

The Fashion Archaeologist

Free PDF Pattern #FP-08 – 1901 Embroidered Reticule

This pattern is offered free of charge to give you an opportunity to try PDF printing and assembly before purchasing a full-size pattern. The pattern and translated instructions are copyright, for your personal use, not to be copied, re-sold, or used for commercial garment production purposes.

Below is some information to help with constructing the patterned item, including a copy of the original French sketch and text, as well as my translation.

General Guidelines:

- These PDF patterns are not “full service” patterns, they are taken directly from the antique pattern sheets as free trial patterns. They do **not** include seam allowances – you will need to add your own allowances appropriate to the fabric and item type. The lines shown are the seam lines only.
- On some patterns, the garment or item pieces may be superimposed, to make the best use of the relatively small space on the scan. Where this is so, you will need to trace off the pattern pieces separately after printing the PDF pattern out on paper. Pieces are marked with the original Figure numbers, to match the antique French text.
- Some lines on these patterns may need to be “trued up” slightly before cutting out. Also, the antique sizing may not be what you might expect -- allow for this when cutting out. It’s always best to make a mock-up out of inexpensive fabric before cutting the pattern from your fashion fabric.
- Other than translations of any existing antique sewing instructions, you may need to work out the order of construction and sewing methods on your own. Bear in mind that some patterns may only need to be cut once; others may have to be cut twice. This may not always be clear from the antique text.
- Pay careful attention to any letters or numbers marked at corners, etc. on the patterns – these show which edges are to be matched up when sewing, or they will relate to something mentioned in the antique text.
- Watch for additional notations on the patterns themselves which will assist in construction or finishing.

Notes for This Pattern:

This pattern is for a dainty Edwardian embroidered reticule, appropriate for dressy or evening use. If you intend to make this as a washable item, be sure to pre-shrink ALL the fabrics and trimmings that go into it. The antique text called for black silk *armurée* (a type of weave similar to serge), but any other silk, such as silk twill, lightweight taffeta or faille, that will support embroidery could be used. The “embroidery” is actually done by appliqué of a fine lace-making ribbon. Battenberg lace ribbon would be a reasonable substitute, or even silk ribbon. Alternatively, lace motifs (from lace yardage) could be cut out and appliquéd to the surface in any design you choose.

The French instructions give details of the lace-making process – I have not translated these portions of the text, as few people these days are expert in antique lace-making. A copy of the lace/ribbon design is included on the last page for those interested. Otherwise, simply follow the design given on the paper pattern using whatever type of ribbon you choose.

Following are my notes on the actual construction, based on the original French text:

- 1) This bag is made of black silk, lined in coloured silk [satin would look best]. The body of the bag is cut twice from the outside fabric and twice for the lining from Figure 103 (remember to leave sufficient seam allowances around all edges).
- 2) Figure 102 represents the base (bottom) of the bag – cut this once from the fashion fabric, once from the lining fabric, and once from cardboard or other stiff material (this is to keep the shape of the bag). Also cut Fig. 102 once from a padding material such as lightweight quilt batting. Leave additional for seam allowances, but cut the cardboard and batting exactly to the outlines of Fig. 102.

- 3) The embroidery should be done on the face of the fashion fabric first, before constructing the bag.
- 4) For the frill, cut **two** lengths of the fashion fabric, on the straight grain, each 5cm wide (2"). [NOTE: You will need, at a minimum, one length of about 1.0m (1-1/4 yds) and another of about 0.7m (7/8th yd), but cut extra to be sure you'll have enough). Fold this long band lengthwise so that the finished width is 2.5cm (1 inch). Run a line of gathering stitching along the long raw edge of each band, and adjust the gathers evenly to form two frills.
- 5) To prepare the bag and frill:
 - a) With right sides together, pin the long raw edge of the longer frill onto one bag piece (Fig. 103), from "A" (on Fig. 103) all around the outside edge to "B" on the other side, but not across the bottom – it doesn't matter which bag piece you choose. Baste frill in place, just inside the seamline.
 - b) On the remaining bag piece (Fig. 103), with right sides together pin the raw edge of the shorter frill only around the upper curved edge of this piece, from "C" to "D" indicated on the paper pattern, tapering the frill out to nothing at each end. Baste in place.
 - c) **Prepare the base (Fig. 102):** Place the Fig. 102 piece cut from the fashion fabric face down on a flat surface. Place the cardboard on top, leaving the seam allowances free. Next, place the batting, then lay the lining piece cut from Fig. 102 on top, with its right side facing up. Baste around the contours along the seamline, through the lining and fashion fabric, encasing the cardboard and batting.
 - d) With right sides together, lay each lining section onto each bag piece (Fig. 103) all around the outside edges, from "A" to "B" (but **not** across the bottom), and pin. Stitch each bag piece along the seamline (but not across the bottom), through the raw edge of silk, frill, and lining. Be careful not to catch the frill itself into this stitching. [NOTE: If you prefer, you can attach the lining by invisibly hand slip-stitching].
 - e) To join the two halves of the bag, with the lined surfaces facing inward, invisibly but securely slip-stitch the two halves together from "A" to "C" on the one side, and from "B" to "D" on the other.
- 6) To make the casing (for the cord handles):
 - a) For the casing, cut a straight-grain strip of fashion fabric, 1.5cm wide (plus allowances, so 2.5cm wide in total [1 inch wide]), and long enough, plus an extra 10cm (4"), to go around the bag, with an overlap for finishing.
 - b) Press the two long edges of the strip to the wrong side by 0.5cm (about 1/4"). Pin the casing strip, with its wrong side onto the right side (outside) of the bag, at an even 14cm (5-1/2") from the bottom of the bag, tucking and trimming the ends as neatly and invisibly as possible. [NOTE: Whether 14cm is exactly the right height from the bottom or not, the casing strip must be no higher on the bag than the top of the joining seam between the two halves of the bag. Otherwise the effect of the design will not work. Move the positioning of the strip down slightly if necessary.]
 - c) Using a short machine stitch (or by hand), neatly stitch the casing strip in place along each of its long edges, through all thicknesses. [NOTE: This is best done with a free-arm sewing machine; otherwise stitch the casing strip onto the bag by hand, using neat, small back-stitches.
- 7) To assemble the bag:
 - a) Turn the bag inside-out (lining side out), and with right sides together, pin its bottom edge around the base section, matching raw edges and pinning through all layers of bag and base, along the seamline. Note that the positioning of the bag's bottom edge on the base is important – the two side joining seams should be placed at the two ends of the base.

- b) Using a hand back-stitch, stitch all around the seamline to secure the bag to the base (it is recommended that this stitching be done by hand, for better control). Hand-overcast over the raw edges of the seam allowances. Turn the bag to the outside.
- c) To make the “handles”, cut two long decorative cords, pass them through the casing strip and tie each one in a long bow at the end.

The above instructions are extrapolated from the French text, i.e. not a verbatim translation (which, with its descriptions of lace-making, would have made little sense to most users today). I’ve also included explanatory information not given in the 1901 instructions. For reference, the original French text and sketch are below, as well as the detailed sketch of the lace (for anyone wishing to try making it).

Original (1901) French text:

Le sac, fait en soie armurée noire, doublé d'une soie de couleur, est orné d'une broderie exécutée en lacet de Luxeuil crème (voir la gravure représentant une partie du travail en grandeur naturelle). On l'exécute en assemblant deux morceaux de soie; on maintient le fond au moyen d'une rondelle de carton.

On taille en carton et en soies noire et de couleur, un morceau d'après la figure 102; on en coupe, en outre, en soies noire et de couleur, deux morceaux d'après la figure 103; on reporte sur la soie noire le dessin d'après la figure 104, puis on y applique les lacets en les cousant avec de la soie fine. On emploie, pour les fleurs, des motifs séparés de lacet médaillon ajouré; on masque les jonctions des médaillons en les brodant au bord intérieur, avec des points biaisés très serrés en soie blanche, au bord supérieur avec des points de chaînette. On remplit le centre des fleurs avec des points noués exécutés en cordonet, et l'on brode la tige au point plat très étroit avec la même soie. On applique sur les petites feuilles du lacet étroit, sur les cercles du lacet plus large: on encadre les petits motifs horizontaux au point de tige et on les remplit au point noté (voir la gravure représentant le détail du travail). Ensuite, on double les morceaux en cousant en même temps, un volant double de soie noire, ayant 2 centimètres $\frac{1}{2}$ de largeur, bordant un des morceaux tout autour, sauf au bord inférieur, et l'autre seulement le long du contour supérieur. On assemble les deux morceaux sur l'envers au moyen de points de surjet et on les monte sur le fond de carton recouvert de soie, posée sur une couche de ouate. On munit le sac d'une coulisse ayant 1 centimètre $\frac{1}{2}$ de largeur et posée à 14 centimètres de hauteur, à travers laquelle on passe des cordelières croisées, terminées aux extrémités par deux longues boucles.

1901 Fashion Sketch



Completed Reticule



Detail of lace (or ribbon) design.