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Seventeenth-century silk lace in the Rijksmuseum

Black lace was as popular as white in the 17th century, certainly in the Dutch Republic, but this fact tends to be overlooked, as so very little survives. Black lace is made of silk, which is quickly rotted by the acid mordant needed to fix the dye, so that any fragments that do survive are exceptionally fragile and precious. The Rijksmuseum is fortunate in possessing some prime examples of this rare textile, while, as we shall see, the bare bones of the history that can be gleaned from documents can be further fleshed out by a study of portraits.

The story opens around 1620, or more precisely in 1619, with the inventory made of the contents of Breda Castle after the death in 1618 of Philip William, Count of Buren, the eldest son of William the Silent by his first wife Anne of Buren, who had spent most of his life in captivity in Spain. Among the contents of his wardrobe was 'A black silk veil with an insertion and black *breynaet*'¹. This was perhaps a military scarf, but the black *breynaet* was undoubtedly a simple edging of possibly plaited black silk bobbin lace². Just such a simple edging of black bobbin lace can be seen on the black cap worn by Hortensia del Prado (d. 1627) in her portrait by Salomon Mesdach, which must date from the 1620s (Fig. 1). Philip William's wardrobe also included 'A Tours black armozine cloak with six black passements and lined with flowered armozine'³, while in the inventory made of

his possessions in Brussels in 1618 are listed *deux pourpointz de satin noir, un en broderie noir et l'autre passementé de noir*⁴. This fashion for trimming black cloaks and doublets with black braid or bobbin lace, either laid on or used as an edging, was to become a highly popular one in the Netherlands over the following decades. In the 1620s these trimmings seem to have consisted mainly of black braid. Cornelis van der Voort's portrait of Laurens Reael (1583–1637), Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1616 to 1619, which was painted in 1620, shows him clad in a black doublet decorated with lines of black braid and with black and gold braid on the sleeves (Fig. 2). Another version of the same fashion can be seen in a portrait of 1625 by Paulus Moreelse of Michiel Pauw (1590–1640), one of the founders of the West India Company (Fig. 3). Here for the first time we encounter the fashion for trimming even patterned silks with, in this case, black braid and a very narrow scalloped black bobbin lace. This narrow black lace can also be seen edging the fashionable slashes in garments of the 1620s, e.g. in a portrait of 1627 of Clara de Hinojosa, second wife of Jan van Wassenaer van Duivenvoorde, at Kasteel Duivenvoorde at Voorschoten, and a portrait of a man dated 1629 by Michiel van Miereveld at the Deutzenhofje in Amsterdam⁵.

In the 1630s, however, a change begins to take place. On 6 May 1631 the Utrecht

Fig. 1. Salomon Mesdach. *Hortensia del Prado*
(d. 1627). Panel, 74 × 61 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Inv. no. A 910.



Fig. 2. Cornelis van der Voort. *Laurens Reael* (1583–1637). Canvas, 223 × 127 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 3741.

lawyer Carel Martens recorded in his account book the purchase of 'an ell and a half of black large laces at 2 guilders the ell'⁶. He does not specify what kind of lace this was, but towards the end of the decade we do, indeed, begin to see a more substantial kind of black silk lace appearing in portraits. In a portrait of a man of 1637 by Johannes Verspronck, the sitter is wearing a black cloak edged with a fairly wide scalloped black lace headed by a narrower one⁷, while



in a portrait by Dirck Santvoort of Agatha Geelvinck (1617–38), first wife of Frederik Dircks. Alewijn, alderman and councillor of Amsterdam, we see similar lace laid down in profusion on a patterned black silk (Figs. 4a and b). A very clear rendering of it is found in Michiel van Miereveld's portraits of 1640 of Hendrick Hooft (1617–78) and his wife Aegje Hasselaer (1617–64), both of whom are dressed in black satin trimmed with the same type of black scalloped lace (Figs. 5a and b). Now, while it is essential to apply caution in interpreting evidence from portraits⁸, it is obvious that three different artists will not have used the same studio props, so we can safely assume that this kind of black silk lace was much in fashion at this period. It all looks very similar and is in fact easy to identify as Genoese lace from its closeness to the white linen lace of the same period from Genoa, which has exactly the same fan-like scallops and geometrical motifs. Gold, silver and silk laces are already specifically mentioned in Genoese documents of the 16th century, alongside linen lace, e.g. in an inventory of Genoa Cathedral of 1593 and another of 1583 of the Palazzo Doria Pamphili in Rome, which belonged to a Genoese family⁹. The most flourishing period for Genoese bobbin lace of all kinds was undoubtedly the first half of the 17th century. The white linen lace of Genoa does not seem to have been particularly popular in the Dutch Republic, where the finer, softer laces of Flanders were preferred for the elaborate falling collars of the 1630s and 1640s. An exception is to be seen in a portrait by Miereveld of Frederick Henry (1584–1647), where the stiff geometrical quality of the lace on collar and cuffs seems appropriate to the armour with which it is worn¹⁰. The black silk lace, on the other hand, was clearly highly fashionable, while Bartholomeus van der Helst's portrait of Gerard Andriesz. Bicker (1622–66) shows him wearing a red cloak trimmed with four rows of cream-coloured or blonde silk Genoese lace (Fig. 6). The characteristic arrangement of a wider lace headed by a narrower one, *pizzo* and *pizzetto* to use the Genoese terms, is very clear here and it may be noted that a very similar black

Fig. 3. Paulus Moreelse. Michiel Pauw (1590–1640), signed and dated 1625. Panel, 127.5 × 94 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. C 1440.



Fig. 4a. Dirck Dircksz. Santvoort. *Agatha Geelvinck* (1617–38). Panel, 72 × 61 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 1318.

Fig. 4b (below). Detail of portrait in Fig. 4a.

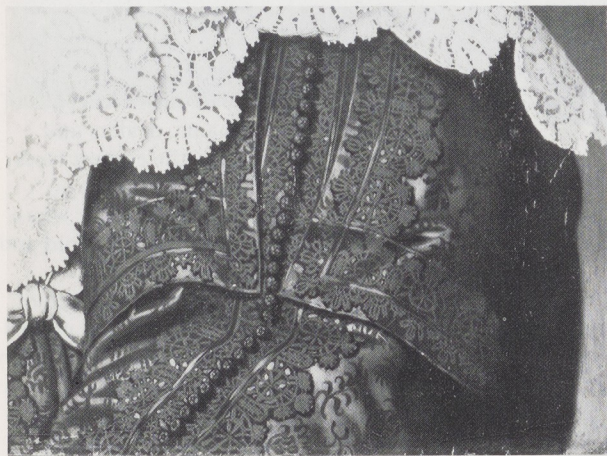


Fig. 5a. Michiel van Miereveld. *Hendrick Hooft* (1617–78). Signed and dated 1640, panel, 69 × 59.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 1250.

Fig. 5b (below). Michiel van Miereveld. *Aegje Hasselaer* (1617–64). Signed and dated 1640, panel, 70 × 58.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 1251.

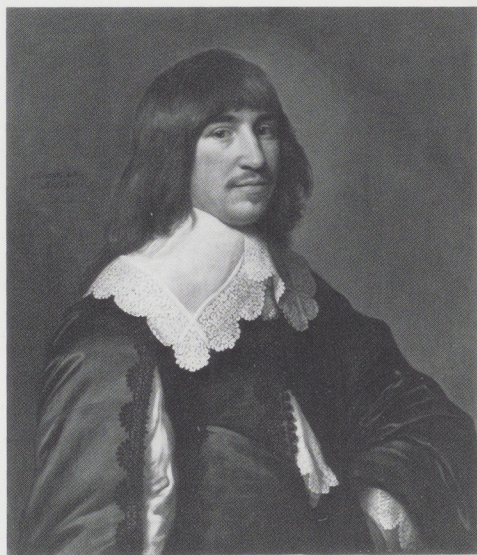


Fig. 6. Bartholomeus van der Helst. Gerard Andriesz. Bicker (1622–66). Panel, 94 × 70.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 147.



silk Genoese lace of this date has been unearthed from a tomb in Meissen Cathedral¹¹. The gold and silver lace of Genoa was not unknown in the Dutch Republic either, witness that on the military scarf worn by one of the civic guardsmen in Bartholomeus van der Helst's *Company of Captain Roelof Bicker and Lieutenant Jan Michielsz. Blaeuw*, painted in 1639 (Fig. 7). The fashion for black Genoese lace certainly lasted until the mid 1640s. In his portrait of 1645 by Jan van Hemert Dirck Hendrick Meulenaer is wearing a doublet with slashed sleeves and a cloak with edgings of a

scalloped lace of this variety (Fig. 8), while it appears very clearly in a portrait of a lady of 1644 by Bartholomeus van der Helst in the National Gallery in London¹². She not only has the lace laid over the black satin of her dress, but there are three rows of it on her silver stomacher. Around the middle of the century, however, the lace industry in Genoa declined owing to economic crises and frequent epidemics of the plague, the worst of which was in 1657. As a result lacemaking virtually died out there, the lacemakers moving to safer places in the countryside and along the Riviera.

While the lace of Genoa was of a stereotyped, easily recognizable variety, that was certainly not the case with the important silk and metal thread lace industry which arose in France in the 17th century. This was situated in the rural areas north of Paris. In his *Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce*, of which the first edition was published in 1723, Jacques Savary des Bruslons gives a list of the small towns and villages around which the industry was centred. The finest silk lace, he says, was made at Fontenay, Puissieux, Morgas and Louvre en Parisi, the ordinary and coarse kinds at Saint Denis en France, Montmorency, Villiers-le-Bel, Cercelle, Écouan, Saint Brice, Groslait, Gisors, Saint-Pierre-les-Champs, Estrepagny, Doumensnil and several other places nearby¹³. The industry has recently been the subject of a searching study by Béatrix de Buffévent, based mainly on the inventories of the estates of lace merchants, dealers and factors¹⁴. According to her, the earliest laces mentioned in these inventories, which go back at least to the 1620s, are black or white silk laces¹⁵ and these, along with the gold and silver laces, were to remain the staple product of the industry almost to the end of the century. However, although it has proved possible to chart the history of the industry in great detail, the documents do not give much idea of what the laces actually looked like. This brings us to the first of the black silk bobbin laces in the Rijksmuseum's collection, matching borders of two different widths laid down on black velvet in two fragments of a cloak (Figs. 9 a and b), which, according to a

Fig. 7. Bartholomeus van der Helst. *The Company of Captain Roelof Bicker and Lieutenant Jan Michielsz. Blaeuw*. Signed and dated 1639, canvas, 235 × 750 cm, detail. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. C 375.



sworn, sealed statement accompanying the fragments, originally belonged to Hugo de Groot (1583–1645)¹⁶. Both fragments can be traced back to Hugo Cornets de Groot, Director of the Post Office at 's-Hertogenbosch, who was a direct descendant of Hugo de Groot's elder son Pieter (1615–78)¹⁷. He had in his possession a set of cloak, doublet and breeches, but these were in such a state of decay that on his death in 1838 (he died unmarried) his heirs cut the cloak into pieces and shared it out among various acquaintances. The largest portion now belongs to the Prinsenhof at Delft, while there are other

Fig. 8. Jan van Hemert. *Dirck Hendrick Meulenaer*. Signed and dated 1645, canvas 88.5 × 69.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 693.

fragments in the Gemeente Museum in The Hague and the Historical Museum in Rotterdam.

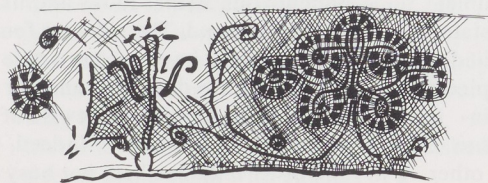
In view of the cloak's origins the lace on it can safely be said to be French, for of course Hugo de Groot spent the greater part of his life in exile in Paris. From the correspondence of his wife Maria van Reigersberch (1589–1653) it emerges that she was the one who ordered her husband's clothes for him. On 29 February 1628, for instance, she wrote to her brother Nicolaes in the Dutch



Republic that 'I am having a patterned satin suit of clothes made for my husband'¹⁸, and again, on 11 October 1630, she says, 'Regarding my husband's cloak, I shall have it lined with plush, such as is now worn, with a small border'¹⁹. On 23 March or April 1643 she once more wrote to Nicolaes, 'I have bought your clothes today and likewise a suit for my husband. The silk cost fourteen guilders and I have not been able to obtain it for less. I have done the same for you as for myself. The doublet is likewise of silk and my husband's is the same'²⁰. Indeed, Nicolaes and other relations kept her busy over the

Fig. 9a. Fragment of a cloak said to have belonged to Hugo de Groot (1583–1645). Black velvet trimmed with black silk bobbin lace and passement, French, probably c. 1645. 44 × 25 cm, width of lace 9 and 5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. N.M. 12233.

Fig. 9b (below). Drawing of part of design on wider lace in Fig. 9a.



years ordering clothes, hats, stockings and suchlike for them and asking for information on the latest fashions. In this respect it is interesting to note that some of her comments appear to support our findings from portraits regarding the switch from narrow braid to wider lace as a trimming. On 11 November 1628, for instance, she asks Nicolaes to send her a little sample of passement, if he wants her to order him a suit trimmed with two rows of passement²¹, while on 21 October 1641 she writes that she has sent Cousin Huygens laces for a tabbard²².

The lace on Hugo de Groot's cloak has a design of a large symmetrical lobed motif linked by curved lines to a spindly flower sprig, all on a background of a simple torchon mesh, which appears to be done with a double thread, probably in order to make it stronger. It is laid down with a narrow passement. Originally there was also a border of the same lace round the edge, but all but a small fragment of this has now rotted away. The dating presents a problem. Traditionally the cloak is said to have been worn by Hugo de Groot as Pensionary of Rotterdam²³, but the type of lace would appear to rule this out. De Groot initially held that office from 1613 until his arrest in 1618, a period when, as we have seen, lace was not yet used in this way. Moreover, even his later visit to Rotterdam in an attempt to regain the office in 1631 seems out of the question, as there is virtually no evidence for lace with a mesh ground until around the middle of the century. De Groot had his portrait painted by Michiel van Miereveld on that occasion, but this only shows him wearing a black spotted silk doublet²⁴. An earlier portrait of 1629, done in Paris by the Rotterdam painter Abraham de Vries, shows him clad in flowered black silk (possibly the very suit referred to by his wife the year before) and wearing a cloak, but no lace can be seen on this²⁵. At the very earliest the lace could perhaps date from the last year of his life, 1645, and it might be that he had a new suit of fashionable clothes made for his visit to Sweden that year, after which he died at Rostock on the way home.

The lace has points in common with laces on clothes belonging to Charles Gustavus of

Fig. 10a. Johannes Cornelisz. Verspronck. *Maria van Strijp* (b. 1627). Signed and dated 1652, panel, 97 × 75 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. C 1415. Fig. 10b (below). Detail of portrait in Fig. 10a.



Sweden (1622–60), which are now preserved in the Livrustkammeren in Stockholm. These include a black uncut velvet cloak, which is again part of a suit and has an edging and laid on border of two different widths of black silk bobbin lace patterned with rudimentary stylized flowers against a

torchon mesh ground which is less clearly defined than that of the Hugo de Groot lace²⁶. The pattern here is outlined by the neat row of holes that was to become characteristic of French black silk lace, but which scarcely appears yet on the Hugo de Groot lace. The laces are, however, again laid down with a narrow passement in the same way as the latter. The same is again true of the edging and laid on border of black silk bobbin lace on a black ribbed silk suit, which has a pattern of disjointed scrolling lines and flower motifs ultimately derived from motifs on Flemish bobbin lace and to a certain extent reminiscent of the lines and thin flower sprig on the Hugo de Groot lace²⁷. Black silk bobbin lace comparable to the Hugo de Groot lace also appears on a black silk suit embroidered all over in black silk²⁸. The materials for a large part of these costumes are known to have been ordered in France for the king's coronation in 1654. By that time fashion in the Netherlands had clearly switched to French black silk lace too. In the portrait of Maria van Strijp (b. 1627), the wife of Eduard Wallis, by Johannes Verspronck, which is dated 1652, the sitter's black dress is trimmed with a narrow lightly scalloped black silk lace with a pattern of small flower sprigs and scrolls (Figs. 10a and b). A wider lace of a similar kind with quite a dense floral pattern is to be seen edging the cloak worn by Abraham del Court (b. 1623), an Amsterdam cloth merchant of Huguenot origin, in the portrait of him and his wife Maria de Keerssegieter painted by Bartholomeus van der Helst in 1654 (Figs. 11a and b). This double portrait appears to commemorate the couple's marriage in 1650 and it can perhaps be taken that the clothes they are wearing are their wedding garments. An entry in the inventory made by Wendela Bicker of the property of herself and her husband Johan de Witt in 1655, the year they were married, also refers to a lace-trimmed black cloak as a wedding garment and incidentally suggests another of the reasons why so little lace of this kind has come down to us, the fact that it was used over and over again. Her list of skirts and petticoats includes '1 black (made) of the bridegroom's

Fig. 11a. Bartholomeus van der Helst. *Abraham del Court* (b. 1623) and his wife *Maria de Keerssegieter*. Signed and dated 1654, canvas, 172 × 146.5 cm. Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, Inv. no. 1296.

Fig. 11b (below right). Detail of portrait in Fig. 11a.



cloak with yellow saye lining' valued at 25 guilders and '1 yellow satin with black lace from the bridegroom's cloak', which was lined with green and valued at 100 guilders, this high value perhaps reflecting the cost of the lace²⁹.

In Abraham del Court's case it may be noted that his garters are also trimmed with black silk lace. That this was not a new fashion is clear from an entry in Carel Marten's account book on 23 November 1633: '8 loops of black silk laces for the black garters'³⁰. Lace-trimmed garters also form part of the surviving set of accessories belonging to one of the suits of Charles Gustavus of Sweden mentioned above³¹.

In the portraits of Maria van Strijp and Abraham del Court the design of the black silk lace echoes that of white linen lace in the same paintings, which has the close patterning of flowers that was so popular in the Dutch

Republic in the third quarter of the 17th century that that kind of bobbin lace has come to be known as Dutch lace or *Hollandse kant*³². Yet the black and white laces appear to have come from different sources. The white lace was produced in Flanders and all the evidence seems to show that the black silk lace came from France. No evidence has so far emerged for the manufacture of black silk lace in the Southern Netherlands, but there is much to show that large quantities of it were imported into those regions from France. The manufacturers of black silk lace in the rural areas north of Paris sold much of their lace via merchants in Paris itself. For example, the brothers Charles and Gilles Chelot at the sign of the Lion Noir on the Rue Saint-Denis, bought laces from at least eight of the rural manufacturers and supplied them to a wide market both inside and outside France³³. The inventory of their estate, dated 1677, shows them to have had creditors in Bruges, Courtrai, Brussels and Antwerp, while a document of 1670 allows Ghent to be added to this list³⁴. This lace imported from France was then sold in the Southern Netherlands or re-exported from there and this last fact may explain the references to black Flemish lace which are found from time to time. 'Black Flanders lace' appears in English sources such as a haberdasher's accounts of 1658, the accounts of the Earl of Northumberland, who in 1660 paid ninety pounds for 'black Flanders lace for two Sutes & Cloaks'³⁵ and an advertisement in the *Newsman* of 26 May 1664 reporting the loss of 'A black lutestring gown with a black Flanders lace'³⁶. In a recently published inventory of 1671 of a Venetian lace merchant too there are references to *Merli di Fiandra Negri*, black lace actually far outnumbering white lace here³⁷. The probability is that these were really French laces exported via Antwerp, such misnomers being by no means uncommon in the history of lace (cf. 'Spanish lace', so called because it was made for the Spanish market, and *point d'Angleterre*, which was certainly not made in England). The situation remained the same in the first half of the 18th century too, the records of the Maison Hoflinger in Antwerp showing

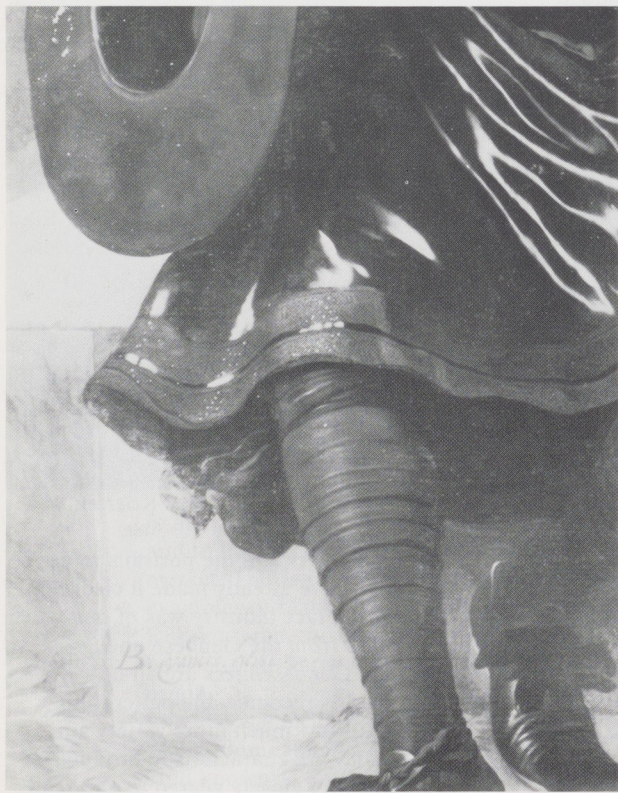
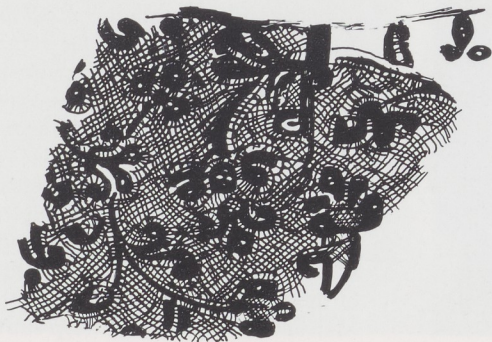
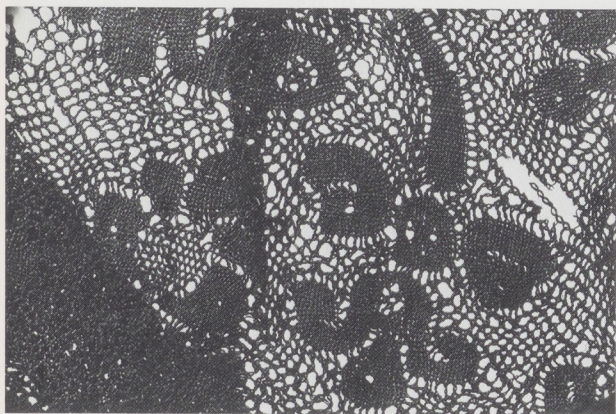


Fig. 12a. Cap, black silk bobbin lace and cord over white linen, the lace probably French, third quarter of the 17th century, 21 × 42 cm, width of narrow lace 3 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. VI R groen.

Fig. 12b (middle). Detail of wide lace on cap in Fig. 12a.
Fig. 12c (below). Drawing of detail of wide lace on cap in Fig. 12a.



massive importation of black silk laces from Paris and the rural regions to the north of the city³⁸.

There was also a large export trade in black silk lace from France to the Dutch Republic. The Chelot brothers had two creditors in Amsterdam³⁹, while Didier Rahault *l'ainé*, one of the most important lace merchants of Villiers-le-Bel, whose career began in the 1620s, sent his son Pierre to the Dutch Republic in 1667 to look into the situation there⁴⁰. Another Parisian lace merchant, Etienne Chastelain, the son and grandson of rural lace merchants, was among the Huguenots who fled to the Northern Netherlands after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, he and his wife setting up a shop in The Hague the following year⁴¹. In his account of French lace Savary des Bruslons notes that the vast bulk of it was consumed within France itself, that the only kind to be exported in quantity was the black silk lace and that one of the chief markets for it was the Dutch Republic⁴². Little work has been done as yet on the Dutch end of this trade, although there are statistics from a later period to show that a large proportion of the lace imported from France and elsewhere was re-exported to Spain, Germany, Scandinavia and the Baltic region⁴³. Inside the Republic itself the silk laces may not necessarily have been sold in the same shops as linen lace. An inventory of 1653 of an Amsterdam lace shop contains only three items of black lace among 318 numbers⁴⁴, but it is quite likely that the black and other silk lace was sold by silk merchants. 'Passements' certainly figure in the inventory of 1640 of Johannes van Heusden, a silk merchant of Amsterdam, and that of 1649 of Maria Koerten, the widow of Nicolas Koerten, silk merchant⁴⁵.

The surviving laces and the portraits referred to up to now have already made it clear that the French silk lace industry was of quite a different kind from the Genoese one.

Whereas the Genoese laces are all of a familiar, readily recognizable pattern, the French ones show much more variety and diversity. They are characteristic products of a luxury industry closely geared to and ready

Fig. 13. Gabriel Metsu (1629–67). *Woman at a Virginal*, detail. Canvas, 82.5 × 85 cm. Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, Inv. no. vdV 49.

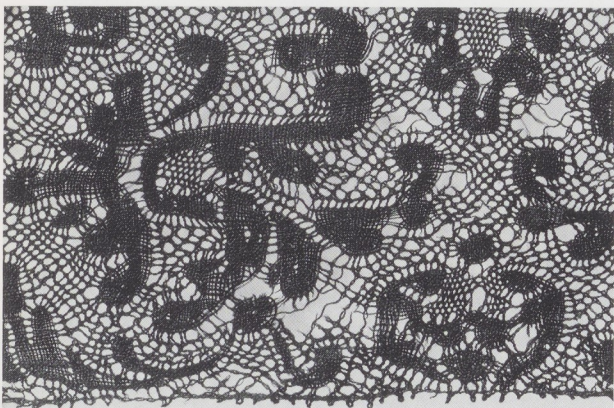


to adapt to every passing whim of fashion and to the specific demands of any given market. This is further illustrated by the other examples of black silk lace in the Rijksmuseum, the quality of which seems to be enough to show that they are French in origin.

The first is a rarity not only as lace, but also as a costume item. It is a small cap of the kind known as a *tip*, made of a wide and a

narrow black silk lace sewn down on to a stiff linen foundation (Figs. 12a and b). Small caps of this kind, which were not undercaps, can be seen in various forms in paintings of the middle and second half of the 17th century, their many permutations and combinations deserving a study of their own⁴⁶. Our cap is roughly similar in form to that worn by the woman at a virginal in a painting by Gabriel Metsu (1629–67) in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam (Fig. 13). It has a rounded opening at the back to accommodate the bun of hair (this opening may have been filled in originally) and rounded side pieces, while the crown of the head is left largely uncovered. The wide lace is pleated over the main part of the cap and there is a narrow border round the back opening, the two being separated by a little plaited silk cord. The wide lace has a bold symmetrical design of scrolling stems with Baroque flowers and leaves of a type familiar in many kinds of lace of the third quarter of the 17th century. It is again set against a torchon mesh ground and the motifs are outlined by a row of little holes. The narrow border has a coiling stem pattern. The design of the wide lace is related to that of the lace on a suit of black silk brocade with a flower and leaf pattern, which belonged to Frederick III of Denmark (1648–70) and is preserved at Rosenborg Castle in Copenhagen⁴⁷. This suit, which is trimmed with matching lace of three different widths patterned with a symmetrical design of coiling stems, is listed in a wardrobe inventory of 1664: *'Ein schwartz seiden brocade Kleide, mit wams, hoszen und Manttell, mit Schartzen spitzen Reich Schamerirt'* and is dated to the late 1650s. In an earlier inventory of 1651 of Frederick's possessions some of the black lace listed is referred to as French and this is undoubtedly true of the lace on the suit as well. While the lace on the *tip* probably dates from the third quarter of the 17th century, it may perhaps have been made up as a *tip* at a later date and the *tip* may well have gone on being worn for a long time. In fact there is also a small piece of black lace of Valenciennes type incorporated in it, but it is not clear

Fig. 14a. Black silk bobbin lace, probably French, third quarter of the 17th century, 9 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. VI R groen.
Fig. 14b (below left). Detail of lace in Fig. 14a.



However, it is of no great moment to us whether the piece of lace in question originally belonged to the *tip* or not. It is in any case of a different design and a more refined variety. In fact it is by any standards a superb piece of lace in both design and workmanship and can be assumed to represent some of the best work the French lacemakers were capable of in the black silk bobbin lace line. Its elegant symmetrical design of scrolling stems with formalized leaves and flowers is most accomplished in drawing and perfect in execution, being again clearly outlined with small holes against a torchon mesh ground. While clearly

whether this is part of the original make-up or whether it was added later as a sort of repair. Various references make it clear that a *tip* was an item that continued to be worn by certain classes of women into the early 18th century⁴⁸.

Associated with our example is a wide piece of lace of a different design (Fig. 14). It is not clear whether this originally formed part of the *tip* or not. Headgear of this kind often included a sort of peak coming down to the forehead and this sometimes appears to be made of or trimmed with lace, as in the portrait of 1682 of Margaretha Verkolje, wife of Reinier Couturier, by Jan Verkolje (Fig. 15)⁴⁹. Something of this kind appears to be referred to in an advertisement in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* of 27 August 1697 regarding a twenty-year-old girl from Vlissingen who had gone missing. She is described as wearing 'on her head a black *tip* with a black feather (patterned) lace'⁵⁰.



Fig. 15 (below left). Jan Verkolje. *Margaretha Verkolje*.
Dated 1682, panel 21 × 16.5 cm. Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 2200.

Fig. 16 (below). Bartholomeus van der Helst. *Geertruida
den Dubbelde* (1647–84). Signed and dated 1668,
canvas, 139 × 125 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam,
Inv. no. A 141.



Fig. 17. Ludolph de Jongh. *Aletta van Ravensberg* (1635–77). Signed and dated 1668, canvas, 111.5 × 88.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 197.



based on similar principles to that of the lace on the *tip*, the design is of a sophisticated type for which few parallels are to be found in other kinds of contemporary lace. It clearly bespeaks an expert French hand and is probably also to be dated to the third quarter of the 17th century.

That quite a different kind of lace was also being produced in France at this time is apparent from portraits. In her portrait of 1668 by Bartholomeus van der Helst Geertruida den Dubbelde (1647–84), the wife of Admiral Aert van Nes, is wearing a black gown trimmed with laid on black silk lace of a densely patterned variety, but her sleeves and the edges of the open skirt are finished with a very airy black silk lace in two widths,

which has a purely linear design of stylized flower sprigs against a mesh ground (Fig. 16). This is very close in style to some of the parchment laces of the day. Parchment lace comprised designs worked in narrow strips of silk-wrapped parchment on a silk mesh ground. A rare surviving example in the Musée de Cluny in Paris⁵¹ has a design of highly stylized flowers and leaves with stiff zigzag lines reminiscent of those on Geertruida den Dubbelde's lace, while both laces also feature the little square motifs known as *points d'esprit*. This kind of pattern could also be worked with a thick silk thread. A small scrap of white bobbin lace in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam has a design worked in this way, again featuring zigzag lines and a torchon mesh ground. Lace comparable to that worn by Geertruida den Dubbelde can also be seen edging the sleeves in the portrait by Ludolph de Jongh, also dated 1668, of Aletta van Ravensburg (1635–77), the wife of Admiral Jan Jansz. van Nes (Fig. 17). A similar fashion prevailed among men as well at this period, witness Jan de Baen's portrait of 1670 of the Paymaster-General Hieronymus van Beverningk (1614–90) (Figs. 18a and b)⁵², albeit this lace might be of a slightly heavier variety. The light airy laces might be the *dentelles noires transparentes* referred to in the *Chronique de l'Œil-de-Bœuf* as being worn by the ladies of the French court who were present when Louis XIV's ex-mistress Louise de la Vallière (1644–1710) took the veil in 1674⁵³.

The records of the lace manufacturers of the region north of Paris all seem to show something of a slump in the black silk lace trade towards the end of the 1680s⁵⁴. This led to their turning more to the manufacture of cheaper, narrower laces and a white linen thread lace of Mechlin type, which clearly represents a decline in standards. However, our survey of surviving pieces and lace in portraits will, it is hoped, have been enough to give some idea of the rich diversity and inventivity in its heyday of an important branch of the lace industry which is only now emerging from obscurity.

Fig. 18a. Jan de Baen. Hieronymus van Beverningk (1614–90). Signed and dated 1670, canvas, 156 × 121.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. A 963. Fig. 18b (below). Detail of portrait in Fig. 18a.



Notes

¹ S. W. A. Drossaers and T. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, *Inventarissen van de Inboedels in de Verblijven van de Oranjes*, The Hague 1974, Vol. I, p. 140, No. 249: *Eenen swarten sijen sluyer met eenen tusschennaet ende swarte breynaet*.

² For the meaning of the term *breynaet*, variously spelt *brainat* or *breinat* (it has nothing to do with knitting), see M. Risselin-Steenebrugen, 'Les débuts de l'industrie dentellière – Martine et Catherine Plantin', *De Gulden Passer* 39 (1961), pp. 87–8. For an English portrait of a lady wearing an early black silk bobbin lace of this kind see S. M. Levey, *Lace. A History*, Victoria & Albert Museum 1983, Fig. 142.

³ Drossaers and Lunsingh Scheurleer, *op.cit.* (Note 1), p. 140, No. 241: *Eenen Toursschen swarten armosijnen mantel met ses swarte sijden passementen ende gevoerdert met gebloemt armosijn*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106, No. 219.

⁵ Exhib. cat. *Prijst de Lijst*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1984, pp. 105 and 112.

⁶ H. Knoester en A. Graafhuis, 'Het kasboek van Mr. Carel Martens, 1602–1649', *Jaarboek Oud Utrecht* 1970, p. 183: 'een el ende half el swarte groote canten d'el 2 gulden'.

⁷ R. E. O. Ekkart, *Johannes Cornelisz. Verspronck*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, 1979, No. 10, pp. 36 and 144.

⁸ It was amusing to note in a recent exhibition of portraits by Van Dyck at the National Portrait Gallery in London (1982–'83) that several of his aristocratic sitters were wearing lace collars of the same pattern.

⁹ Details of these and other documents were presented in a paper given at a meeting of the Lace Group of the Centre International pour l'Étude des Textiles Anciens at the Rijksmuseum in April 1985 by Elena Parma of Genoa. I am most grateful to her for allowing me to quote some of her findings here.

¹⁰ Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. A 254. See also Levey, *op.cit.* (Note 2), Fig. 120.

¹¹ Marie Schuette, *Alte Spitzen*, Berlin 1914, p. 153, Fig. 118.

¹² Inv. no. 1937.

¹³ Jacques Savary des Bruslons, *Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce*, Amsterdam 1724, Vol. I, col. 1670.

¹⁴ Béatrix de Buffévent, 'L'Économie dentellière en région parisienne au XVIIe siècle', Société

historique et archéologique de Pontoise, du Val d'Oise et du Vexin, Pontoise 1984.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁶ Inv. nos. N.M. 5401, acquired in 1882, and N.M. 12233, acquired in 1911. The Nederlandsch Museum already had a fragment from this cloak on display in 1879, see the note by D. van der Kellen in *Eigen Haard* 1879, p. 153.

¹⁷ Hugo Cornets de Groot (1798–1838) was the son of Adriaen David Cornets de Groot (1768–1827), the son of Jan Cornets de Groot (1736–82), the son of Pieter Cornets de Groot (1684–1747), the son of Hugo Cornets de Groot (1658–1705), the son of Pieter de Groot, the son of Hugo de Groot.

¹⁸ H. C. Rogge, *Brieven van en aan Maria van Reigersberch*, Leiden 1902, p. 165, Letter XLIV: *Ick doen mijn man een gegraveert satijne kleedt maecken*. See also p. 167, Letter XLV, 8 October 1628: *ic hebbe hem over eenighe weecken een satijne kleedt doen maecken dat ghegraveert is*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191, Letter LIV: *Aengaende mijn mans mantel sal ic met pluyse doen voeren, ghelijck men die nu draght, met een klein boretege*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 246–7, Letter LXXVI: *Uwe kleeren hebbe ic van dage nevens een voor mijn man ghekogt. De kaffa kost verthien gulden en hebbe se niet minder connen krijgen, hebbe voor UE. ghedaen als voor mijn selve. Het waembais is meede van kaffa, van gelijcke is mijn mans*.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170, Letter XLVII: *mocht mij een klein monsterken van het passement zenden, om sulcken kleedt met twee passementen gheboordt toe te maecken*. It should be noted, however, that the word *passement* continued to be used later in the century for bobbin lace as well as braid or similar trimmings. Savary des Bruslons speaks of *dentelle ou passement* (*op.cit.*, Note 13, col. 1670).

²² Rogge, *op.cit.* (Note 18), p. 240, Letter LXXIV: *Wat de canten belangen ic hebbe cant aen Nicht Huygens ghesonden tot een talbert*.

²³ This appears in the sworn statement and is also mentioned in E. A. van Beresteyn, *Iconografie van Hugo Grotius*, The Hague 1929, p. 15.

²⁴ This portrait is in the Prinsenhof, Delft. There is a copy dated 1631 in the Rijksmuseum, Inv. no. A 581. See exhib. cat. *Het Delfts Orakel. Hugo de Groot 1583–1645*, Delft (Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof) 1983, p. 70.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 71 for a copy of this portrait in a private collection.

²⁶ Inv. no. 3404. See S. M. Levey, *op.cit.* (Note 2), Fig. 141A. See also *Livrustkammeren*, May 1968, p. 150, Fig. 18. I am indebted to Santina Levey for this reference.

²⁷ Inv. no. 3401. Gudrun Ekstrand, *Karl X Gustavus dräkter*, Kung. Livrustkammeren, Stockholm 1959, pp. 34–5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–5.

²⁹ J. H. Der Kinderen-Besier, *Spelevaart der Mode*, Amsterdam 1950: Rekeningboek van de inboedel van Johan de Witt en zijn vrouw Wendela Bicker (A. G. A. Archief de Graeff, Boedelpapieren Dossier IV; 3), p. 281: *1 swarte van de bruydegom's mantel met geel say gevoer 25,-*

1 geele satijne met swarte kante van de bruydegom's mantel kost same met de groene voering 100,-

³⁰ Knoester en Graafhuis, *op.cit.* (Note 6), p. 191.

³¹ The suit in question is the one embroidered in black silk, Inv. no. 3400. See G. Ekstrand, *op.cit.* (see Note 27), pp. 24–5.

³² It appears to have been known in the Dutch Republic as *dicht werk* or 'dense work', witness an advertisement of 17 March 1693 in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* relating to two missing boxes with 'all sorts of Brabant laces, and dense work, small and large flowers' (*alderhande soort van Brabandsche Kantten en dicht Werk, kleine en groote Bloemen*.) The inventory of Pierre Baillie of 1684 (Gemeentearchief, Amsterdam, Desolate Boedelkamer No. 388, f. 70r) also contains a reference to 'a black silk camlet skirt with a dense lace' (*een swarte syde camelotte rock met een dicte kant*.) I have made grateful use here of the invaluable notes left by Dr. Leonie van Nierop.

³³ De Buffévent, *op.cit.* (Note 14), p. 234.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248 and Note 313.

³⁵ Both of these are quoted in Levey, *op.cit.* (Note 2), p. 24 with Note 26. A reference is also given here to Sir Ralph Verney buying black silk lace on a visit to Brussels in 1652 (*ibid.* with Note 25).

³⁶ Cited in Mrs. Bury-Palliser, *History of Lace*, London 1865, p. 102, Note 15.

³⁷ Anne Kraatz, 'The inventory of a Venetian lace merchant in the year 1671', *Bulletin de liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens* 55–56 (1982), pp. 127–33. I am grateful to Anne Kraatz for providing me with a

photocopy of this and another article by her on French lace.

³⁸ M. Coppens, '«Au Magasin de Paris». Une boutique de modes à Anvers dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle,' *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art* 52 (1983), pp. 94 and 96.

³⁹ De Buffévent, *op.cit.* (Note 14), p. 248 and Note 314.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 248, Note 314 and p. 183, Note 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁴² Savary des Bruslons, *op.cit.* (Note 13), col. 1671.

⁴³ Export figures for lace in the second half of the 18th century are given, under *Speldewerk*, in Dr. Leonie van Nierop, 'Uit de Bakermat der Amsterdamsche Handelsstatistiek', *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 13 (1915), pp. 106–72, in the table given in *Bijlage B*, starting on p. 129.

⁴⁴ The inventory was discovered and is to be published by Drs. E. van de Wetering, who gave a brief account of it at the study day held by the Museums Textile Committee at the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam on 26 April 1985 and kindly gave me permission to quote him.

⁴⁵ J. G. van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van het bedrijfsleven en het gildewezen van Amsterdam*, Vol. III. 1633–72, The Hague 1974, p. 255, No. 490 and p. 526, No. 1028.

⁴⁶ For illustrations of the various types see Der Kinderen-Besier, *op.cit.* (Note 29), pp. 157–8 and elsewhere, and the separate charts in F. van Thienen, *Das Kostüm der Blütezeit Hollands, 1600–60*, Berlin 1930.

⁴⁷ S. F. Christensen, *De Danske Kongers Kronologiske Sammling Paa Rosenborg. Kongersdragerne fra 17. og 18. Aarhunderde*, Copenhagen 1940, Vol. 1, pp. 65–7.

⁴⁸ See J. Le Francq van Berkhey, *Natuurlycke Historie van Holland*, 1772, Vol. III, p. 599.

⁴⁹ Another clear example appears in Gabriel Metsu's earliest dated painting of 1645 in the Hermitage in Leningrad, showing a girl winding thread on to lace bobbins. See exhib. cat. *Gabriel Metsu*, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, 1966, No. 52, pp. 136–7.

⁵⁰ *op het hoofd een zwarte Tip met een zwarte pluimkant*. This reference again comes from Dr. Leonie van Nierop's notes.

⁵¹ Levey, *op.cit.* (Note 2), Fig. 235.

⁵² This fashion can also be seen in Gerard

Terborch's portrait of 1670 of François de Vicq (1646–1707) in the Rijksmuseum, Inv. no. A 2417.

⁵³ Quoted in Bury-Palliser, *op.cit.* (Note 36), p. 140.

⁵⁴ De Buffévent, *op.cit.* (Note 14), pp. 126–7.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to Santina Levey, Keeper of Textiles and Dress, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, who encouraged me to write this article in the first place and gave me her valuable assistance, and Toos de Klerk, President of the Dutch lace society, Het Kantsalet, who kindly made the drawings in Figs. 9b and 12b.