

## Conservation&restoration work in the Textile-Preparation Workshop in 2014/2015

The paper presents the conservation&restoration work carried out in the Textile Restoration&Preparation work in 2014 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> The material to be processed was singled out of the collections in agreement with the responsible curator; the decision on the treatment to be applied followed. After the analysis of the object, preparatory operations and actual treatment, the procedures were documented in reports<sup>2</sup> which the Workshop presented on posters at the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Restorer and Preparator Section of the Croatian Museum Society.<sup>3</sup>

### Conservation&restoration work on object inv. No. 21541

#### Object data

Collection:	Collection of National Costumes from the Croatian coast
Type : object:	man's trousers
Date:	first half of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century
Locality:	Babino Polje, island of Mljet
Dimensions:	187 by 70 cm
Material:	cotton, silk, Spanish broom

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- 1 Along with some restored objects, a large quantity of textile material from the Museum storerooms underwent preventive conservation.
  - 2 The reports on conservation-restoration operations were prepared by the staff members responsible for the treatment of specific item.
  - 3 The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Restorer and Preparator Section of the Croatian Museum Society was hosted on 13 and 14 May 2015 by the Split City Museum.

## Object description

The *vlaške gaće* (Vlach trousers) are of a simple cut, made of blue lining, rough home-made cotton cloth, decorated with a yellow silk braid on the legs and openings on the band in front and at the back. No data on the wearer or on the occasion have been found.

## Description before the start of work

The trousers were very damaged by wear and mending, and the colour is not uniform. A white haberdashery twill strip for tying the trousers round the waist was run through the band.

## Conservation&restoration work

Before the start of work, all rough yarn was removed along with the black thread used to close almost every damage, and the braids were taken off. The object was wet-cleaned in a neutral detergent and distilled water solution, and placed on a flat base for drying. The same procedure was repeated for the silver braids. After relaxing the cloth, dyed cotton cloth was laid under each damage and closed with silk thread using the restorer stitch. A new waist string (*smička*) was knitted, using Spanish broom because a broom fragment was found when the band was unstitched, suggesting the conclusion that the original *smička* was made of that material. After restoration the trousers were placed in an acid-free box of the required dimensions and restored to the respective collection (Fig. 1-3/p. 195).

Procedure carried out by Jasminka Vujičić, senior conservator

## Conservation&Restoration work on small *Holubinka* Cap, Inv. No. Bk 777

### Object data

Collection:	Collection of national costumes of the Croatian diaspora
Type of object:	small cap
Name (dialect)	holubinka
Date:	16 <sup>th</sup> century
Locality:	Moravia
Material:	flax
Technique:	woven, embroidered
Ornament:	floral

Information related to the cap can be found in the Catalogue of the Croatian Ethnographic Collection of the Trade and Crafts Museum in Zagreb, written by the outstanding textile connoisseur Jelica Belović Bernardikowska.

“No. 14: *Holubinka* from the regions of the Moravian Croats and Slovaks. This 16<sup>th</sup> century cap was the property of the family of the Countess Ghika, and has remained in the family until today when, Mrs Schauer von Schroekenfeld of Zagreb, Countess Helena Ghika, donated it to this Museum through Mr. Berger, imperial purveyor and renowned expert” (Belović Bernardikowska 1908: 40). Further on she describes the cap as a valuable object distinguished by outstanding quality of the embroidery and lace.

### Object description

The woman’s cap was made of two layers of thin, undyed linen and very thin undyed flax lace. The thread density of the linen warp and woof on the face of the cap is 59 threads/1 cm, and on the reverse 29 threads/1 cm.

The cap was tailored in three pieces: two front pieces of equal dimensions (17 cm long by 8.5 cm wide), joined at the top, and the crown (15 cm high by 16 cm wide). The linen of the cap was embroidered throughout with the pique technique (backstitching through the incorporated band), complemented with white embroidery (hem stitch and knotted stitch).<sup>4</sup> The knotted stitch was detected only after microscopic (Dino-line) examination (200x magnification). The front of the cap (63 long by 5 cm wide) is trimmed with bobbin lace with a narrower bobbin lace band (63 cm long by 0.6 cm wide) on top.

The technique of backstitching with an incorporated ribbon is a variant of backstitching in which two fabric layers are stitched together. The pattern consists of two narrow stitch lines, and a band is inserted between them to raise the pattern to the surface. The top fabric layer needs to be thin, but thickly woven, while the bottom layer must be thin, but rarely woven because the band is drawn through it. The backstitching was used on white linen with different kinds of whitework embroidery. The pique stitch was used in Italy in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries for making coverlets, curtains and drapes. A similar technique was used until recently in making caps in the Czech Republic.<sup>5</sup>

Hem stitching is a decorative drawn thread work: the threads of the fabric are wound and tightened with spaced stitches producing decorative holes on the fabric. The finest, lace-like embroidery is obtained in this way. As a rule, it is done by whitework on white linen (acc. to Brittain 1980: 274).

The knotted stitch is made by knotting the thread around itself and fixing the knot by a stitch. It is used as a relief stitch for covering large linen surfaces; sometimes it fills the motif thickly or serves for the final decorative outline (Brittain 1980: 251).

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4 I would like to thank my fellow colleague Marena Kurlin, curator, Head of the Lace Collection, for her help in determining the stitching techniques.

5 Acc. to [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20776/20776-h/chapter\\_15.html](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20776/20776-h/chapter_15.html). (22.4.2015.).

Bobbin lace is made by weaving threads held on an even number of wooden bobbins, and pinning them on top of narrower or wider patterns. pinned to a pillow and filling the given motif (acc. to Eckhel 2012: 82).

### Condition before the operation

Considering the date, the cap was in a good condition with no visible dirt. The damage on the cap is due to mechanical action; warp or woof threads are missing here and there on the basic fabric, and a triangular lace edge (4.5 by 3 cm) is missing on the left side of the cap.

### Restoration work

The object was photographed and the fabric analysed structurally before actual restoration. The object was dry-cleaned with a restoration vacuum cleaner. Prior interventions on the lace were removed, and the lace was relaxed. It was laid on Melinex foil, covered with Sympatex and a moistened blotter, and closed with Melinex foil. The object obtained a small quantity of moisture through the perforations on Sympatex, and was suitable for levelling. After levelling, the threads were covered with Melinex foil and loaded with prochrome weights for drying. Although the cap was made of linen, because of the extremely fine linen and embroidery the damage of the embroidery was padded with crepeline silk and (restoration) backstitched with silk filament. The damage on the lace was padded with thin tulle and also backstitched (restoration stitch) with silk filament. Part of the missing lace was replaced with tulle straight-stitched to the lace with silk filament.

For storage purposes the cap was filled with a small pillow of adequate dimensions, lined with silk. The cap was lined with Tyvek foil and stored in an acid-free box (Fig. 4-6/p. 196).

Procedure carried out by Ljiljana Vilus Japec, senior conservator

## Conservation&Restoration work on a Scarf, Inv. No. 6283

### Object data

Collection:	Collection of national costumes of north-western Croatia
Object name:	scarf (dialect: <i>rubec</i> )
Date:	early 20 <sup>th</sup> century
Locality:	Brezovica, Zagreb
Technique:	woven
Ornament:	floral
Dimensions:	75 by 76.5 cm + 15 cm tassels

**Object description:**

The head scarf (*rubec*) is part of the collection of national costumes of north-western Croatia. It dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and comes from Brezovica. It is made of red silk atlas with a warp and woof thread density of 33/cm and 43/cm, respectively. At the edges there are brocade flower bunches and green, violet and yellow silk flowers interwoven with gold wire. At the rim there are silk thread tassels of the same colours as the bunches and flowers. Dimensions: 75 by 76.5 cm + 15 cm tassels.

**Description of as-found condition**

The condition of the scarf is rather poor. There is visible mechanical damage in the form of smaller holes and cracks due to fibre weakening.

The silk bunches and flowers are preserved well and will require some small interventions. Several yellow threads interwoven with gold wire on the bunches and flowers came off the basic fabric because of the lack of a thread system. The tassels round the scarf are partly separated from the main fabric.

**Conservation&restoration work**

- Preparatory operations
- photographing of the object (Fig. 7/p. 197)
- description of the object and of the damage
- structural analysis of the basic fabric
- structural analysis of the basic fabric threads
- structural analysis of the tassels
- dying of crepe-line for object lining

**Mechanical cleaning and relaxing**

Because of the brittleness of the fabric the object was dry-cleaned with a restoration vacuum cleaner, then relaxed and left to dry under glass loads. Closing of damage by restoration stitch

The scarf was lined with crepe-line silk dyed as required, and the damage was closed by restoration stitches with silk filament. The damage on the bunches and flowers was treated the same way. The tassels partly separated from the scarf were attached to the scarf with silk filament (Fig. 8-9/p. 197).

## Storage

After conservation&restoration the scarf was wound on a roller lined with acid-free protective Avos foil, and removed to the storeroom of the collection of national costumes of north-western Croatia.

Procedure carried out by Marijana Najjar, senior conservator

## Conservation-Restoration work on silk fragments Inv. No. 13775A 1-2

### Object data

Collection:	World Culture Collection
Object name:	silk fragments
Date:	n/a
Locality:	China, Japan
Material:	silk, Indian ink
Ornament:	calligraphy
Dimensions:	fragment 1: 26 cm by 22.5 cm fragment 2 : 220.5 cm by 23 cm

### Object description

Object Inv. No. 1377e 1-2 in the World Culture Collection consists of two silk fragments, dimensions 26 x 22. cm (fragment 1) and 20.5 x 23 cm (fragment 2). The material is natural colour silk with a calligraphic text. According to Tomislav Mikuljan from the Culture Dept. of the Japanese Embassy in Croatia, the inscriptions are in kanbun.<sup>6</sup>

The fragments were donated by Zlata Kranjčić, niece of Milka Trnina,<sup>7</sup> a few months after Trnina's death on 11 September 1914. The objects were part of the singer's estate. "These are four fragments of woven silk fabric from China or Japan, and one woven fabric fragment from India. The last object from Trnina's estate was purchased on 6 February 1954 from Zdenka Balog, whose family inherited one-sixth of Trnina's estate" (Santo 2013/2014: 248).

The objects under inventory number 13775 a-e include five fabric ensembles the fragments of which were reconstructed and applied to kraft paper. On arrival at the Museum they were in a very poor condition, requiring conservation&restoration work on all the ensembles of the above inventory number.

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6 Japanese hieroglyphic script used until the 19th century.

7 "In 1930 Milka Trnina donated to the Museum thirty-odd objects from China, Japan and India. Trnina received these exceptionally valuable objects from William Sturgis Bigelow, famous Boston collector of Japanese and Chinese art who visited Japan in the late 19th century. His collection of 26,000 Japanese and Chinese objects is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts" (Santo 21013/2014: 239).

### **Description of as-found condition**

The condition of silk fragment 1 is relatively good and does not require major interventions other than cleaning and consolidation on a new base. The condition of silk fragment 2 is very poor, and it was applied on kraft paper inside out. The basic fabric is mechanically very damaged and a considerable part is missing, meaning that the text also suffered damage. The dirt visible on the fragments is the result of unfavourable microclimatic conditions in the Museum storeroom.

### **Preparing documentation**

The silk fragments were photographed before, during and after the work; the fabric and the damage on the fabric were photographed with a Dino lite digital microscope (Fig. 10-12/p. 198-199). The fibres and the fabric were also analysed structurally.

### **Cleaning of the object**

After testing the stability of the dye used for the calligraphic text on the silk, the object was wet-cleaned in a neutral Restore Detergent and distilled water solution. The fragments were placed in a tulle sandwich and wet-cleaned on a linen lined frame in order to avoid damage during the procedure. After wet-cleaning and drying the fragments were relaxed, after which they were ready for the next stage of the operation.

### **Consolidation**

In addition to the consolidation of the object by pasting to a new base, the damaged parts were also closed with restorer-stitched silk filament exclusively on parts with no calligraphy.

### **Storage**

After the operation the object was placed in an acid-free cardboard portfolio and stored in the World Culture Collection storeroom.

Procedure carried out by Mihaela Grčević, restorer.

### **REFERENCES**

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