

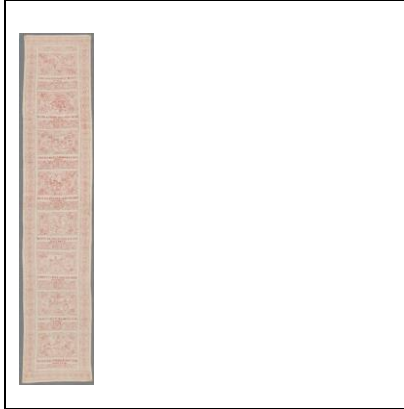
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## Title of Object

Table cover

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## Photo of Object (optional)



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## Object Information

**Artist:** Unknown

**Culture:** Danish

**Date of Object:** c.1650

**Country:** Denmark

**Accession Number:** 2015.71

**File Created:** 10/18/2016

**Material/Medium:** Linen plain weave, silk embroidery

**Author of File:** Cathie Wemlinger

**Department:** Decorative Arts, Textiles and Sculpture

**Reviewer of File:** Kara ZumBahlen

**Last Updated/Reviewed:** 2/23/2017

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## Tour Topics

Group 2, Highlights 1600-1850, Ceremonies and Celebrations, Bringing People Together, celebration, food and drink, Christianity, Lutheran, symbolism, bible, writing, religious, family, spirituality, stories, redwork embroidery, craft, biblical stories, flowers

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## Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. Take time to look at the table cover in its entirety.  
What do you notice about the work?
2. What purpose or purposes do you think the table cover served?
3. What do we put on our tables today for special occasions?

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### **Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)**

This (almost 15 foot) table cover is embroidered in a monochrome style known as redwork, which was typical in early modern Danish needlework. In fact, this red monochrome style persists in traditional Danish embroidery practices today.

This white linen ground with red silk embroidery; openwork border design with floral motifs; eight central vertical rectangular panels depict scenes from the life of Christ: 1. Annunciation, 2. Nativity, 3. Circumcision, 4. Epiphany, 5. Baptism, 6. Temptation, 7. Crucifixion and 8. Resurrection.

Each of these panels is in a ovoid frame with scrolls with flowers and fruit in the corners; text in satin stitch below each image; images separated by rectangular blocks with scrolling flowers and female heads and torsos flanking a wreath with monogram; running stitch overall except text. The textual insertions and visual elements were derived from contemporary religious texts. The scenes are paired with quotations copied from the Danish Lutheran Bible, issued by King Frederik II of Denmark in 1589. The oval medallions that surround each of the embroidered scenes are also copied from the same bible.

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### **Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)**

It would have covered a long table set for large gatherings, either on a religious feast day or for other celebrations when a cleric would have officiated, such as a birth or marriage.

The table cover illustrates Luther's moderate stance on iconography. Luther and many of his followers believed that images were not only benign but could be extremely useful in encouraging the comprehension and even remembrance of important concepts.

The pairing of religious imagery and text in this table cover give some indication of how this moderate approach to images impacted the lived experiences of Danish Lutherans.

Though a group of embroidered table covers like this one are represented in several Danish museums, no comparable examples are known in the U.S., making it not just a unique addition to Mia's textile collection, but an important acquisition at the national level.

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### **Current Mia Label Information (optional)**

This table cover features redwork embroidery, a Scandinavian textile tradition still alive today. It is decorated with scenes from the life of Jesus, beginning with the Annunciation (when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive Jesus) and concluding with his crucifixion and resurrection. The scenes are paired with quotations copied from the Danish Lutheran Bible, issued by King Frederik II of Denmark in 1589. The religious theme would have suited the contexts in which the table cover was used. It would have covered a long table set for a large gathering, either on a religious feast day or in celebration of a birth or marriage.

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## Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

Mia website: <https://collections.artsmia.org/art/122957/table-cover-denmark>

Mia library

Information from the Department of Decorative Arts, Textiles and Sculpture: Accessions Proposal Document