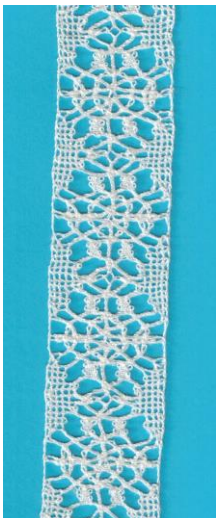
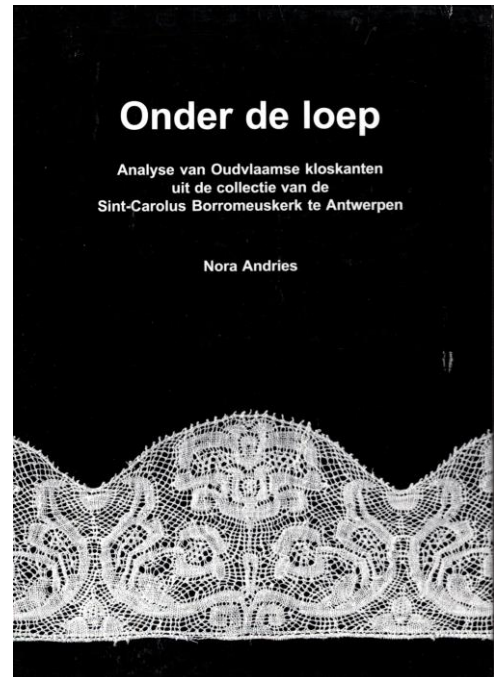


## Onder de loep

Nora Andries

*Onder de loep* is brief history of a lace collection as well as a well selected group of reproduced prickings from that collection. The history begins in the 1960s with Vatican II which caused major changes to liturgical practices. As a consequence of this many churches in Belgium either dispersed or discarded their textile collections, including the old lace. In Antwerp, the Reverend F. Huybrechts of Saint Carolus Borromeus church chose a different path and tried to maintain the churches artwork as well as the textiles and lace.

Early bobbin lace is difficult to trace. We know that lace was initially a commercial enterprise. Lace has been valued as much as precious metals or diamonds at times. It was affordable to those with a lot of money which in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries meant the nobility, the rising merchants, and the church.



Most of the details about the lace trade do not exist. We know that bobbin lace came into Flanders through Italy and possibly Switzerland where lace designs had been published. Once it did start in Flanders, it did become an important center of learning for making lace. For example we know that Françoise Bader came to Antwerp to learn in 1640 so she could return to Valenciennes to introduce good lace making practices. However, the details of the design evolution are not documented. It is possible that they would try not to share ideas to limit competition in this lucrative industry.

In some sense, delving into this collection is somewhat like an archeological expedition. You can see the evolution of lace in these examples. The initial laces are based on braids. From there the tapes grow, and as time continues in the examples, more modern features can be seen. The example on the left is interesting since it is mostly braids, yet these side triangles are reminiscent of Torchon. This is one

step beyond the earliest laces.

The example on the right dates to just before the invention of early Binche. The picots are modern. It still has a few braids in it since they haven't quite discovered grounds, yet the fillings in the motifs include some primitive snowflakes that are a little strange to work. There are other elements that can be found in some modern laces. When the footside doesn't connect for a while, it uses what we would call a rib which is used in Duchesse and Withof in modern laces. There is also a triangular cloth stitch ground in a ball that you would find in s'Gravenmoerse lace.



The instructions are well documented. The diagrams show clear thread paths. However, given the number of differences in how they are constructed, e.g. the number of twists may differ from modern usage, this may be something for someone who has mastered rudimentary skills and is comfortable with diagrams. The text is in English, Dutch, and German.

Sharon Sacco