



2007

kostuum

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SUMMARIES

A passion for lace

Forty years of collecting

Els Bartelink

As an enthusiastic maker of bobbin lace, I started collecting antique bits and pieces of this beautiful product. Gradually I came to a better understanding of all the different varieties and feeling that I wanted a collection which would represent the entire development of lace through the ages. Thus my search had to start by looking for very old lace like the early plaited lace, reticella, Flemish bobbin lace, Venetian needle lace, French 18th-century Argentan and Alençon, etc.

I travelled to Belgium, France, England and Germany to visit shops, antique markets and auctions. Often one comes across a nice find by mere coincidence. For example, after a long search for a pair of lace mittens, I happened to find a lovely pair of white Chantilly lying in a market stall in Louvain. A traveling salesman sold me some fine pieces of drochel, point de Lille and black Chantilly lace.

As lace dealers got to know me as a serious collector, they were prepared to lay good pieces aside until I was able to come and inspect them. People I did not know contacted me to offer family heirlooms. Not always did these turn out to be what I wanted, but they were worth a try.

I find it interesting to find out who would have been the former owners of the lace in my collection. I have lace from the collections of Margaret Simeon, Mrs. Van der Hofstadt-Storie, Mrs. van der Meulen-Nulle and Mrs. MacLeod, just to mention a few.

When exhibiting my lace, I love to surround it with small *objets d'art* of ivory, silver or gold, e.g. perfume bottles, portrait miniatures, old bobbins or Dutch tiles. I am also the lucky owner of several 17th- and 18th-century pictures of fashionably dressed persons wearing lace.

As a collector I ask myself a good many questions. Would I want to include machine-made lace or the 19th-century revival copies of 16th- and 17th-century lace? Should I wash discoloured or dirty lace? Those questions are usually not easy to answer. What I do know is, that handling lace and keeping it in a good and safe condition gives me profound pleasure. I never stop marvelling at its beauty.

Lace in church?

A survey inspired by 17th-century portraits in the Dwingeloo church

The 'kantstudiegroep'

A lace study group consisting of Marijke van Wijngen-Pieterman, Tini van der Weerd-Burgers, Hetty de Loor-Beuger, Monique Kup-Voeten and Elly Balk-Barth, examined lace as shown in Dutch portraits from the first half of the 17th century, as well as preserved lace from the same period.

By chance they discovered the twin portraits of Rutger van den Boetzelaer (1578-1668) and his third wife Batine van Loon in the 15th-century Dutch Reformed or St. Nicholas Church in Dwingeloo, a village in the Dutch province of Drenthe. The lace collars of this couple are depicted in such a detailed manner that they became the starting point for further research. Jan van Rossum (ca. 1630-1678) is supposed to have painted this married couple dressed in the latest fashion, with flat collars with wide lace borders.

Flemish bobbin lace from the third quarter of the 17th century had large, curved, floral patterns and vines placed either symmetrically or asymmetrically within a background of plaited mesh. This lace was worked in continuous threads, adding extra pairs for the clothwork, the densely worked patterns in cloth stitch. In the 17th century the mesh of the background was irregular. The lace was worked in straight strips and not in the shape of, for instance, the cone-shaped collars. The patterns of this lace resemble those of the brocaded silks of which clothes were made. In some portraits we also see the use of black lace as a decoration of the clothes themselves. This silk bobbin lace, called *Puntas*, was mainly black, be it sometimes white, and was made in the Antwerp area amongst others.

In women's clothes a low neckline was combined with several collars with lace borders. The sleeves were short and wide, cinched at the lower edge with ribbons tied in a bow to make them stand out. Underneath these short sleeves the linen, lace-bordered sleeves of the shift were visible. Men wore a flat band, a *col rabat*, onto which a border of lace was sewn without any pleats or gathers. It was fastened centre front with laces, the ends of which were usually finished with decorative tassels.

A number of other, well-known painters made similar twin portraits. All these portraits make clear that in the third quarter of the 17th century the Old-Flemish bobbin lace was an important status symbol in clothes worn by the well-to-do bourgeoisie and nobility all over the northern Netherlands.

The bracelets of 1826

Hanneke Adriaans

The many women's portraits by Jan Adam Kruseman (1804-1862) provide us with an extensive picture of the clothes and jewellery of the ladies of his time. His full-length 1826 portrait of Antoinetta Wouters-Brasker gave rise to this article. Her bracelets will not primarily draw the eye to this portrait, but they certainly deserve a second look as well as being compared to what we know about bracelets of that time. There are two other portraits of Dutchwomen wearing bracelets which are very interesting. One is also from 1826, the other probably from 1827.

In the French fashion magazine *Journal des Dames et des Modes* jewellery is depicted very clearly. The author compared a number of jewellery details from its fashion plates to bracelets in the above-mentioned and other portraits, as well as to preserved examples.

In July 1825 a new type of bracelet comes forward in the *Journal des Dames*. These bracelets with their pointed edges will be characteristic for the year 1825. They are introduced as *gothiques* and the *Journal des Dames* clearly charts their development.

The Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris possesses the delightful centre part of a 'gothic' bracelet which closely matches the decoration on a ball gown from 1826. A dating of ca. 1826-1827 is therefore probably correct for this item. A Viennese bracelet looks like a twin to the one in Antoinetta's portrait and a second Viennese example also belongs to this series. Both look very festive through the use of gems in contrasting colours.

In 1996 a very interesting bracelet was auctioned in Paris. It shows a portrait of Marie-Caroline, Duchesse de Berry. Marie-Caroline, an important client of the Parisian jewellers, had a preference for the gothic style. The bracelet with its very obvious neo-gothic elements may have been made in 1827 or slightly earlier.

That a Viennese bracelet is the closest match to the bracelets in the portrait of a Dutchwoman, demonstrates that the jeweller's trade had an international character. The dynamics of the chronology are a fascinating phenomenon, even on this small scale.

Not subject to gravity

The ideal figures of shop window dummies

Sjouk Hoitsma

Shop window dummies were first seen around 1880 when the modern department stores with their large plate glass windows appeared in Paris. The dummies were based on the ones tailors used. Ca. 1900 these mannequins were very lifelike: their visible parts were made of wax and some of them could even move. Their bodies were modelled after the fashion ideal of the time: a round 'mono-bosom' and a tilted pelvis resulting in the desired S-curve. Unlike women of flesh-and-blood, these mannequins needed no corset, bosom pads or petticoats to achieve this ideal. Their bodies showed the fashionable shape to perfection, defying the laws of nature.

Ten undressed mannequins dating from 1900 to 2005 allow us to see how the ideal silhouette changed. The cloth body of Yvette, the automaton doll made by Pierre Imans, has a corset shape. The twenties' mannequin with her stylised head, by the same maker, has a sturdy, straight body and a flat chest. The thirties' mannequin has an elongated, but fairly natural body. The 1948 mannequin perfectly shows off the New Look with its wasp waist and high bosom. The fifties' figure has the body of a pinup with high, pointed breasts, a narrow waist and wide hips. Then there is 'Twiggy', small and slender with a flat chest, made by Rootstein in 1966. In 1979 the Rootstein mannequin with the tall, muscular, athletic body was modelled after Joan Collins. The full-bosomed Dianne Brill served as a model for the 1990 mannequin. The last one is Rootstein's 2005 mannequin 'Line': she looks as if she is wearing an invisible push-up bra. This series of mannequins is shown alongside the developments in women's underwear, particularly the supporting kind.

Until the mid-1960s corsets, brassieres, girdles and corselettes were the main instruments for women to approach the ideal bodies of these mannequins. After that exercise and dieting became more important, muscles were supposed to take over from supporting underwear. Only the bra is still commonly worn, and the arrival of the push-up bra in 1993 made it possible for many women to show cleavage.

Since the 1980s plastic surgery has become more accepted. In spite of medical risks, increasing numbers of women go under the plastic surgeon's knife. They are motivated by the ideal body shape as presented to them by

fashion magazines, by manipulated photographs, catwalk models, and mannequins with unrealistic proportions in shop windows.

Max Heymans: the man who put Dutch haute couture on the map

Maaïke Feitsma

In the Netherlands Max Heymans (1918-1997) was the first couturier to generate wide media attention through his extravagant, flamboyant and eccentric personality. Because of his pioneering work he is regarded as the nestor of Dutch couture.

Heymans' father had a wholesale fabrics business in Arnhem, and as a child Max was fascinated by fabrics and clothes. In 1936 he became a window dresser for Hirsch & Cie in Amsterdam. In that same year he also became a milliner, a profession that had always exclusively belonged to women. In 1938 he established Modesalon Max Heymans on the Muntplein in Amsterdam.

After WW II Heymans started to make couture clothes as a backdrop to his signature hats, which he continued making throughout his career. He made hat collections for small Paris fashion houses such as Jean Lafaurie and Regine Lutèce. Both his hats and clothes were very successful in the early fifties. From 1960 to 1962 Heymans had his own couture salon at Hirsch & Cie, with his own label, for a fixed salary and half the profits. But Heymans wasn't able to fit into the company culture, and continually exceeded the budget.

In 1963 he established a salon in his house on the Nicolaas Witsenstraat in Amsterdam. Here he would henceforth stage his fashion shows, where six models would show 30 to 40 models. Heymans adored Paris and especially Chanel suits were an inexhaustible source of inspiration to him, although he saw himself as an original designer. Dating his designs is a problem as his style didn't really change over the years: the same names and fabrics and, in his later years, sometimes even the same designs keep reappearing. Gradually his style changed from extravagant to classic, partly because of the hats he continued making.

His customers were smart, rich ladies and actresses. When girlishness became the fashion ideal, Heymans kept striving for timeless elegance in designs for adult, elegant women. His clientele remained loyal to him, partly because of his flattering personal attention, but to a certain extent also because of his Jewish background.

In his autobiography *Knal!* (1966), he openly avowed his homosexuality and he became a gay role model. Heymans saw himself as a bohemian and an artist because he designed couture for its own sake, without thinking of clients, money or profit. Often in his later years staff nor suppliers could be paid. Loyal customers would pitch in, but the collections suffered.

The press usually treated Heymans benevolently during his long career. He was measured by special standards, out of deference for his pioneering role in the early days of Dutch couture.

Sales and auctions of clothes in Staphorst

Of the ways of selling clothes and the reasons for doing so

Dirk Kok

Staphorst is a rural village in the province of Overijssel in the eastern part of the Netherlands. It used to be a very closed community. Religion, a strict protestant denomination, is still very important, and social control is very strong. Traditional dress is still worn, although the youngest woman to wear it is now 37. Men no longer wear it at all.

Items from this traditional dress are traded between villagers or sold at clothing auctions which are open to the general public. Nowadays there are many auctions, due to the decrease in the number of women still wearing the regional costume. Auctions were held as early as in the 18th century and became more frequent in the 19th century, when many Staphorst people emigrated to Michigan in the USA. After World War II the number of auctions sometimes increased to two a week during the 1990s, because the younger generation switched to city clothes in great numbers.

In the first place, a clothing auction may be held after the decease of the wearer. Elderly women sometimes sell their clothes before they die, because old age problems make it impossible for them to dress themselves according to the rules of regional dress. Also in care institutions carers have no knowledge of how to dress these women properly; and neither have their children. Widows of advanced age sometimes adopt mourning for the rest of their life and sell their colourful garments. Moving to another village, even a nearby one, may lead to a change of costume because religious and political preferences are different there.

The auctions are held on the seller's farm or in a rented hall. The numbered goods will be hung from washing lines strung in- and outside side the house. The present abundance of goods offered for sale has put pressure on the prices. Sunday caps and blue printed headscarves still bring in some money, but other items, such as linen and garments made of rare hand-woven fabrics, make hardly anything. For special occasions such as weddings, mourning and Sundays, women wear second-hand though often still costly clothes.

Since the 1960s outsiders, such as museum curators and collectors, have been buying at the auctions. The paint-dotted fabrics Staphorst women used to make at home, are cut up by doll makers, patchwork lovers and Staphorst shopkeepers selling them as souvenirs. There are still plenty of these fabrics left, but they are obviously threatened with extinction. Regional dress is also offered for sale in the safe anonymity of the internet. Although a lot of the old clothes will remain, with the disappearance of the wearers their meaning and the way they are connected to each other, disappears too.

At the ripe old age of 103

Regional dress from the estate of Gerridina Nijenhuis-Steen

Wielent Harms

Gerridina Nijenhuis-Steen died in 1995 at the age of 103. She wore regional dress throughout her life, and not only did she store her own clothes with care, but also those of her dead husband and relatives. In 2006 her daughter donated the entire collection of clothes to the author. It provides us with a complete picture of the wardrobe of a typical country woman from Salland, in Overijssel, a province in the eastern Netherlands, from the 19th until far into the 20th century.

Dress in the countryside was always inspired by fashionable 'city clothes'. Women in the eastern Netherlands adopted the jacket, skirted and long-sleeved, and skirt around 1850. Wide hips were fashionable, so they would wear four or five underskirts. An apron finished the costume off. From circa 1920 onwards fashion gradually changed in Salland too, women began wearing bodices and skirts alongside the skirted jacket and skirt. The modern skirts were flared and were a lot narrower than the old type. Only two underskirts were worn underneath the modern skirt. The bodices were much looser than the jackets had been, and the apron was not worn as much with this ensemble.

Gerridina's wardrobe consists of two categories of dress: for mourning and non-mourning. In both categories four subcategories are seen: everyday dress, Sunday dress, 'good' clothes and clothes for special occasions. Sunday dress was only worn to church and would stay in good condition for a long time. 'Good' clothes were items that were no longer quite good enough to wear to church. Clothes for special occasions would for instance be worn for confession or a wedding. As a rule each type of dress had its own apron.

At her wedding Gerridina received a cabinet filled with tightly rolled linen, as was customary. Her wardrobe contains different kinds of underwear such as machine-knitted vests and home-made chemisettes of white flowered cotton. It also contains stockings, shoes, a rain cloak, merino shawls and a long shawl of quilted velvet.

Gerridina had caps of different models, which again may be subdivided into caps for mourning and non-mourning. Accessories such as hats, small neckerchiefs, purses and jewellery complete the picture. The top piece is Gerridina's necklace of five rows of garnets with a gold clasp. She also had earrings to wear with her cap and both gold and silver pins, gold for non-mourning and silver for mourning.

It is very unusual for a collection of regional dress to have remained intact. In 2008 there will be an exhibition devoted to the clothes left by Gerridina Nijenhuis-Steen in the Stedelijk Museum in Zwolle.