials from the United Kingdom: white satin and Honiton lace. This bobbin lace was made in the small Devon town of Honiton. The young woman adorned her head with simple orange blossoms, rather than a crown or tiara befitting her rank, and a veil about three and a half metres long. As for jewellery, she wore a diamond necklace and earrings, and a brooch given to her by her fiancé. In her diary, she wrote: “I wore a white satin dress with lace ruffles by Honiton, which reproduced an antique design. My jewels were my Turkish necklace and earrings and the precious sapphire brooch of my dear Albert”.

In keeping with the Queen’s taste, women of means appropriated white for their bridal attire. The trend, pioneered by Victoria, was followed by her descendants. Princess Alexandra of Denmark, who married the Queen’s son, the future Edward VII, in 1863, also adorned her hairstyle with orange blossoms, considered a symbol of fertility. Thirty years later, Princess Mary of Teck introduced, at her wedding to the future George V in 1893, some novelties such as incorporating lace from Princess Alexandra’s wedding dress, i.e. using antique elements or borrowing them from other models. Mary, Elizabeth II’s grandmother, adorned her gown with the symbols of the United Kingdom: roses from England, thistles from Scotland and shamrocks from Ireland. The dress took on a dynastic meaning and a sense of representing the emblems of the nation. The British royal family thus began a custom that soon became a tradition and a symbol across countries and cultures. ●

The ‘Dying Art’ of Lacemaking and the Flemish Cultural Revival

by DAVID HOPKIN,
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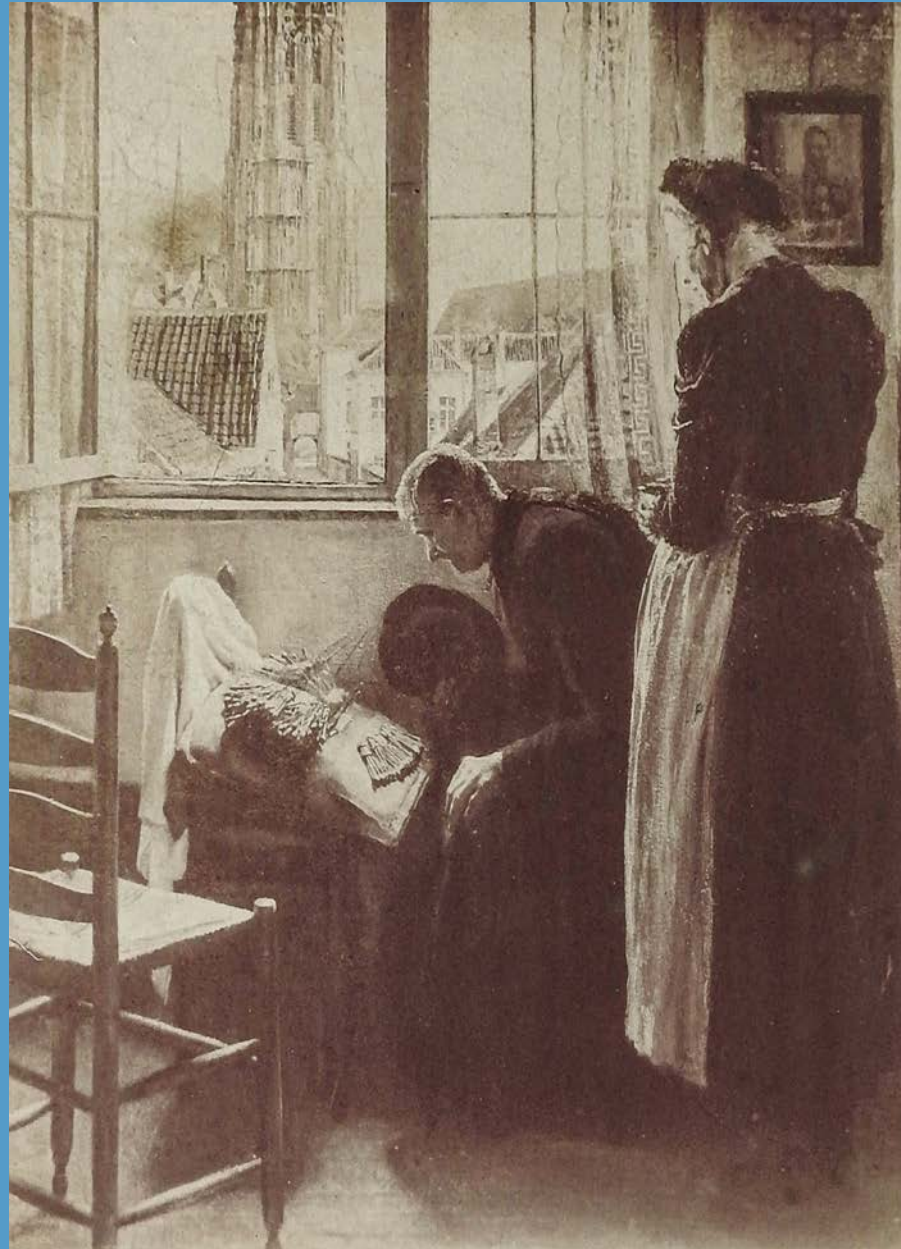
¹ There is no standard guide to the Flemish Movement in English, but a good introduction to both its political and cultural ramifications can be found in HERMANS, Theo, VOS, Louis, and WILS, Lode (eds) *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History, 1780-1990* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

² See, for example, VAN DER DUSSEN, Benoit, *L'industrie dentellière belge* (Brussels: Veuve Parent et Fils, 1860), p. 8; BACCAERT, Herman, and CARLIER, Antoine, “Kantdracht en Kantluxe”, *Elseviers Geïllustreerd Maandschrift* 10:39 (1910): 361-76, 362. Needle lace, these authors allowed, was an invention of Venice.

When, after the Revolution of 1830, the southern Netherlands separated from the largely Protestant north to become the new kingdom of Belgium, it was not the bilingual, federal state it has since become: it was a unitary state with one official language — French. French was not only the language of politics, the administration and higher education, it was also dominant in the cultural field. Even in the Flemish speaking half of the country, the aristocracy and educated middle classes had adopted French as their preferred mode of expression. Belgium’s subsequent political development owes much to the Flemish Movement which emerged in the 1840s. The Flemish Movement was not a membership organisation, but rather a loose assembly of associations and individual activists concerned for the status of the Flemish (that is Dutch) language, and the rights of Flemish speakers. Not all its associates were autonomists or separatists, and in its first decades many of its adherents were simply Belgian patriots who chose to highlight the Flemish contribution to Belgium’s history and culture. But to make their case for the Flemish language, its defenders needed to show that it was not only a practical everyday vernacular, but it was also a literary language with a rich cultural tradition. To do so, they reached back into the Flemish past and, in particular, to its Golden Age under Burgundian and then Habsburg rule from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, when Flanders was the economic and cultural powerhouse of northern Europe, and its autonomy was defended by the powerful citizen militias of its major cities.¹

This historicism is one reason why lace mattered to the Flemish Movement. Despite the absence of clear evidence, many Flemish writers claimed that bobbin lace was also an invention of this fertile period. And whereas other forms of wealth and creativity had fled during the wars and emigration that devastated the southern Netherlands from the late sixteenth century onwards, lace remained.² Its artistry may have been neglected, its makers impoverished, and yet they above all others had maintained the traditions of Flanders through their pious practices, their corporate celebrations, and the Flemish ballads which they performed as they worked. (Folksong collecting, an important form

Alexander Struys, "Beroemde Mechelse kantwerkster", 1902. Museum Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen.



3 HOPKIN, David, "Working, Singing, and Telling in the 19th-Century Flemish Pillow-Lace Industry", *Textile* 18:1 (2020): 53-68.

4 GUBIN, Éliane, and SCHOLLIERS, Peter, "La crise linière des Flandres: ouvriers à domicile et prolétariat urbain (1840-1900)", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 74 (1996): 365-401, 392.

of cultural activism for all subaltern languages in nineteenth-century Europe, was heavily reliant on lacemakers in Flanders.³) This was just one of the ways in which the destinies of lace and the Flemish language seemed to be linked.

Domestic lacemaking was still an important industry in nineteenth-century Flanders, employing around 150,000 women in 1866, that is about 1 in 10 of the female population; by contrast it was barely present in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern half of Belgium. Even though lace manufacture was declining in some centres such as Antwerp and Ghent, it survived in other cities such as Bruges and Ypres, and it actually expanded in the countryside as the Belgium state, hand-in-glove with the Catholic Church, attempted to relieve the poverty caused by the collapse of the hand-spinning and weaving industries in the 1840s by converting the female population into lacemakers.⁴ It remained an important source of employment for Flemish women right up to the First World War.

5 GEZELLE, Guido, “Spellewerkend zie ik u geerne”, *Biekorf* 4:2 (1893): 23.

6 COURTMANS-BERCHMANS, Johanna, *De hut van Tante Klara* (Ghent: E. Vanderhaegen, 1865); BUYASSE, Cyriel, *Het recht van de sterkste* (Amsterdam: W. Versluys, 1893); STIJNS, Reimond, *Hard labour* (Rotterdam/Brussels: Meindert Boogaardt/De Vlaamsche boekhandel, 1904); STREUVELS, Stijn, “De blidje dag”, *De Gids* 27 (1909): 1-52, 262-309. See also the pages dedicated to Flemish literature on the website www.laceincontext.com.

7 LAENEN, J., “In memoriam: le chanoine G.-C.-A.-M.-J. van Caster”, *Bulletin du Cercle archéologique, littéraire et artistique de Malines* 25 (1920): 77-86.

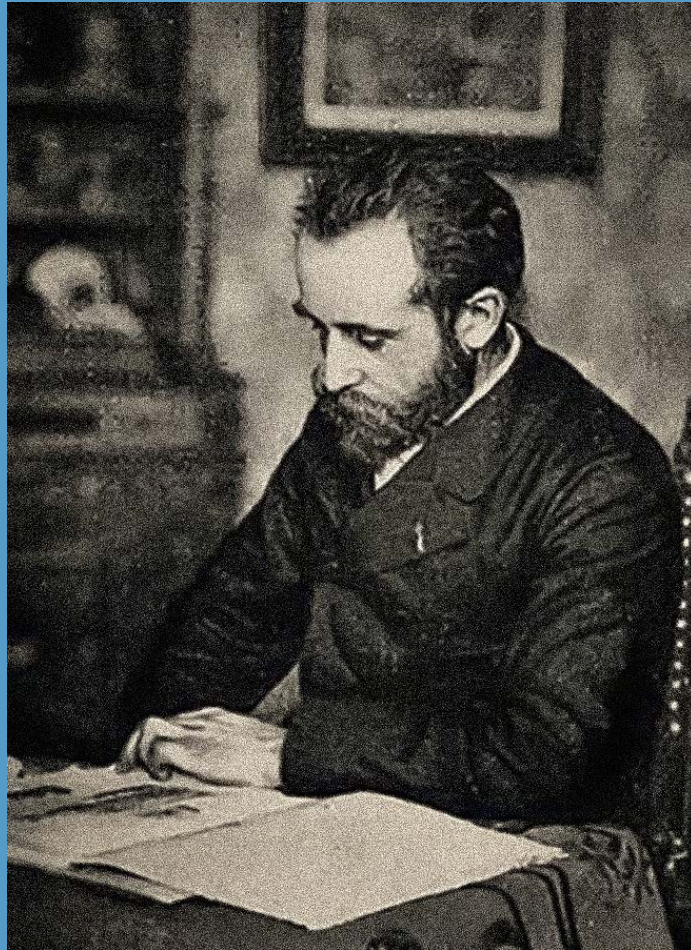
8 VAN CASTER, Guillaume, “Étude sur la dentelle de Malines et sa technique”, *Bulletin du Cercle archéologique, littéraire et artistique de Malines* 19 (1909): 159-204.

From the 1840s to the 1920s, almost every writer associated with the Flemish Movement found some use for the lacemaker. They were inspired by Flanders glory days in the High Middle Ages, but they were also proponents of social realism, and did not shy from depictions of the most profound misery: the lacemaker was the link between the two modes of expression. Those on the Catholic wing, such as the priest-poet Guido Gezelle, celebrated her as a model of Catholic womanhood and the buttress of Flanders’ Catholic identity.⁵ Writers from the Liberal wing, such as the novelists Johanna Courtmans-Berchmans, Cyriel Buysse, Reimond Stijns and Stijn Streuvels, drew attention to her poverty, exploitation and abuse, sexual as well as economic.⁶ They also focused on her subjugation to the Catholic Church.

It seems hard to reconcile the role of lace and lacemaking in the Flemish cultural revival, given the contrast between Gezelle’s ecstasies and the unremitting grimness of Buysse and Stijns, but these positions are less opposed than they appear. We can understand how by concentrating on one historic centre of lacemaking, Malines (Mechelen), and one decade (1900-1910), which witnessed the inter-related cultural activities of the antiquarian and priest Willem van Caster, the painter Alexander Struys, and the writer Herman Baccaert.

Van Caster was born in Malines in 1836, and he dedicated his life to his native city. He celebrated Malines as a chronicler and archaeologist, a founder and sometime president of the local historical society the *Cercle archéologique, littéraire et artistique de Malines*, and an opinionated contributor to plans to restore the Cathedral and other buildings in the city. He was also a collector and connoisseur of Malines lace, organizing several exhibitions and writing on the subject for the *Cercle*.⁷ His enthusiasm was inspired by his appointment, shortly after his ordination in 1860, as chaplain to the Sisters of Mercy. They ran two lace schools in the city and van Caster catechised their young pupils. The Catholic Church was intimately connected to the Flemish lace trade both as a producer (there were more than 700 lace schools run by nuns in the provinces of East and West Flanders alone) and as a consumer. Van Caster was so taken with this textile art that he designed himself a lace alb which the nuns made for him: it took two years to complete.⁸ On lace, as in other aesthetic matters, van Caster had strong views: he believed the quality of design and execution had deteriorated, and that Malines lacemakers should return to the geometric patterns of earlier centuries. As was typical for Flemish historians of the period, van Caster posited an early date for the origins of lace in Malines, in the fourteenth century, in line with his Gothic predilections. The evidence for this long history was, he admitted, limited, but he was able to establish with more certainty that lacemaking was present in Malines by the second half of the sixteenth century.

Alexander Struys, from the *Revue mensuelle illustrée*. April 1895, p. 497.



9 YOUNG, Edward, *Love of Fame, the Universal Passion* (London: R. & J. Tonson, 1741), p. 105.

10 LIS, Catharina, and SOLY, Hugo, *Armoede en kapitalisme in pre-industrieel Europa* (Antwerp: Standaard, 1980), p. 204.

11 VERHAEGEN, Pierre, *Les Industries à domicile en Belgique V : La Dentelle et la broderie sur tulle* (Brussels: Office du Travail, 1902), vol. 2, pp. 110-14.

12 DE WOUTERS DE BOUCHOUT, Joseph, “Une industrie qui se meurt: la dentelle de Malines”, *Bulletin du cercle archéologique, littéraire et artistique de Malines* 11 (1901): 115-28.

13 VERHAEGEN, *Les Industries à domicile*, vol. 2, p. 238.

“Mechlin” or Malines lace was one of the finest produced in Flanders; according to the eighteenth century English poet Edward Young, it was “the Queen of laces”.⁹ At the end of the eighteenth century nearly half of the women in the city were involved in lace manufacture.¹⁰ However, over the course of the nineteenth century the industry declined as competition with machine-made imitations drove down prices. In 1902, Pierre Verhaegen conducted a survey of lacemakers’ wages on behalf of the Belgian Ministry of Work: of the eleven Malines lacemakers he interviewed only two earned more than fifty centimes for a workday of nine, ten hours or more (a derisory sum for such skilled and painstaking work, a mere eighth of what an unskilled male day-labourer might expect to earn).¹¹ Not surprisingly, young women preferred more remunerative work and lacemaking was increasingly restricted to elderly women who had been trained in their youth and who were now housed in the city’s hospice or beguinage. (Beguinages, a feature of Flemish towns, were enclosed, convent-like structures in which lay women could live and work without taking permanent vows.) The Sisters of Mercy’s lace-schools had closed in 1870, and while one reopened in 1873 under the patronage of the wife of a leading Catholic politician, Madame Cannart d’Hamale, this initiative ran out of steam in the 1880s.¹² A lay woman, Serafina van Costenoble, made another attempt to set up a lace school in the late 1890s but it does not seem to have lasted very long.¹³ Joseph de Wouters de Bouchot’s 1901 description of Malines lace as “a dying industry” was entirely justified.

Alexander Struys, “Un art qui se meurt”, 1909. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Liège.



¹⁴ On Alexander Struys see WESLY, Emile, ‘Alexander Struys’, *Elseviers Geïllustreerd Maandschrift* 4:7 (1894): 1-20.

The decadence of Malines lace was also intimated in the 1909 painting “A Dying Art” by the Malines-based artist Alexander Struys.¹⁴ It was one of three works in which he treated the Malines lace industry. In this painting, a skeletal lacemaker bends over her cushion: through her open window the roofs of the Beguinage and its church of Saint Catherine and Saint Alexis can be seen. Lacemakers needed light to work and so were often to be found seated by the window; representations of them in this position had been an artistic commonplace of the Dutch Golden Age, and the theme was revived in the nineteenth century. Many of Struys’s Flemish contemporaries also portrayed lacemakers at windows with rooftop townscapes beyond. For example, the artist Josephus Dyckmans who, like Struys, had trained at the Antwerp Academy (and taught there, though the two did not overlap), pictured an aged lacemaker

Josephus Laurentius Dyckmans, "The Old Lacemaker", 1844. Haynes Fine Art (Bridgeman Images). A closely related painting, dated 1846, was gifted by Prince Albert to Queen Victoria, and is now in the Royal Collection. <http://bit.ly/3Sx8jTM>



15 DE WOUTERS DE BOUCHOUT, "Une industrie qui se meurt", p. 128.
16 *L'Indépendance Belge*, 25 April 1878, p. 1.

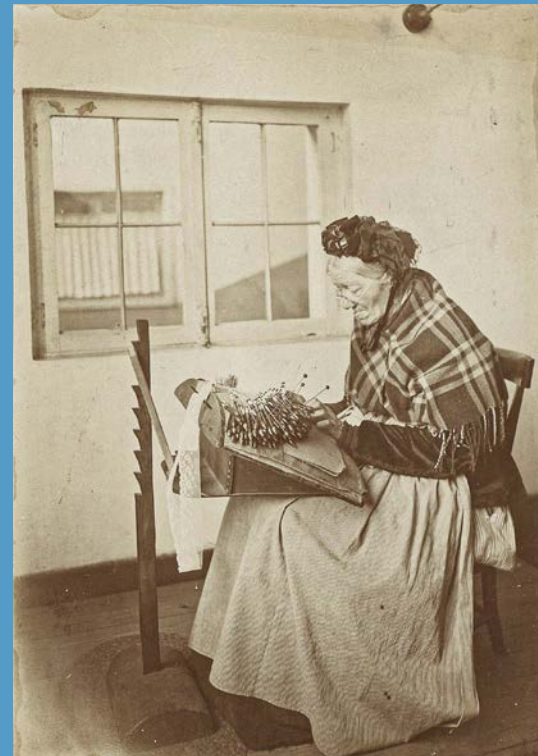
with the spire of Antwerp cathedral visible through the open window. However, Dyckmans surrounded his subject with little pleasures — the flowerpots on the window next to the snuffbox, the cat on the stool, the pilgrimage statue of the Virgin on the wall behind. A lacemaker's life was circumscribed but it might have its consolations, and the same point is made by de Wouters in his description of a lacemaker's room in the Malines Beguinage with its naïve religious statues, paper flowers, snuff box and prayer book: "These little things evoke an entire poem about a life lived in serenity and piety".¹⁵ The lacemaker's room in Struys's painting is, by contrast, entirely bare: the effects of poverty and age weigh visibly on her and death cannot be far away. While the façade of the church may offer hope for a better life hereafter, Struys was ambivalent about Catholicism, having achieved notoriety with his 1876 anticlerical (and sometimes banned) painting "Birds of Prey", which depicted predatory Jesuits surrounding a dying man.¹⁶

This anticlerical tone is less overt in Struys's 1902 painting "The Famous Lacemaker of Malines". In a similar room a clergyman bends to admire some fine lace — its complexity is evident from the mass of bobbins resting on the pillow. Although not a portrait, this painting invokes van Caster's dedication to lace. The lacemaker herself hovers at his shoulder. Through the window we see the tower of Saint Rombout's cathedral. Canon van Caster was the historian of this building and responsible for its physical upkeep. The parallelism between lacemaker and cathedral was becoming a visual cliché in the first decade of the twentieth century. When in 1910 a group of mostly aristocratic Belgian



◀ Postcard, “Les amies de la dentelle”, 1912

▼ Joanna HABRECHT, known as “moeder Litte”. “Een kantwerkster aan het werk”, Regionale Beeldbank Mechelen, SME001010767. She appears to be the model for “Les amies de la dentelle” design.



17 COPPENS, Marguerite, “The Lace Industry in France and Belgium during the First World War”, in Maude Bass-Krueger, Hayley Edwards-Dujardin and Sophie Kurkdjian (eds) *Fashion, Society and the First World War: International Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), pp. 122-33. The emblem appears to have been based on a photo of a Malines lacemaker, Johanna Habrecht, known as “Moeder Little”.

18 See, for example, DEGREEF, Guillaume, *L'Ouvrière dentellière en Belgique* (Brussels: Bibliothèque Populaire, 1886).

19 “C’est comme de la dentelle de Malines”. This line, which appears in all histories of Malines lace, is quoted in

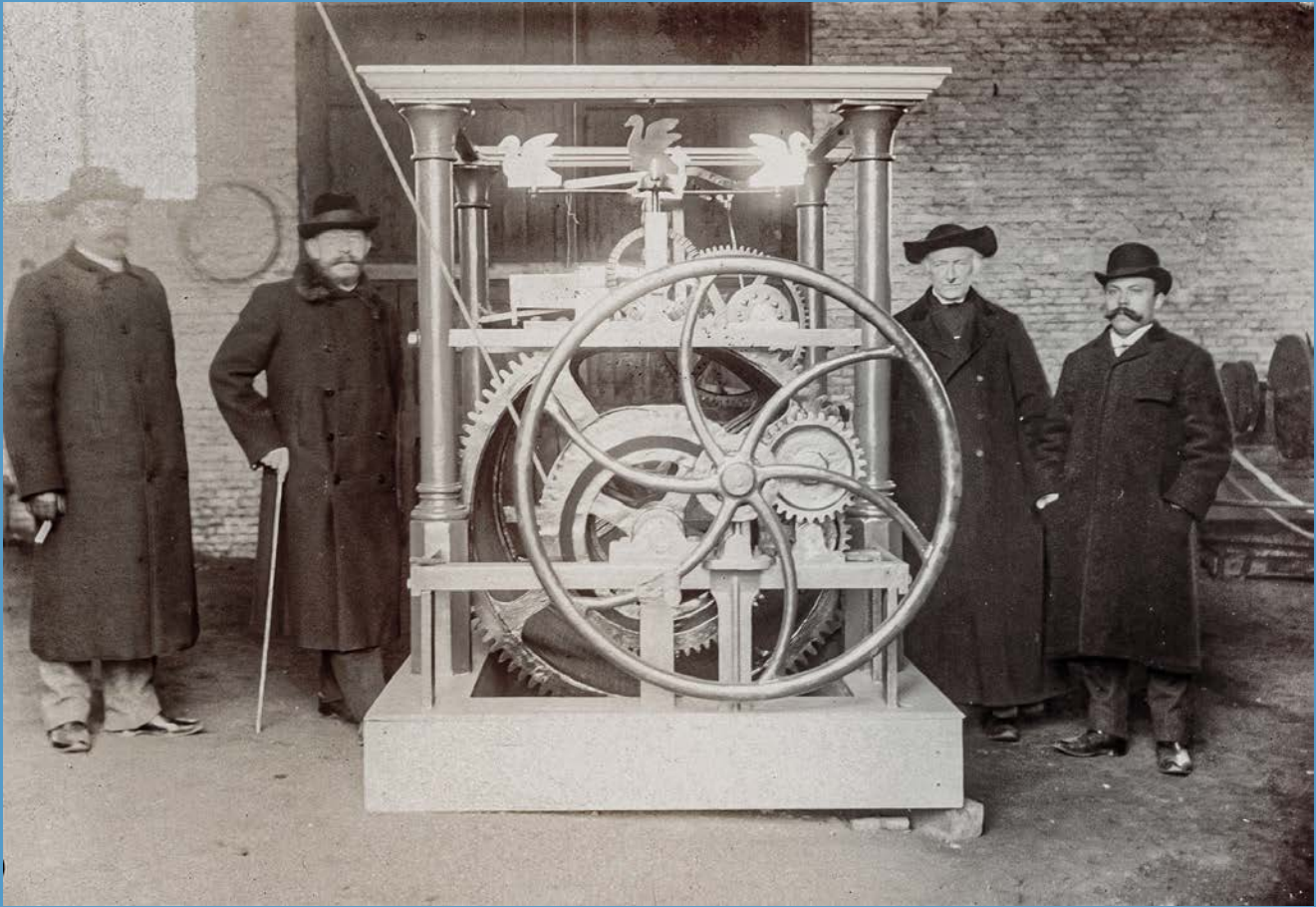
women under the patronage of the Queen formed a committee “Les amies de la dentelle” [the friends of lace] to rescue the lace industry, their emblem featured a lacemaker through whose window appeared, improbably, the cathedral towers of Bruges, Antwerp and Malines.¹⁷ This visual proximity signalled the close connection between the Catholic Church and the lace industry, though in the minds of some, perhaps including Struys, that connection was a problem. Critics claimed that the Church’s hold over impoverished and isolated lacemakers kept them quiescent in the face of rampant exploitation, including by the Church itself through its schools and workhouses.¹⁸ Flanders’ intellectual prostration before Catholicism likewise acted as a break on the region’s development, according to the liberal wing of the Flemish Movement.

However, other associations between these two legacies of Flanders’ Golden Age — lace and ecclesiastical architecture — were more celebrated. Napoleon supposedly compared the spire of Antwerp’s cathedral to a work of Malines lace, and for Flemish writers the analogy between lace and Flanders’ Gothic heritage was inescapable.¹⁹ A local francophone poet, Marcel Angenot,

BURY PALLISER, Fanny, *A History of Lace* 2nd edition (London: Sampson, Low, Son & Marston, 1869), p. 106.

Bury Palliser was the most important nineteenth-century historian of lace, but she often neglected to cite her sources,

and I have been unable to track down original evidence of Napoleon’s observation.



Canon Willem van Caster (on right), at the Mechelen bell foundry, 1905. Regionale Beeldbank Mechelen, SME001001053.

20 ANGENOT, Marcel, “Les Carillons” in *Les Poèmes inutiles* (Paris: Eugène Figuière et Cie, 1914), pp. 68-71.

21 See, for example, DAUFRESNE, Auguste, “La Dentellière de Malines”, *Revue pédagogique* 3 (1855): 387-8; and VALDELIEVRE, Pierre, “Le Carillon” in Michel Loosen, *Le secret de la dentellière* (Steenvoorde: Foyer Culturel de l’Houtland, 1988), p. 77.

22 BEYEN Marnix, ROMBOOTS, Luc, and VOS, Staf (eds), *De beiaard: Een politieke geschiedenis* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 2013).

described the cathedral as “Saint Rumbold dressed in a Malines of stone”, watching over the city from his “balcony of lace”. He went on to liken the crystalline peal of the cathedral’s carillon of forty-nine bells to a silvery net of lace thrown protectively over the city.²⁰ Other poets also invoked the connections between lacemaking and bellringing: lacemakers, who sang as they worked, are said to have joined in with the bells’ music, or the rattle of their bobbins is compared to the tinkle of bells, or their hands are described as dancing to a festive carillon.²¹ Carillons, while not unique to Flanders, are particularly associated with that region; they are a legacy of Flanders’ former wealth and a symbol of municipal pride and autonomy. Neglected for much of the nineteenth century, their revival from the 1890s onwards was part of the Flemish cultural renaissance.²² The Malines cathedral carillon was at the centre of this development, and van Caster himself played a crucial part in the restoration of the tower and its bells. The canon hoped for a similar revival in lacemaking.

Struys’s third painting depicted one of the supposed obstacles to that revival. The same “famous” lacemaker, but now in the attitude of a supplicant, unravels her lace for the benefit of a visitor so wrapped in furs that she almost disappears: the purse in her hand is her most visible attribute. This is the “koopvrouw”, the intermediary between the lacemakers and the lace merchants

Alexander Struys, “De Koopvrouw”, 1913. Museum Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen.



23 VERHAEGEN, *Les Industries à domicile*, vol. 1, pp. 189-201.

24 It was first published in serial form under the title “De onweerbaren: een verhaal uit het leven der speldenwerksters”, in *Dietsche warande en Belfort* (1910) nos 1-2: 479-87, 575-86, 60-71, 147-56, 229-36, 342-61, before being published in book form as *Aan den waterkant* (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1911).

25 MULS, Jozef, “In memoriam Herman Baccaert”, *Vlaamsche Arbeid* 11 (1921): 253-7.

who were often based in Brussels. Lace merchants had little direct contact with their workers: it was the koopvrouw who set the rates for the work and who handed out patterns and thread to women who were almost always bound to her by debts. The intermediary was the common explanation for the paradox of lace: handmade Malines lace was an expensive luxury, but its makers earned a pittance, where then was the money going? According to Pierre Verhaegen and other commentators on the lace industry, the culprit was the koopvrouw. Her influence on the industry was pernicious: lace merchants and designers had little direction over lacemakers’ training or their taste, and so the industry was trapped in a cycle of declining standards and ossifying styles. Only by removing the intermediaries could the lace industry be revived.²³

If it seems like I am reading too much into this picture, it is because these same issues are explored in a contemporary novella that features characters modelled on van Caster and Struys: Herman Baccaert’s *Aan de waterkant* [By the waterside].²⁴ Born in 1883 into a working-class family from Malines (his father was an upholsterer, his mother a seamstress), Baccaert studied Germanic philology at Louvain University, before taking a job in the Ministry of Culture. At the same time was also an author, writing studies of the Flemish poet Emmanuel Hiel and the composer Pieter Benoit.²⁵ Baccaert was more politically engaged in the Flemish Movement than either van Caster or Struys, leading to



Albert Geudens, "Mensen van Brugge". Museum Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen.

26 See the exchanges between the Flemish Catholic newspaper *De Standaard* (23 June 1921, p. 4; 28 June 1921, p. 1; 2 July 1921, p. 1) and French language Catholic newspaper *La Libre Belgique* (26 June 1921, p. 2; 30 June 1921, p. 2; 9 July 1921, p. 1).

27 BACCAERT Herman, and CARLIER, Antoine, "Gebruiken bij Kantwerksters", *Volkskunde: Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Folklore* 19 (1907-8): 223-29; "Bijdrage tot de Folklore van het kantwerk", *Volkskunde: Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Folklore* 21 (1910): 169-75; BACCAERT, Herman, *Handleiding tot de Kantkennis* (Bruges: Verbeke-Loys & Co, 1912). On the dictionary, compiled with Carlier, see the report "À l'academie royale flamande", *Le XXe Siècle*, 21 June 1910, p. 1.

28 Anon., [CARLIER VAN LANTSHEERE, Antoine], *La question dentellière: essai de mise au point* (Brussels: Hayez, n.d. [1912]).

his imprisonment for collaboration after the First World War. In 1919 he was a candidate for the 'Frontpartij', a Flemish veterans' autonomist party. The public demonstration of Flemish political allegiances at his funeral in June 1921 was a matter of polemic in the Belgian press.²⁶

In the less turbulent years before the war, Baccaert had established himself as an expert on both carillon music and lacemaking. He wrote several articles on lacemakers' songs and folklore, compiled a dictionary of terms used in the industry (which was lost during the war) as well as a guide to lace — the first substantial work on the subject in the Dutch language.²⁷ Several of these works were co-authored with the Brussels lace merchant Antoine Carlier de Lantsheere, the most prominent spokesman for the commercial lace interest in Belgium. In that role Carlier often locked horns with Pierre Verhaegen as well as the fine ladies of 'Les amies de la dentelle' over their philanthropic interference in the lace industry.²⁸ Baccaert's connections to lace were personal as well as intellectual: in 1911 he married Emma van Wetter, a lacemaker who, together with her sisters, ran one of the last lace businesses in Malines.²⁹

Aan de waterkant was first published in the year before his marriage, and may reflect on the circumstances of his courtship. Baccaert's knowledge of lace and lacemaking is on display throughout: he introduces specific terminology such as the special stitches used in the Malines lace industry, and he invokes local lacemakers' traditions, such as the ceremonial "washing the candleblock" when nightwork started in the week following Saint Bavo's day (1 October).

29 VERMEIR, Harry and TONNOEYR, José, *Kroniek van de Kant in Mechelen en de Mechelse Kant* (Sint-Katelijne-Waver: 2006), p. 65.



Albert Geudens, "Portrait of Herman Baccaert", 1909. Geudens also illustrated *Aan de waterkant*.

30 LAENEN, Joseph, "In memoriam: le chanoine G.-C.-A.-M.-J. van Caster", p. 72.

31 HOPKIN, David, "Legends of Lace: Commerce and Ideology in Narratives of Women's Domestic Craft Production", *Fabula* 62:3-4 (2021): 232-58.

He also quotes from lacemakers' songs throughout the text. His heroines are an aged lacemaker, Sofie, and her only surviving daughter, Leentje, who works as an embroiderer even though she too knows the secrets of lace. Together they share a waterside hovel, in the shadow of the Basilica of Our Lady of Hanswijk, a pilgrimage church where Sofie goes daily to pray for the souls of her husband and children who had been carried off in a cholera epidemic. The quiet, orderly home which the pair share is a model of the lacemaker's cottage idyll, with its sanded floors, polished copper saucepans, a songbird in a cage... The regular tolling of the cathedral carillon adds to this harmony. Sofie is not a beguine, but her calm, pious life is compared to a beguine's, and it was a beguine, her aunt, who first taught her lace.

One of her few visitors is canon van Gaelen, an old school friend and a great admirer of lace. Van Gaelen — gaunt, bald with an aquiline nose — is a portrait of van Caster, as Baccaert's contemporaries recognized.³⁰ And like van Caster, van Gaelen is a Gothic enthusiast: "his feet stood in his own time, but in his beliefs, words and deeds, he was rooted in the Middle Ages". Van Gaelen draws exactly the same parallel between lace and the cathedral's architecture as Angenot: "What they chiseled in stone, in airy, open, soft stone, you weave from supple threads" he tells Sofie. "Gothic tracery and lace are sisters born of the same noble blood."

Van Gaelen's young nephew, Jules Molder, is a painter. This character is less obviously a representation of Struys, who was nearly sixty when the book came out. But his role in the novel is similar: the canon induces him to paint Sofie's portrait, sitting at her pillow in front of the window. Day after day Jules visits the cottage to work on the painting, and while there he tells the pair the story of the discovery of lace. A poor orphan in fifteenth-century Bruges was inspired by the Virgin Mary to imitate gossamer patterns. This lacemaker was affianced to an artist and the story ends with the pair happily married and teaching this new art to their children. This legend comes from a short story written by the Bruges journalist Caroline Popp in 1867, but by Baccaert's time its literary origins had been forgotten and the tale had become accepted folklore.³¹ The legend connects lace to the glory days of Flemish creativity, while

32 SPAAK, Paul, *Kaatje* (Brussels: Henri Lamertin, 1908).

33 CARLIER, Antoine, *La Belgique dentellière* (Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1898), p. 73.

its plot parallels the budding romance between the artist and Leentje. The pair are separated by class and education, and the canon initially opposes the match: with a heavy heart Jules leaves Malines. But after a period of travel in Italy and France, Jules and Leentje are reunited. In the meantime, Jules's portrait had won a medal at the triennial art exhibition (as indeed Struys's "The Famous Lacemaker of Malines" had done at the 38th triennial salon in Ghent in 1902). Here Baccaert's novella echoes Paul Spaak's 1908 play *Kaatje*, in which a simple lacemaker rescues a Flemish painter from pernicious foreign, and specifically Italian, influences through the force of her love.³²

Baccaert's other plot driver is van Gaelen's plans to revive the lace industry. With the backing of the great and the good, including the Queen of the Belgians, he sets up a lace school in a building attached to the beguinage church. He wants the pupils to learn the most complex and beautiful laces, but his object is undermined by his choice of lace mistress. He appoints an old koopvrouw to this role, that is one of the intermediaries in the lace trade. She is determined to make the school into a commercial undertaking for her own benefit: she purloins one of the canon's designs, persuades an aristocratic customer to place an order, and cajoles Sofie to turn the design into a pattern — a pricking — for the pupils to use. In the meantime, she teaches them the simplest, cheapest 'ribbon laces', and regularly beats and abuses them. The tensions come to a head when Jules, on his return, takes a photograph of Sofie's pricking and the koopvrouw accuses the pair of stealing her designs. Lace merchants like Carlier were strident in their demands for better protection of their copyright, and Baccaert may be reflecting these concerns. Although the koopvrouw does not win her case, the stress of appearing before a police court makes Sofie dangerously ill.

The novel ends with Jules taking on his uncle's mission to rescue lace. The canon's mistake, he says, was to be too focused on past glories. The most important skills the pupils needed to learn were drawing and pattern making: that way they would be able to maintain quality and keep up with the fashions. His background as an artist would enable him to teach these skills, with the help of Leentje and Sofie. Here Baccaert is repeating, almost verbatim, Carlier's diagnosis of the problems affecting the Malines lace industry and the necessary remedies.³³

The basic plot of Baccaert's novella is familiar from nineteenth-century literature: a man saves a woman by his action in the public sphere, but she also saves him by creating a domestic idyll and recalling him to his true (in this case "Flemish") self. Baccaert employs the established tropes of lace literature, and not just literature in Flemish but also in French. As well as Popp and Spaak,

34 LEMONNIER, Camille, “La jeune fille à la fenêtre”, *Gil Blas* 14:4446 (20 January, 1892): 1-2.

35 NEUCKENS, Antony, “Mesures législatives et syndicales en matière de travail à domicile”, in *L'exposition du travail à domicile: documents, monographies, statistiques* (Brussels: Misch & Thron, 1911), p. 1.

Baccaert evokes the Franco-Flemish Camille Lemonnier’s poem “The young girl at the window” in a crucial scene in which Jules watches the lacemaker’s home at night before turning away to leave the city.³⁴ He draws on the medievalism of the Flemish renaissance, and is steeped in the same set of associations, whether literary (the legend of lace), visual (the bird in the cage) or aural (the carillon, the lacemakers’ songs). *Aan de waterkant* is the textual equivalent to de Wouter’s visual poem of “serenity and piety”. Yet elements recall the criticism of the Flemish social realists — the exploitation of the lace-school pupils, the violence with which they are treated, and the poverty that Sofie and her fellow lacemakers lament. And as seems axiomatic, not just in the literature of lace but also in the social activism that took up their cause in the same period, lacemakers cannot free themselves. Whatever was done to remedy lacemakers’ situation, argued the trade unionist Anthony Neuckens at the 1910 Brussels Congress on the problems of homeworking, would be done “for them, but without them”: other attendees, including Verhaegen and Carlier, appear to have agreed.³⁵ They needed a male saviour, a Flemish hero. One cannot help imagining that Baccaert saw himself in this role. ●

Conservation of a wedding dress by dressmaker Juana Valls

by EVA CAMÍ, ELISABET CERDÀ, MERCÈ LÓPEZ
and ROSA FLOR RODRÍGUEZ

Introduction

In 2019, the Textile Museum of Terrassa added a new acquisition to its modernist dress collection. This is the wedding dress worn by Miss Carmen Rafael Margenedas on her wedding day, the 16th of May 1910, with Mr. Joan Valls Giralt.

Due to its condition, a laborious conservation process has been necessary to bring out the richness of its fabrics and decorative elements.

The dress combines silk satin with tulle and is adorned with elaborate embroidery consisting mainly of beaded appliqués, small silver sequins and imitation pearls. It has a high collar, long sleeves, and a waist slightly above its natural position, following the more upright and slender fashion influenced by the great fashion houses of Paris. The skirt is elongated in the form of a lavishly decorated train, as it was the most visible part of the dress during the ceremony.

Fig. 1. Photograph of the wedding day where Carmen Rafael is wearing the dress made by her mother-in-law, Juana Valls. Photographers A. I. E. F. dits Napoleón, Barcelona, 1910.





Fig. 2. Photographs of the initial state of the dress before the intervention. Front and back.

1 CASAL-VALLS, L., *La figura de la modista i els inicis de l'alta costura a Barcelona. Trajectòria professional i producció d'indumentària femenina (1880-1915)*[*The figure of the dressmaker and the beginnings of haute couture in Barcelona. Professional trajectory and production of women's clothing (1880-1915)*]. Doctoral thesis, directed by Mireia Freixa. Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 2013, pp. 594-600. Available at <<http://bit.ly/3HB1HQz>> (Accessed: 10/03/2022).

In addition to its richness and quality, an outstanding feature of the dress is that it preserves, sewn to the inside of the garment, the label with the name of the dressmaker who made it, “Juana Valls”, the mother of the bride and one of the best-known dressmakers of modernist Barcelona¹. Her real name was Juana María del Pilar Giralt Miró, but when she set up her business, she took her husband's surname.

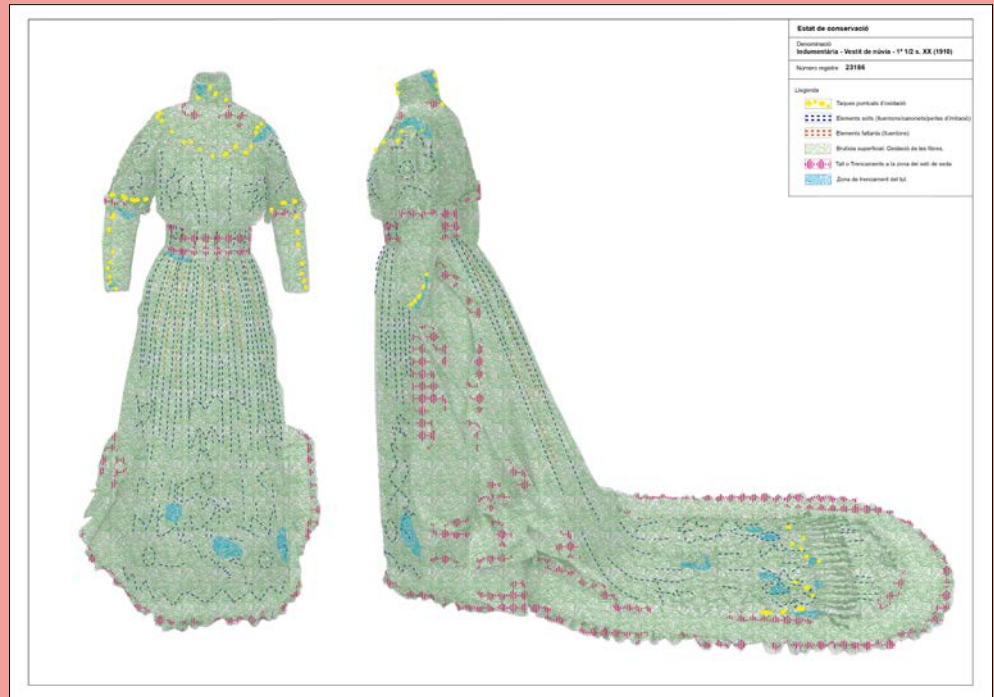
Documentation, the step prior to conservation

Before undertaking such a complicated intervention as the conservation and recovery of the wedding dress, the garment was thoroughly documented: it was photographed in general and in detail, after which all the integral parts were measured and defined. Finally, all the alterations were documented and recorded with the help of diagram of its condition, made with the vector software, Adobe Illustrator®. The diagram of conditions or alterations is a tool commonly used in the documentation process of heritage assets. This examination allows us to approach the garment more scientifically and helps us to propose the necessary conservation treatments for each element of the dress.



Fig. 3. Example of the documenting process of the condition of the dress. Use of the DinoLite® digital microscope.

Fig. 4. Diagram of the condition. Diagram created with Adobe Illustrator®.



2 MONTERO, S., “La «seda cargada» en la indumentaria entre 1880 y 1930. Metodología de estudio y propuesta de conservación-restauración” [“Weighted silk” in clothing between 1880 and 1930. Study methodology and conservation-restoration proposal]. *Ge-conservación* (2011), num. 2., p.81-88. ISSN-1989-8568.

We found that, although at first glance the dress appeared stable, structurally it suffered from serious problems, mainly due to the alteration of the silk fibres that make up the fabrics of the dress. This phenomenon is known as weighted silk². It is a type of alteration that is found mainly in the late 19th and early 20th century. During this period, different chemical products were introduced into the silk-finishing process, such as metallic salts, mainly made from tin. It resulted in a final product that was heavier and more expensive on the market. However, over time, these salts end up destroying the silk fibre’s natural structure, making it brittle and powdery. The vertical tears are characteristic, which leave the fabrics looking as if they had been attacked by a rabid cat, in addition to the evident loss of the elements applied to the garments, such as buttons, hooks or embroidery, as the fragility of the fabric cannot withstand the stress and weight of them.

Unfortunately, this type of alteration at the chemical level is irreversible. What actions can be taken will be focused on slowing down the rate at which the destruction/loss is progressing. Therefore, in addition to direct actions on the garment, indirect actions, relating to preventive conservation, will be equally important, such as creating a space where the garment is kept protected from sudden changes in temperature and humidity, as well as from direct sources of light, and placed in such a way that it does not suffer from stress.

Conservation and recovery process

The first step in the conservation process is cleaning. This is a very significant step, which must be carried out carefully and conscientiously as its effects can be irreversible. In this process, the particles that could damage and deteriorate the fabric are removed. However, we must bear in mind that the piece has a historical patina and that a cleaning process can never return it to its original state, at the risk of damaging it forever.

According to the specialists, there are various ways of classifying the types of cleaning³. In our case, the condition of the fabrics only allowed us to carry out the cleaning mechanically, removing surface dirt deposits by means of suction and smoke sponges.

Thus, we carried out a controlled vacuuming of all elements with a ConserVac[®] vacuum cleaner. The most delicate and damaged parts, which made up 90% of the garment, were covered with nylon netting, which prevents the garment from being damaged by the suction, but at the same time allows the dirt to be removed. The inner part of the train was cleaned with the help of vulcanised sponges, as the preservation of the lining fabric



Fig. 5. Cleaning of embroidered appliqués with a 1% solution of surfactant in deionised water, applied with cotton swabs.

3 LÓPEZ REY, M., *Métodos y materiales de limpieza alternativos al medio acuoso en tratamientos de conservación y restauración de materiales textiles* [Alternative cleaning methods and materials to aqueous media in conservation and restoration treatments of textile materials]. Unpublished doctoral thesis, directors Margarita San Andrés Moya and Ruth Chércoles Asensio. Madrid: Complutense University of Madrid, Faculty of Fine Arts, 2017.

4 MONTESINOS FERRANDIS, E. M^a. [et al.], "Aproximación al estudio de adhesivos para la consolidación y el refuerzo de tejidos históricos: Materiales y métodos" [Approach to the study of adhesives for the consolidation and reinforcement of historic fabrics: Materials and methods]. *Arché* (2008), num 3, p. 143-146. ISSN 1887-3960. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/3Rg38qX> (Accessed: 12/02/2022).

allowed for the mechanical movement necessary for this type of cleaning. All decorative elements, sequins, pearls, beads, etc., were cleaned with a 1% solution of surfactant in deionised water, and applied with cotton swabs while straightening the sequins deformed by use.

Having finished the cleaning process, we proceeded to strengthen the dress. This step aims to conserve, as far as possible, the fabric's stability. This garment's condition meant that we had to carry out a very invasive treatment. Many parts had to be taken off in order to treat them individually, deciding on the most appropriate treatment according to their condition, shape and constituent elements.

Two methods of consolidation are commonly used in the conservation of fabrics: stitching or adhesive consolidation. Both are supported by a secondary textile support that provides stability to the antique fabric. In the case of consolidation by stitching, the fixation is done employing silk threads and conservation stitches, whereas, as the name suggests, the second method is based on the adhesion of the secondary support to the original fabric by means of a binder that can be of different type of adhesives: cellulosic, vinyl, acrylic, starches, etc.⁴

Stitch fixation is the most common and the least "invasive", and is reversible, although full reversibility is impossible. Within this type there are different subdivisions: small localised losses can be fixed on a cut-to-size support, or if the fabric suffers from many losses or tears, a full support can be used. If the fabric shows many structural alterations, in many cases it is encapsulated, i.e. the original piece is protected between two semi-transparent fabrics such as tulle or crepe, which, despite their subjection, allow the original fabric to be seen. Adhesive consolidation has the disadvantage of being almost irreversible and often stiffens the pieces. It is used when the condition of the fabrics does not allow the use of stitching. These two approaches can also be combined, as we have done with this dress.



Fig. 6. Example of the consolidation process. Fixing with adhesive and stitching.

Fig. 7. Detail photo of the ribbon on the right side of the skirt, before and after the conservation process.



Adhesive bonding requires several previous steps. Firstly, deciding which adhesive to use. In the world of conservation, there is a wide range of adhesives. Depending on the characteristics of the piece to be treated, the most suitable is chosen. In this case, we used Klucel G, a cellulose-based adhesive, which comes in powder form and is diluted with water. We opted for a concentration of 3% to achieve a correct adhesion and still maintain a certain elasticity while avoiding the characteristic glossiness of higher concentrations. In this approach, the adhesive is not applied directly to the fabric, as this could damage it and is difficult for the conservator to control but is applied to the fabric to be used as a support. In our case, we opted to use a natural silk crepe. With the help of a wide brush, the adhesive was applied to the crepe in such a way that a small adhesive layer or film was created. Once dry, it is ready for use. The adhesive needs to be reactivated, in the case of Klucel G, this can be done by applying alcohol or acetone.

The pieces fixed with adhesive have been the wide ribbons, the bows that decorate them as well as the flounces that surround the tail. As the adhesive needs to be applied on a flat surface, these fabrics had to be flattened beforehand.



Fig. 8. Exhibition support. 3D mannequin made from the ©Bodyteca Histórica de Carmen Lucini with the actual measurements of the dress.

Cold steam, glass and, weights were used. In the case of the flounces, the adhesion was done on the front side, as they had to be folded back on themselves and then ruffled again. In this way, the fabric was encapsulated and protected.

The stitching was concentrated on the pieces where the basic fabric was tulle decorated with sequins, beads, and imitation pearls in various motifs. All of these elements generated tensions that the tulle could not withstand, causing it to stretch. In order to reinforce it, but at the same time maintain the transparency of the tulle, a silk crepe was used as a support on which the tulle was fixed all around the perimeter with single-headed silk thread, while all the applied elements were reinforced and those that had fallen, but we still conserved, were reattached.

The last step in the conservation process was the reassembly of all of the pieces, respecting their original placement and shape. Taking into account that the interventions carried out have partially modified them, giving them a different volume from how they were originally.

One of the reasons for the intervention on the dress was that it would form part of the exhibition “Un museu, mil trames” (One Museum, thousands of threads), which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Textile Museum of Terrassa. For this reason, a made-to-measure support had to be made where the piece could rest adequately free of undue stress. The support is a mannequin made from the actual sizes of the dress, made from acid-free, pH-neutral paper and starch glue. To achieve a comfortable surface, it has been lined with cotton wadding and covered with a cotton knitted fabric. The creation of made-to-measure supports, both for storage and the exhibition of the pieces, is part of preventive

Fig. 9. Final photograph of the dress, once the conservation treatment is finished and fitted on the made-to-measure mannequin.



conservation. Providing a base on which the pieces can rest without suffering is just as important as a good conservation. Both have to work hand in hand, because if this last step is not taken into account, all the previous work may prove to have been pointless. The dress, once conserved and assembled on a custom-made mannequin, features all the details. ●



Fig. 10. Dressmaking Secrets
Example of the elements
that have appeared “hidden”
between the folds and the
different garments that make
up the dress.

Dressmaking Secrets

During the dismantling of the dress, a considerable number of needles were found embedded and forgotten between the folds of the fabrics, which leads us to think about the dressmaker’s work method, first arranging the garments with needles so that they could be moved as she wished before sewing them in place. In one of the folds, between the sash and the skirt, was found a golden-headed needle, topped by a small pearl. We don’t know if this needle had any special symbolism or if it was forgotten by chance. We also discovered, hidden inside one of the ribbons, a fragment of the artificial flowers that once decorated the dress, namely a wax pistil and the paper and wire peduncle. These flowers can be seen in the original photograph of the wedding.



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