

A journey into French woven cloth

TEXT TINA IGNELL PHOTO BENGT ARNE IGNELL

ULLA CYRUS-ZETTERSTRÖM has an Honorary Doctorate and is a textile engineer. For over 30 years she was in charge of the Wäfskolan (Weaving School) in Borås. She made the design for and constructed a loom. For many years, she was a member of C.I.E.T.A. *, where her knowledge of French, acquired in childhood, made it possible for her to go to the lectures and then convey her knowledge. She learnt Chinese and, in 1995, published a French-English-Swedish-Chinese textile terminology. The author of many books, she turns 100 this year.

KERSTIN LOVALLIUS does a lot of weaving and enjoys experimentation. She designed the Professional Weaver training in Upplands-Väsby, where weavers could learn many of the techniques we were to be looking at that day. She too has spent time in France and taught French people silkdamask drawloom weaving.

MARIANA ERIKSSON, weave tutor, also weaves a lot and especially likes trying out new materials. For many years, she taught on the textile teacher training course at Uppsala. She and Professor Margareta Nockert saw to it that Textile Science became a research subject at Uppsala University.

Kerstin Lovallius and Mariana Eriksson have co-authored several books on drafting theory, often with a personal approach, inspiring an eagerness to try out interesting materials in new ways and areas of usage. Their books contain many of the weaves we refer to or show here**.

TIME FOR OUR SESSION with these doyennes of weaving:

Laid out in front of us were pictures of French cloths, which we photographed at *Manufacture Prelle* in Lyon. Recently made and machine woven. What we were homing in on were the weave structures. A lampas woven, say, during the 16th century on a drawloom, during the 19th century on a Jacquard, can now be woven on computerized machinery.

Ulla Cyrus-Zetterström came prepared with a magnifying glass and notepaper.

The first cloth we looked at is cerise with white pattern. It had been labelled 06401 Lampas Moiré Duchesse.

Ulla Cyrus-Zetterström queried the name, which to her did not fit.

– This is not a lampas, there are no stitching ends in the float areas, which there should be. This is a liseré, she pronounced emphatically and went on. You see the warp in the darker shade. In the ground weft, you can see the white that floats for the liseré and produces the white patterning. When it becomes part of the ground, it makes the cloth look pink. We all had a look and, indeed, could see what Ulla so clearly and informatively had explained.

Anders Berch, 1711-1774, professor of economic sciences. Collector, including swatches from Europe, India and China in order to show his students the making of a product.



All the woven cloth comes from *Manufacture Prelle*:

Commercial name, *Lampas*. Ulla Cyrus-Zetterström's analysis showed it was correctly termed *repp with liseré*, 55% silk, 45% cotton. Below, Ulla Cyrus-Zetterström absorbed in analysis.

On return to the editorial office, I sent a query over to *Manufacture Prelle*, in the light of Ulla's comments. The answer was: *Certainly, Ulla Cyrus-Zetterström is right, it is a liseré, woven in repp. The cloth was called Lampas several decades ago, so it is what is known as a commercial name. It has become so well established that it would not be possible to change it.*

When Ulla was told of the reply, she was not that surprised, as she has seen this happen before. Cloths get given commercial names instead of the technically correct term.

– Yes it is quite clearly a repp, she commented, being one of the main structures used for moiré.

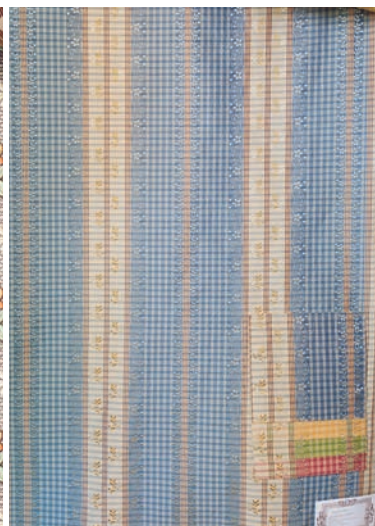
ULLA CYRUS-ZETTERSTRÖM has an impressive record when it comes to weave analysis. She told us it began after she became a pensioner, which is when she had the time.

The weavings in the Royal Armoury and the Swedish Army Museum have been subjected to her eagle eye. The book, *18th century textiles – the Anders Berch collection* at the Nordiska Museet, contains analyses of all the samples along with a very helpful chapter on woven textile construction.

Ulla had a warm and hearty chuckle about those held attitudes in Sweden, questioning why we might need to learn what lampas is, for example.

– And we only have all these fantastic cloths in our museums.

The book, *18th century textiles – the Anders Berch collection* at the Nordiska Museet. Edited by Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark



Top, **Brocatelle** in linen and silk
 Below left, **Droguet**, 100% silk
 Below right, **Mexicaine**, 69% viscose, 20% silk, 11% cotton

Multi-coloured effects from the weft changes, **latté**, Face and reverse.
 Below left, **Hélène Verzier**, Manufacture Prelle, showing the reverse of a **lampas broché**, machine woven. The pattern floats get trimmed away.
 Below right, **Lampas broché**, machine woven.

NEXT UP was a *Mexicaine*, a striped cloth with small decorative floral arabesques. The ground is plain weave.

FOLLOWING ON WAS A *Brocatelle* (67% linen and 33% silk).

– Now this is a typical brocatelle, was Ulla's immediate response. It belongs to the lampas group, but is woven, so to say, the other way round. The grey pattern is in silk, a satin weave, while the ground weft is a thicker linen stitched down in a twill. This combination produces the raised puffy effect in the pattern, she explained.

Then we came to *lampas broché*, machine woven in this case. The pattern weft travels from side to side, i.e. thrown. Woven by hand, the pattern would have been inlaid, brocaded, see pages 30, 31.

– Lampas was a popular weave during the Renaissance, said Ulla, woven of course at that time on a drawloom, known as a 'simple'.

Later it was woven on Jacquards, when they arrived in the 19th century. In principle, though, there is little difference to be seen between the two modes of production.

Compared to damask, lampas allowed the use of more shades in the weave and the patterning was more distinct.

A few more pictures were examined, including a *damask* and a *droguet*, both included in the glossary alongside.

We now had something to take with us, somewhat the wiser, on our journey through French fabrics. ■

Two of the books on drafting theory are available through **The Bookshelf, p 72.

GLOSSARY

- SILK** Thread or cloth
- BROCADE** Originally a damask, with certain details inlaid in silver and gold. The term is more widely applied.
- DAMASK** Based on patterning with weft- and warp-faced effects
- LAMPAS** Patterned cloth in which pattern wefts are stitched down with a stitching warp.
- LISERÉ** Created with weft floats. When the pattern weft is not floating, it is incorporated into the ground weave (common in the 18th century).
- DROGUET** Small pattern repeats, can have both warp and weft floats.
- LATTÉ** When, for example, a pattern is produced with three shades, two can remain the same throughout, while the third changes to enrich the design, see the picture above.
- MOIRÉ** Patterning effect produced by rollers, for example, often on repp, see p. 14 and 22.

Sources: Books: 18th century textiles – the Anders Berch collection at the Nordiska Museet + Warp and Weft: Eriksson, Gustavsson, Lovallius
 Facts from the interview outlined here.

* C.I.E.T.A, CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ETUDE DES TEXTILES ANCIENS
 International organisation established in 1954 to develop a standard methods and common language for historical textiles. Based in Lyon, France. www.cieta.fr. Two official languages, French and English.