

An embroidered drawstring purse

Made by Nicole d'Anjou (Karin Rappe)

Description of Item

The item is a drawstring purse that is 14 cm wide and 18 cm high. It is green on one side and red on the other. It has a woven band for hanging it in and two drawstrings for closing. It is embroidered with a pair of shears on both sides.

Description of Materials Used

The made of wool fabric and lined with thin wool. All seams have been made with waxed linnen thread. The embroidery, weaving and drawstrings are all made of wool yarn of varying thickness and colour.

Description of Manufacturing Process

The embroidery

The outside of the purse was cut from thick green and red wool. I had printed the pair of shears in an appropriate size on paper. The paper was pinned to the wool and the outlines of the pair of shears was transfered to the fabric by means of drawing along the lines with a pencil. The pencil would go through the paper and draw on the wool.



The two pairs of shears was then embroidered using satin stitch and outlined with backstitch.



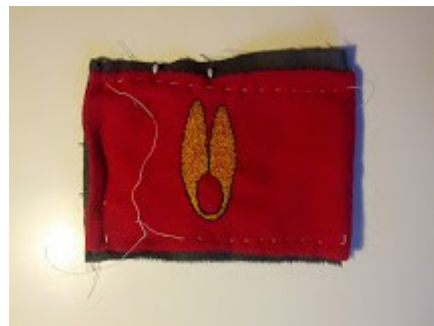
The red and the green sides were then sewn together at the bottom using backstitch and the seams were felled.

Lining

To protect the embroidery the purse is lined. That way things put into the purse will not pull the threads of the embroidery. The lining is made of thin dark green wool. I cut it the same size as the combined piece of thick wool and sewed it together at the top on each side with a waxed linnen thread using backstitch and then felled the seams.

Weaving it together

The purse was then turned right and the sides were tacked together.



For the weaving 8 threads of red yarn and 7 of green, 1,60 m each was used. The weaving was done using a rigid heddle. First one side was woven together, then it continued into a ribbon for about 50 cm and then down the other side of the purse. The weaving was finished by tying each end of the weaving into a tassel at the bottom of the purse.



Closing

The closing of the purse was made by making 6 holes of each side along the top of the purse. Each one was sewed like common lacing holes with waxed linnen thread. Through these holes I laced two whip cords made from green wool. At the four ends of these cords black stoneware pearls, that a friend made for me, was put. Two pearls for closing were also added.



Historical finds

Simple drawstring purses can be found throughout the whole medieval period. (1, 2) All of the purses that can be found in museums and mentioned in literature are made from linnen, silk or velvet with silk and metal embroidery. (2,3)

The embroidery techniques used in the preserved purses include many of the known techniques, but a common one seems to have been satin stitch combined with outline stitch.

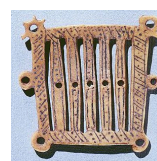
The purses are commonly decorated with tassels and are closed with some kind of string or strings.

There are simpler purses shown in paintings and in books, for example the purses in the picture to the right from Code Manesse. (6)



Many purses have simply been sewn together, but some have been woven together. The weaving have in some cases been done with tablet weaving, but in some cases it could have been done with a rigid hedge which is a simpler and faster technique.

(4) Small rigid heddles have been found that could have been used for weaving edges but also for weaving together a purse like this. (5)



How and why have I deviated from the finds

I have used wool for everything except three seams. None of the preserved pouches was made using wool, but these purses, and the ones mentioned in literature were made for wealthy women. They were an item to show off. The purses shown in the paintings, for example the ones in the picture above are much simpler. They could very well have been made from wool. I think it could be plausible for a woman who was not very wealthy and needed a purse for every day use, to have made it in wool.

Bibliography

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Embellished textile purses in the French 14th century
Tasha Dandelion Kelly
<http://cottesimple.com/articles/aumonieres/>
3. Embroidered purses in the Metropolitan Museum of Art
[http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections?
&where=France&what=Embroidery&ft=*&when=A.D.+1000-1400&pg=1](http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections?&where=France&what=Embroidery&ft=*&when=A.D.+1000-1400&pg=1)
4. According to Åsa Vävare pouches has been found with sides woven together in a fashion that could be done either by tablet weaving or rigid hedge weaving.
5. A rigid heddle found in Väskinde kyrka, Gotland
<http://mis.historiska.se/mis/sok/fid.asp?fid=120034&g=1>
6. Codex Manesse, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 848