

The 15th Century Archer:

Civilian and Military Life Material Culture from the Skin Out
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www.historiclife.com



Introduction

The focus of this 15th century impression is an English longbowman during the War of the Roses specifically during the conflicts in 1471. This document will explore extant examples, historical documents, and artwork from the target era to show what kind of gear an archer would have while in military service and while living his normal life. This paper is divided into two parts the first being on military gear like maille, helmets, jacks, archer bracers, and arrow bags. The second section focuses on the clothing an archer would own.

Impressions

The items in this paper are for a portrayal of a Yeoman archer of a lord's household. The clothing that is made for a middle class man not a man of wealth; for instance an archer would wear a simple acorn hat instead of a lord's chaperon and the gowns are of common and easy to get colors instead of a dark green, crimson red or black. The red doublet is dirty from having a maille shirt and jack over it most of the time it is worn.

Life of a Soldier

Until the 17th century England did not keep a standing national army; archers in this time period were either recruited from town levies though the commissioner of arrays or were indentured servants serving in a lord's retinue. The "Commission of Arrays" is the term used in English law where any able bodied man between the ages of 16 and 60 could be forced into serving in a military campaign; this law was the model for later militia laws and the modern draft. Local lords served as the "Commissioner of Arrays" and in a time of war sent men ahead of them to announce when they would be in a town recruiting for the army; the pay for an archer was so much better than the normal income of the average man that there was never a problem recruiting men into the army.

English archers were considered some of the roughest men alive at this time in history. A great many foreign writers wrote about the arrogance and ferocity of the English soldiers.

A Spanish chronicler described English veterans of the War of the Roses serving under Earl Rivers "men who had been hardened in civil wars which had raged in their country. They are huge feeders and deep carousers, often unruly and noisy in their wassail. Through from a remote and somewhat barbarous island they yet believe themselves the most perfect men on earth."¹

A Secretary wrote to the Venetian Ambassador "They have a vary high reputation in arms; and from the great fear the French entertain of them, one must believe it to be justly acquired"²

Dominic Mancini wrote this about the archers in Richard III army in 1483 as they arrived at London: There are hardly any without a helmet, and none without bow and arrows; their bows and arrows are thicker and longer than those used by other nations, just as their bodies are stronger than other peoples', for they seem to have hands and arms of iron. The range of their bows is no less than that of our arbalests (crossbows); there hangs by the side of each a sword no less long than ours, but heavy and thick as well. The sword is always accompanied by an iron shield... They do not wear any metal armour on their breast nor any other part of their body, except for the better sort who have breastplates and suits of armor.

¹ Embleton, Gerry. *The Medieval Soldier: 15th Century Campaign Life Recreated in Colour Photographs*, Great Britain, Windrow and Green, 1994; 98

² Embleton, Gerry;98

Indeed, the common soldiery have more comfortable tunics that reach down below the loins and are stuffed with tow or some other material. They say that the softer the tunic the better do they withstand the blows of arrows and swords, and besides that in summer they are lighter and in the winter they are more serviceable than iron³.

Archery and Practice in England

The English believed so strongly in the power of the longbow that over the years many laws were put in place to force men to practice at the longbow from the 14th century to the 16th century where guns started to replace the bow. In 1364 Edward III banned all other sports on feast day (Sunday) except archery "every able bodied man should in his sports use bows and arrows, pellets of bolts, and shall learn and practice the art of shooting."⁴

In 1498, the gardens north of the City were destroyed to make a plain field for archery, and over 200 permanent butts (archery targets) were set up for target practice in Finsbury and Shoreditch fields. Henry VIII decreed that all males between 7 and 60 had to practice archery.⁵

³ Andrew Boardman. *The Medieval Soldier in the Wars of the Roses*, (Alan Sutton Publishing, Ltd. 1998); 136

⁴ Matthew Strickland and Robert Hardy. *The great Warbow*. Sutton Publishing Limited. UK. 2005 ;199

⁵ Museum of London display.

Military Kit



Maille and Jacks

Standard

A standard is a collar of maille that helps protect the neck from cut and arrows. They are common in depictions of archers and show up regularly in muster rolls. Several extant pieces remain to us; most are elaborate in design and likely were part of a suit of armor of a man at arms, knight, or lord.

The example bellow is English and sits in the British Museum in London. It has 16 gauge wire rings that are 8mm round riveted in the neck and 18 gauge 8mm flat riveted links in the rest of the collar. It has butted construction flat brass links for decoration hanging from the upper part of the collar.



The Reconstruction

This reconstruction is made of 2400 plus links riveted by the writer. The rings are 9mm Forth's Armory do-it-yourself rings; they are pre-made 18 gauge flat wedge riveted links. It is alternating row construction; one row of solid and one row of riveted links. The construction is done in an expanding row construction method, the first 7 rows are straight and starting at rows 8/9 they expand having a total of 19 rows. The top row was about 29 inches fully stretched out but maille was meant to drape so the collar is 17 1/2 inches when sewn onto the padding.

The padded linen collar is hand quilted it; it was about 18 1/2 inches after seem allowance and quilting. It over laps about 1/2 and inch when closed comfortable tight over the neck. The top of the maille standard was laid out to the top of the linen collar and whip stitched the maille to the linen with a thick waxed linen thread to hold them together to add the leather to the top. Then the leather was sewn down with a running stitch to cover the links so they would not rub against the neck. Many effigies and artwork show an edging on the top of collars; the assumption is leather or cloth was used to protect the neck from the maille.



Haulbergen and Haulberk

Maille shirts (a.k.a. Haulbergen and Haulberk) are depicted worn under a jack commonly in the 15th century and are described in some ordinances from the time

From the ordinance of St. Maximin de Treves, published October of 1473.

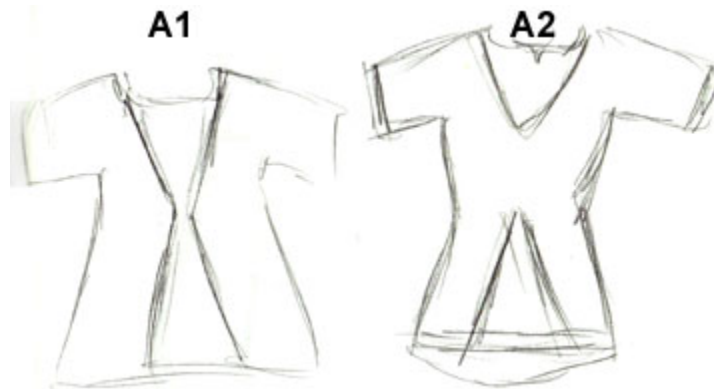
In the section describing the equipment of members of a lance - specifically the mounted archer "The mounted archer must possess a horse worth not less than six francs, and should wear a visorless sallet, a gorget (This may mean a maille standard or bevor), a brigandine, or a sleeveless mail shirt under a ten layer jack"⁶

Maille shirts are not simply flat tubes like most modern shirts come; they have gussets and gores to create a better fit for the wearer. So far every found extant example of a full maille shirt from the middle ages has gussets and gores and all are riveted. Rings sizes and styles vary; 2mm rings to 8mm rings in flat and round wire riveted with dome headed rivets or wedges (wedges are only used on flat rings but not all flat rings are wedge riveted).

The maille shirt pictured worn under the sleeveless jack in this document is a short sleeved flat 8mm wedge riveted shirt. It came as a tube but has been altered by the writer to have a gore in the neck like the A1 and A2 shirts in the Wallace collection.

A1 – With short sleeves to the elbow, cut square at the neck. It is composed of iron rings of flat sections, except for the one row of brass rings with iron rivets along the bottom edge of each sleeve. A2 – Of the highest quality, with short sleeves reaching to the elbow and composed of strong, riveted iron links of half- round section, being flat on the front side.⁷

**Sketch of the A1 and A2 Maille Shirts with Gore Placements - The Wallace Collection
Art by James Barker**



⁶ Charles Ffoulkes. *The Armourer and His Craft*, (Dover Publications, 1988); 87

⁷ Sir James Mann. *Wallace Collection Catalogues Volume 1 Armor*. William Cowels. 1962; 1

The Jack

Jack, pourpoint, heuk, gambeson, hacketon, and tunic are terms found in 15th century inventories and accounts describing defensive garments that were worn as a form of armor. The term Jack is used by modern reenactors and scholars to describe the textile armor from the War of the Roses that was either a multi-layered linen garment or a layered linen stuffed with raw cotton garment that served to protect the wearer from arrows and sword cuts. This type of armor was common among the archers/foot soldiers of the time.

[For more information please see the Jack documentation with the display.](#)

Finished Standards worn with Jacks in 2005



Archers in Jacks, Maille Shirts, and Standards from Artwork



The Salled

The Salled (English term), Sallet (French term), or Celata (Italian term) is the most common type of helmet found in the imagery of the mid to late 15th century. In artwork, historical muster rolls, and orders the helmet mentioned over and over again is the salled. The open faced salled is the most commonly depicted helmet among troops; when the English archers are shown they almost always have and open faced sallad. Archers at this time drew the bow back to their cheek near the eye to aim the bow much like playing darts modernly; a brimmed helmet like a kettle hat would cause problems with the bowstring. From personal experience it is hard to shoot well with a kettle hat instead of and pen faced helmet. Visors would also interfere with the archer as a raised visor could get in the way of the bow string like the brim of a kettle helm and the visor being down limits vision.

From the ordinance of St. Maximin de Treves, published October of 1473.

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By the middle of the century, although jacks continued to be worn, the basinet had been replaced by the Sallet.⁹

In May 1455, the mayor of Coventry was ordered royal signet letter to supply a retinue for the king. The town council decided to supplied a hundred men with bows, jacks, and salleds¹⁰

Helmet Liner Reconstruction

While the helmet on display was bought from www.bestarmor.com the helmet liner was researched and reconstructed by the writer. Many extant helmets from the 14th through 17th centuries still have liners in them. Liners are made of a fine woven linen and stuffed with various materials to pad them. The most common material is raw cotton but straw, grass, flax tow, and horse hair are also found in extant liners. The shapes of liners vary; mine is designed off several 15th century examples being made of four triangular segments with an eyelet at the top to lace together for a tighter or looser fit. The panels are made of linen with raw cotton stuffing.

⁸ Charles Ffoulkes. *The Armourer and His Craft*, (Dover Publications, 1988); 87

⁹ David Edge and John Miles Paddock. *Arms and Armor of the Medieval Knight*. Crescent Publishing 1996. 128-129

¹⁰ Terence Wise; 27

Linen Liner of Linen and Raw Cotton, Evidence of a Leather Strap for Attachment at the Bottom¹¹

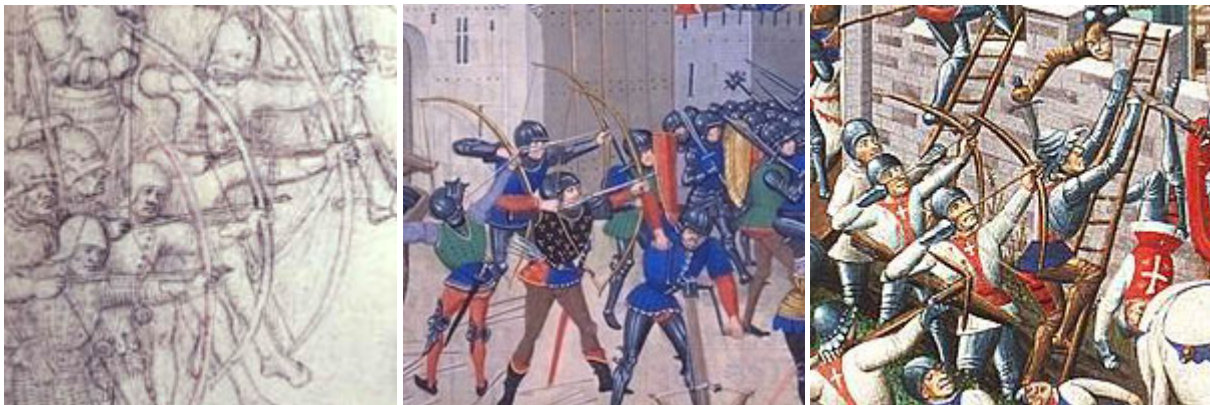


Images of Helmet with Liner on Display. Last Image Extant Example in the Royal Armories Leeds UK.



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In Historical Art most Soldiers Wear Sallads, English Archers Always have Open Face Sallads



¹¹ David Edge and John Miles Paddock; 182

¹² Last Image taken at Leed Armory
March 3, 2008

Livery Jackets

Livery coats, badges and symbols were the first military uniforms. They identified the wearer's loyalty, who was responsible for his maintenance and for whom he fought. In a time of war an indentured retainer could, based on the terms of his contract bring additional men to serve his Lord. Each of those men would in turn be given a livery coat in the Lord's design.

"Livery and Maintenance" is the giving of identifiable clothing and the maintaining of an individual's well being in return for that individual's service. Those who served were not usually domestic servants in the way we commonly think of servants today. They were often income or landed individuals with some standing in their communities.

For more information please see the "15th Century Livery Coats for Soldiers" documentation with the display.

Arrow Bag

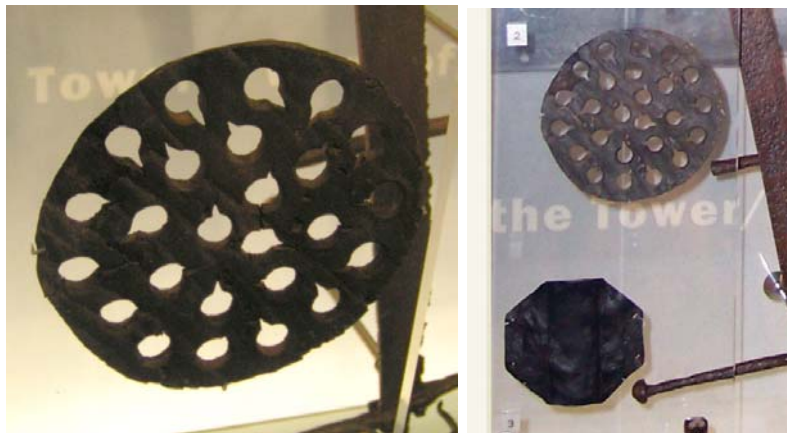
Quivers as modern archers think of them are not found in medieval finds or art; archers are depicted with arrows in their belts or on a bag over their shoulder. The shoulder bags shown in art are always white so likely the bag was made of linen in period. They also appear to have drawstrings on both end of the bag in the art.

We have several leather disks found with arrows assumed to be part of an arrow bag at one time. A notebook from Francis Grose in 1777 illustrates an arrow bag once preserved in Canterbury. It shows the spacer, set about mid shaft. ¹³ The bag was lost in the Second World War. The Mary Rose spacer has 24 holes in and has stitching holes on the side of it indicating it was likely stitched in place in it's bag.

The Reconstruction

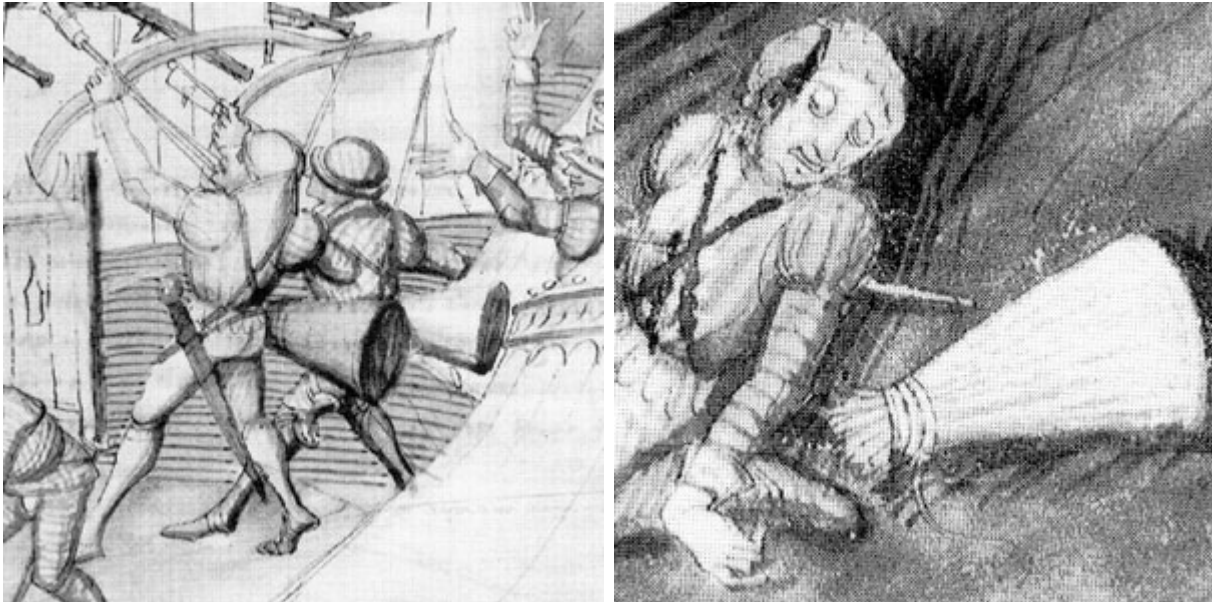
The arrow bag is constructed of linen and hand finished with waxed linen thread and has a thick leather disk in it to hold the arrows stitched to the linen like the Mary Rose disk indicates and set in the center like the antiquary drawing shows.

Leather Disks



¹³Clive Bartlett. English Longbowmen 1330 – 1515. Osprey Publishing 1995; 55
March 3, 2008

Manuscript Art of Archers with Arrow Bags



Archers Bracer

Extant examples exist in private collections and museums of archer bracers and are found in many pieces of artwork from the 14th –15th century. All examples have something in common; they are small in size. Ranging in the three to five inch range in size bracers of the middle ages really only covered the wrist and not the whole forearm. Ascham tells us that a bracer serves to save the archer's arm from the "stripe of the string" and his doublet from wear. It also keeps the string "gliding sharply and quickly" across the shooter's arm, thereby making a "sharper shot." Even so, Ascham believes it best "to give the bow so much bent, that the string need never touch a man's arm, and so a man need no bracer."¹⁴

Bracer Shape

The basic shapes seem to be rectangular with clipped corners such as the Museum of London and Mary Rose examples of oval like the York find and the piece shown in Dress Accessories that is in a private collection.

Straps

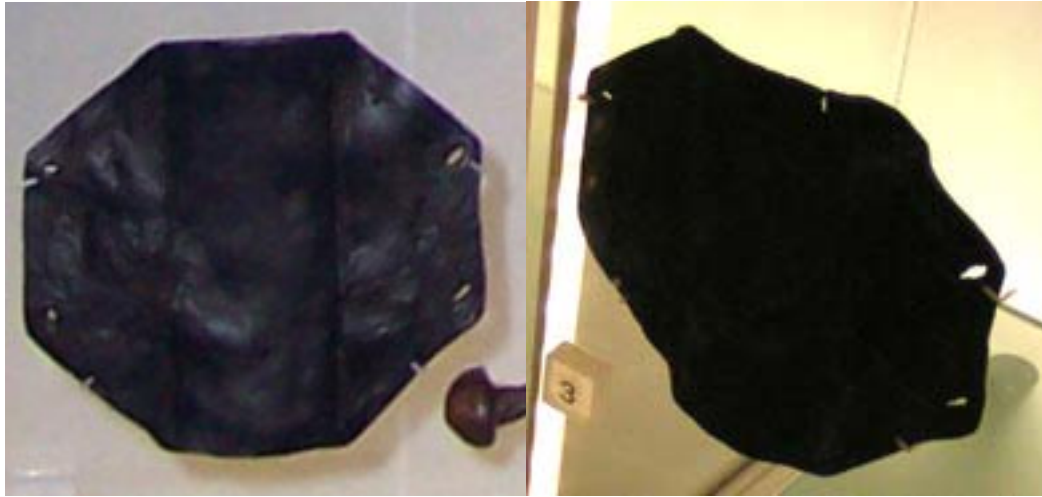
The Museum of London and Mary Rose bracers have holes in the leather remains that indicate straps were attached with rivets to the main body of the design. Some artwork like "History of Tarquin" (a Flemish tapestry) and St. Sebastian's Alter (1493) show men wearing bracers of these sorts with rivet heads holding on the strapping.

The York example has two slits in the side of the bracer with a one-piece strap with a bronze buckle on it. The strap is under the main body of the bracer as to not interfere with the bowstring. The private collection example is all in one piece where the straps are part of the body of the bracers and has bar mounts, pendant loops, and a buckle.¹⁵

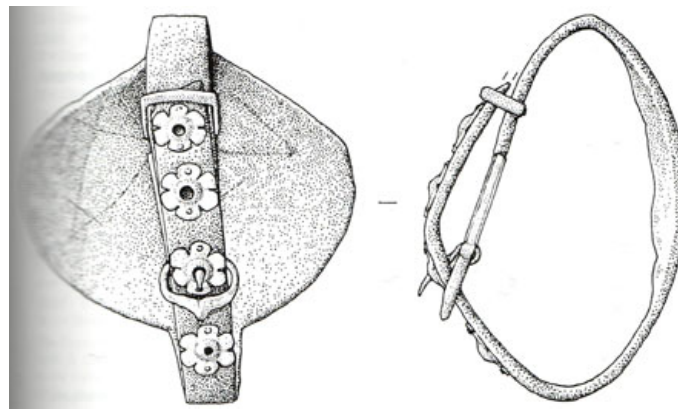
¹⁴ http://labelle.org/Argear_Bracer.html

¹⁵ Geoff Egan, Francis Pritchard. Dress Accessories 1150-1450. The Broidell Press, 1991; 231

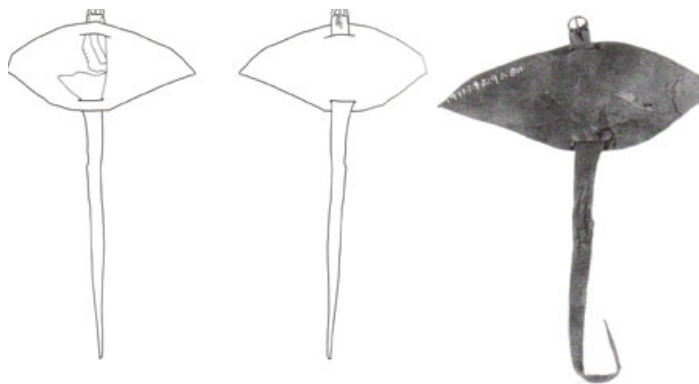
Bracer in the Museum of London - Found in Worship Street - 15th Century



Bracer from Private Collection Shown in Dress Accessories - 15th Century¹⁶



Bracer from York Find – Late 14th Century¹⁷



¹⁶Geoffrey Eogan; Frances Pritchard, *Dress Accessories, c.1150-c.1450 (Medieval Finds from Excavations in London)*, London: Boydell Press, 2004;

¹⁷Quinta Mould, Ian Carlisle, and Esther Cameron. *Leather and Leatherworking in Anglo-Scandinavian and Medieval York*. Council of British Archaeology 2003; 3404.

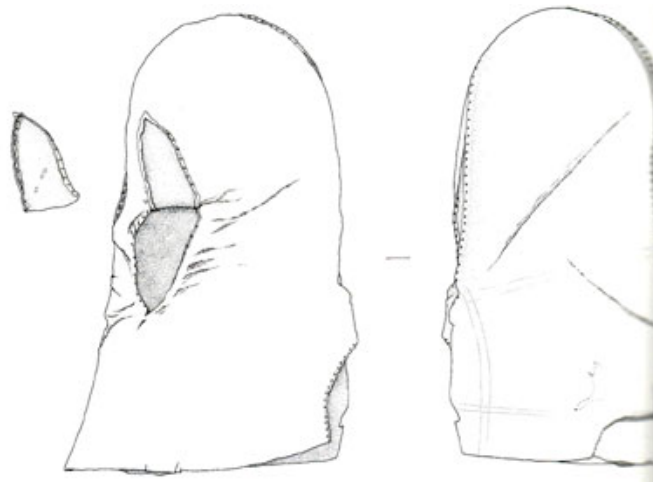
Work Gloves

Many extant pairs of leather mitten gloves are around; in the museum of London there is a 15th century pair and in the book *Material culture in London in an age of transition: Tudor and Stuart period finds c. 1450 - c. 1700* from Excavations at Riverside sites in Southwark, London there are two gloves listed. The construction is simple, the two halves are rounded at the fingers and the wrist flairs open. The thumb is a simple shape cut into the palm side of the glove with a oval shape attached to create the back of the thumb. There is no seam against the bend in the thumb in this design which will help prevent chaffing while working. Likely these gloves were used like modern work gloves by men who did labor intensive jobs.

The Reconstruction

The reconstruction is based of the basic design the extant examples give us and is made of 2oz goat skin sewn together by hand with a glovers needle and waxed linen thread using a running stitch. There is no dye applied the finish is natural oil.

Drawing of Mitten Glove in *Material culture in London in an age of transition: Tudor and Stuart period finds c. 1450 - c. 1700* from Excavations at Riverside sites in Southwark, London



Images of 15th Century Glove in the Museum of London



March 3, 2008

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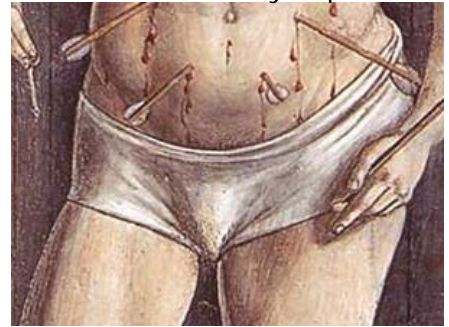
Civilian Clothing



Braies

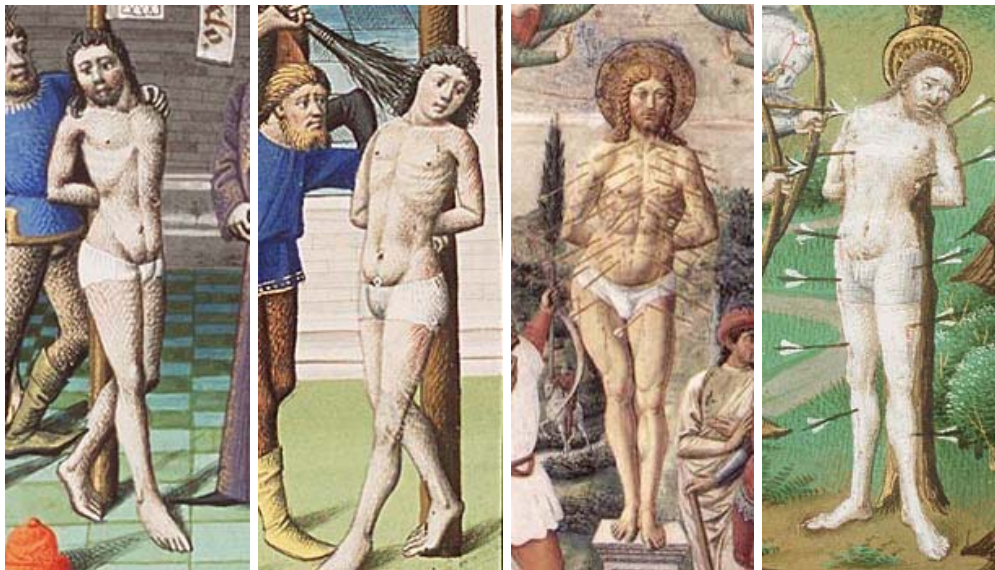
There are several types of braies depicted in 15th century art but the two most commonly depicted are like our modern bikini briefs or are like boxer briefs with short legs. All depictions indicate that braies were white and most likely linen; this would make them easy to clean as bleached linen will fade stains in sunlight.

Paintings of St. Sebastian give us many references to braies and how they might be shaped as there are no know serving examples.



The most common style of braies seems to be like modern boxer briefs with short legs. Being that there did not have a stretching weave like we do today braies are most commonly shown with a draw string closing them in the second half of the 15th century. Antonello da Messina's painting of St. Sebastian c. 1476-77 shown to the left is a perfect example of the style mentioned. It looks as if the braies are made of two pieces with a seam running down the center with an internal drawstring at the top. Since linen does not stretch the pattern has to be big enough for the braies to go around the thigh and pull over the hips.

Other Depictions of Braies

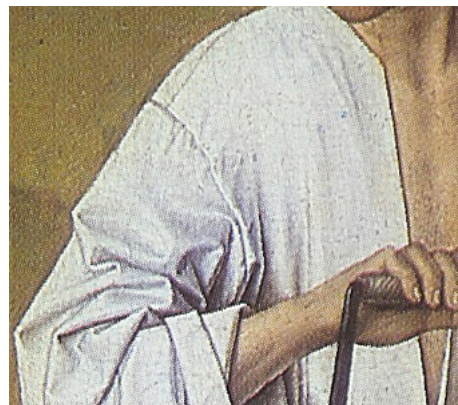


Shirt

The medieval shirt or chirte, chert, shert, scherte, shurtes, schyrtys, shertys. There are no extant examples from the 15th century so we have to rely on art from the time to give us a clue on how one was made as well as extant shirts like the St. Louis shirt and several extant shirts from the 16th century, all of which are made in a similar fashion as the reconstruction.

Observations of Construction:

- Most of the shirts in the art gallery below are from mid thigh to knee length with a few that are longer shown.
- The seams appear to be at the shoulder and on the sides indicating the shirt body was 2 pieces.
- In some of the more detailed images it is plain to see there is no curved arms eye and that the seam where the arm meets the body of the shirt is hanging off the shoulders and on the arm. This indicates that the body is square and not tapered in at the arms eye. (*Pictured to the right*)
- The neck openings appear to be simple circles in most cases and some are slit open down the front. It can only be assumed that the edge is rolled and sewn down to prevent fraying.
- Sleeves for the most part appear to be straight pieces of cloth; they have large cuffs which suggest no taper from the armpit to the cuff. Some might be tapered as seen in the some of the manuscripts below.
- Most shirts appear to be open on the side seam from the mid hip down, this is likely for ease of movement when walking.



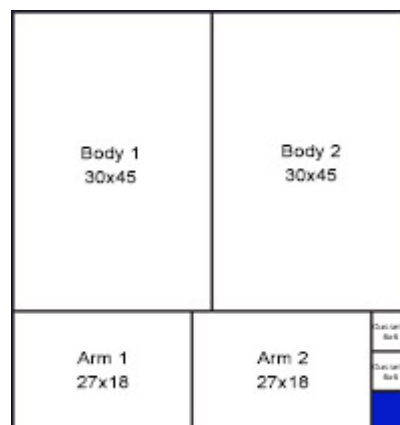
The Reconstruction

Bleached white linen 3.5 or 5.1oz works best for a shirt. Looking at the art of the time it seems that white linen was the common material for shirts.

Layout

An efficient way to layout the shirt is *pictured to the right*. This layout is for 60 inch material:

- Body pieces should be 30 inches wide by 45 inches tall for a man up to 44 inches in the waist.
- Arms should be 27 inches wide by 18 inches tall. For a man with a large shoulder and bicep you may want to increase the size to 27 inches by 20 to 22 inches.
- Gussets should be 6 inches by 6 inches.



For 56 inch material:

- Body pieces should be 28 inches wide by 45 inches tall for a man up to 42 inches in the waist. For thin guys you can make the shirt body width less, just measure across thickest part of your body and add a few inches for ease of movement in the garment.
- Arms should be 25 inches wide by 18 inches tall.
- Gussets should be 6 inches by 6 inches

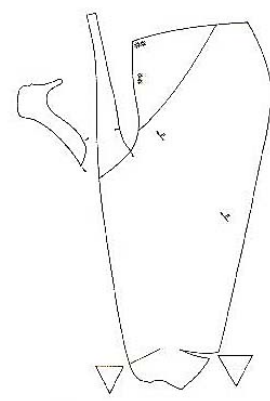
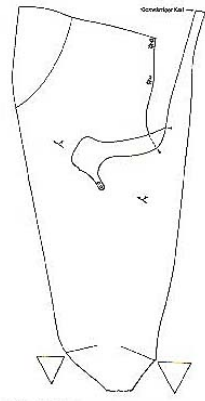
Other Depictions of Shirts



Hosen

Joined hose seem commonly depicted by the 1450s with a few notable exceptions like the Rogier van der Weyden's St John Altarpiece. Joined hose have a cod flap to cover the groin and are pointed to the doublet to stay up.

There are two pairs of extant hosen from 1490-1510 left to us. One pair is wool (pattern pictured right) and another pair is made of linen. Both are built in a similar shape which I suspect is the same as earlier joined hose. Late hose have a codpiece instead of a flap like depicted in the art of the 15th century until the 1490s. The pair pictured right have a foot piece wraps under the foot meaning there is not a separate sole design.



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Observations of Construction:

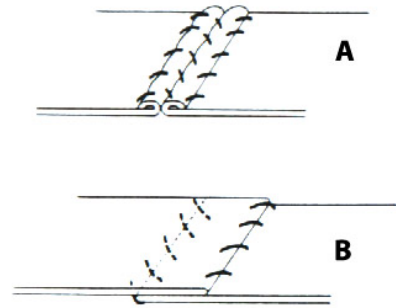
- The shape of the leg in extant hose from 1200 to 1600 does not change. The only change to the pattern is the addition of material to cover over the butt, hips, and groin.
- Extant hose are not cut with rounded curve at the calf and back of the knee like many modern people cut them; they have two straight lines for the thickness of the legs. The first is from the ankle to the widest point of the calf and the second is from the calf to the widest point of the thigh. It is also important to note that when creating a pattern (like below) when you measure the distance between these points you must go along the curve of the body or your hose will be short.
- Foot designs used in the 14th century are also used in the 16th century so I feel sure that any of those designs will work with 15th century hosen.
- Some images depict men with now shoes on with their hosen which means some hose may have leather bottoms which would also indicate the pattern can have a separate sole instead of a wrap around piece as you see in the pattern above and in the drawing of how to make hosen below. There are extant examples of 16th century hosen with separate soles.
- There are three seam lines in most depictions of hosen, the center of the butt and the middle of both legs, this indicates that the legs and but area are incorporated into one piece of material like the pattern below.
- The majority of extant hosen are cut on the bias
- Twill fabrics are used the most for hosen; I believe twill is used to give more stretch to the garment that is more form fitting.
- In Rogier van der Weyden's St John Altarpiece the executioner has his split hosen rolled down and you can see there is a white, likely linen, waist band where the points are. Likely linen is used to prevent stretching at the waist so the hose will not pull down over the hips easily and to reinforce the eyelets for the points to make them stronger.



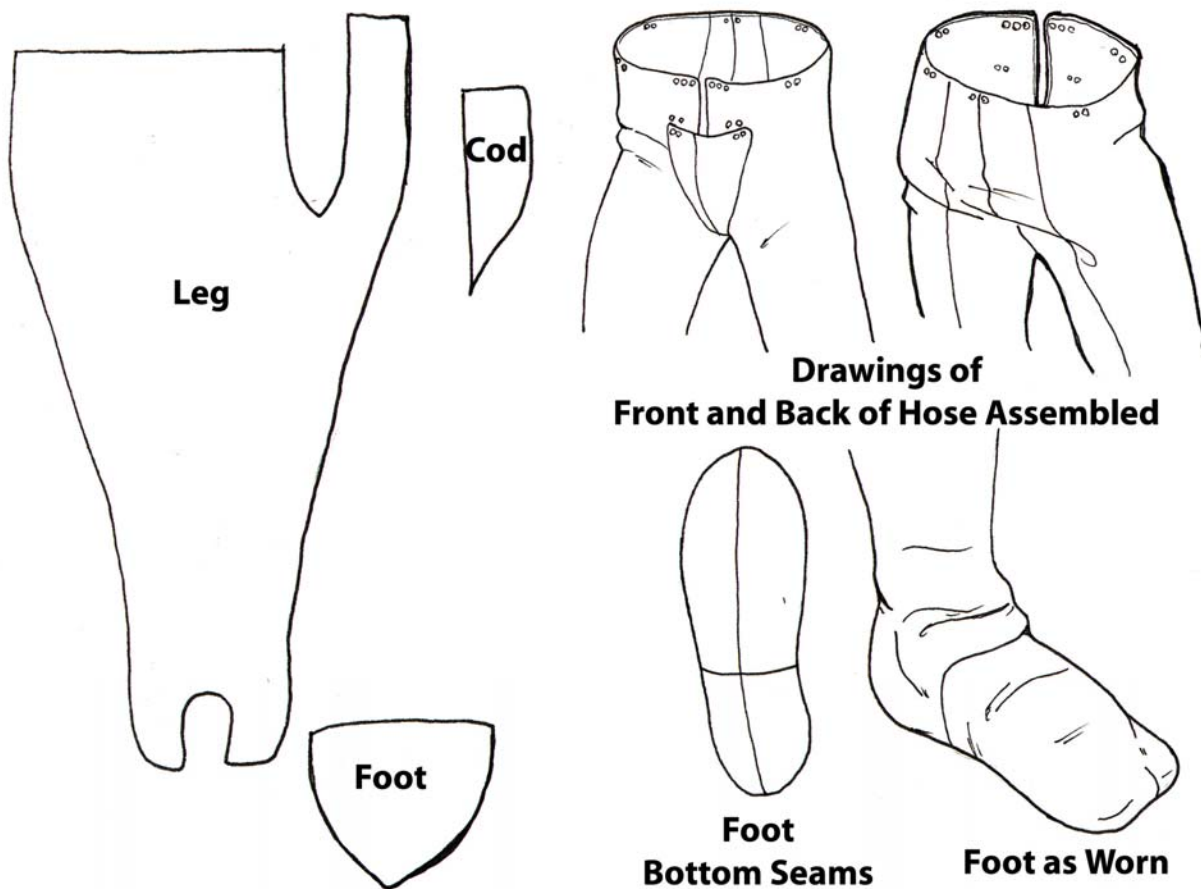
The Reconstruction

The hose are made of thick twill wool to give plenty of stretch when sitting down. Notice the pattern is like the hosen of the 14th century in the shape of the legs and how similar the 1490-1510 pattern above is to this pattern.

- The cod is made of two pieces cut like you see below, the seam in the center in the curved part of the pattern, it creates a bulge for the area it is covering.
- The foot pattern is based off the late 14th century London hose find. It is a simple piece of wool that wraps the foot and has a seam under the foot. The seams under the foot is not a tradition seam like in figure A (right) it is like figure B (right) where the material is overlapped and whip stitched on both raw ends which is common among extant hosen. It is a much more comfortable seam to step on. This will only work with fulled wool, worsted would have to be finished.
- A linen band is added to the waist to prevent the wool from stretching when worn and to strengthen the eyelets
- The eyelets and visible seams are all hand sewn with waxed linen thread



My Pattern:



Doublet

Doublet means two layers in Middle English, in this case it is a body garment made of a layer of wool on the outside and lined with linen or maybe silk on the inside.

Observations of Construction:

Doublets from the English, French, and Flemish art all have the same basic shape through out the time period of 1450 - 1480

- Standing collars that cover the neck and come above the neck opening of a gown are by far most common in art of this time. "V" shaped back section like you see on the mason working without a gown on in the Jean Fouquet manuscript to the right and in the English manuscript of the Life of Edward IV circa 1461 seem the standard in art for the region; Germans often depicts a "U" shaped piece making the back of the neck.
- No collar circular neck openings are seen but are far less common in the English, French, and Flemish art than standing collars mentioned above.
- Body construction remains the same though out this time frame.
 - Four pieces for the body and four pieces for the peplum (skirt area). The dividing line is at the natural waist with is the belly button and small of the back for men.
 - The peplum ends at the top of the hips where the hosen begin
 - The eyelets for the points in the peplum are at the bottom of the peplum no higher than one inch from the bottom edge as seen in the image on the far right and the first image in the third row of the gallery
 - The body is closed with a series of eyelets running up the open edge in the front as the two images to the right show as well as the first and second image in the third row of the gallery
 - Some artwork indicates that the inside edge of a peplum or front opening where the eyelets are is just the linen lining like seen in Memling's Martyrdom of St Sebastian which is the first image on the right



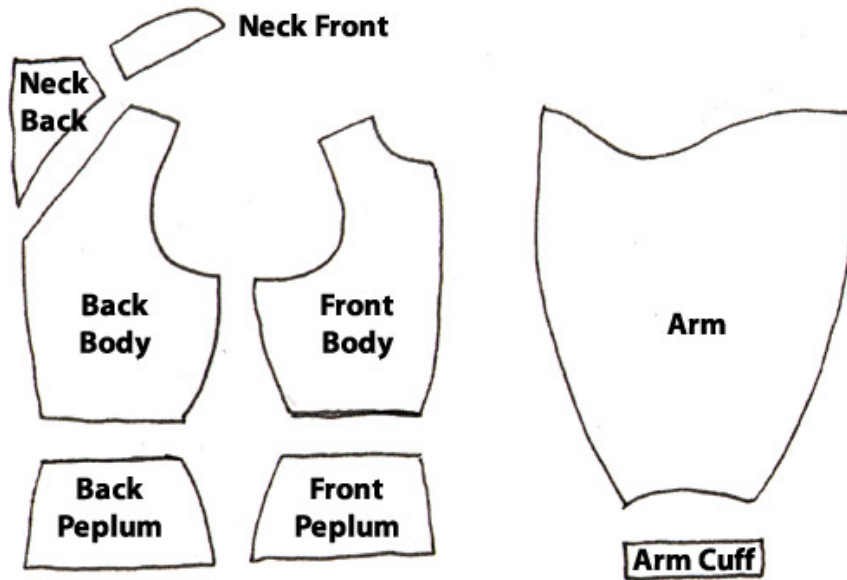
- Other depict that the outer layer of wool was longer and that the wool was rolled to double or maybe triple thickness at the edge and the eyelets are sewn on that part. Rogier van der Weyden's St John Altarpiece the second image on the right on above page shows the inside of the doublet where the eyelets are on wool and not a linen lining.
- Linings can be pieced together and set in as we see in the van der Weyden's St John Altarpiece; or they can be made of solid pieces like the wool layer and sewn together on the edges like Memling's Martyrdom of St Sebastian oon the page above shows.
- Arm pieces come in several designs
 - Set in sleeves are most common through out this time frame
 - Ball shoulders are popular in 15th century art in the 1460s which can be seen with the image of Henry VI from 1461 (1st in the gallery) and Jean Froissart Chronicles (3rd in the second row of the gallery) but in art from the 1470s on you rarely if ever see ball shoulders as you can see in the manuscript image of Edward IV's coronation (2nd in the gallery) the gowns lay flat at the shoulders in that depiction.
 - The arm is set in so the seam runs down the back of the arm along the elbow which can be seen with the first two images in the image gallery which are painting of Henry VI from 1461 and in Jean Fouquet manuscript image in the page above or in Memling's St. John the Baptist pictured to the right
 - The wrist can be closed by buttons like the image to the right and below; or with lacing cords
 - The wrist can also be integrated with the arm or a separate piece as you can see in this blow up from Weyden's St John Altarpiece



The Reconstruction

- One or two buttons are set in at the wrist to close the arm.
- The buttons are sell stuffed buttons
- Eyelets are set in all the way up the front offset for spiral lacing or in matched pairs for lacing shut with sets of points.
- The eyelets, buttonholes, and visible seams are all hand sewn with waxed linen thread
- The long lacing cord for the spiral laced doublets are silk fingerloop braid with a brass eaglet like the finds in the Museum of London book Dress Accessories

Pattern Layout



Other Depictions of Doublets

1445 – 1460s



1470s



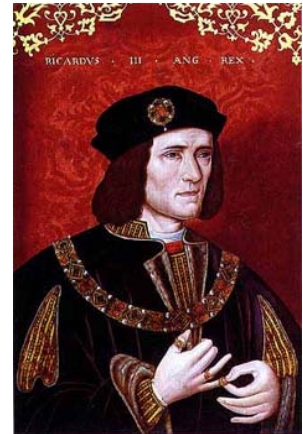
Gown

While again there is no extant garment of this type we are lucky to good images from manuscripts from the 1460s-1470s from England to show us what gowns looked like there. The first four images in the gallery are English in origins.

Patterns have to be extrapolated from 16th century patterns, but to look 15th we have to pay attention to the details the art shows us.

Observations of Construction:

- The body has enough fabric in it to create pleating but there is no indication of pleating at the body shoulder seam so the body cannot be rectangular. Many pattern books from the 16th century have gowns for men and women that are bell shaped, the shoulder seam is normal size but the body widens as it goes down.
- The arms-eye has pleating in the majority of pictured gowns in this era indicating the arm pattern is widened at the arm-eye to give extra material to pleat in.
- Some arms have splits running from the arm-eye to the mid arm like the portrait of Richard III above and to the right.
- Some arms have large openings at the wrist, some small opening with buttons and some without buttons.
- Some gowns are sewn shut all the way down the side seams and others are split from the hips or mid thigh down
- Most have a closed front, some have an open front.
- Some closed gowns have no indication of how they are closed so they may be sewn shut
- Some have fur edging on the closed seam down the front which may indicate hook and eyes which are a known technology for this time through many finds.
- Some depictions show buttons, some only at the top indicating only the top is open and some with buttons all the way up and down like in van der Wyden's St. Christopher painting (right)
- Many depictions show fur edging which might be just the edge but is likely a full fur lining like many other images from this time period show.
- Some gowns have no fur shown on them but linen linings can sometimes be seen where there are arm slits depicted.
- Some gowns are depicted with no lining as can be seen in some Bosh painting
- Gown length seems to be depended on social status and age. Old men are often depicted with full length gowns where many young men are shown with short gowns. Men of high social standing are also often shown in long gowns like sixth image in the gallery, it shows the head Pantler in a lords retinue, a well paid position of rank, leading his Yeomen who work for him out of the kitchen with the next course of food. The head Pantler has a full length gown where the Yeomen are wearing groin length gowns.
- Pleating on gowns is very even, it could be that the material is pleated into the belt but more likely the pleating is tacked into place. It might be that there is a band of material on the inside the pleating is tacked too.



The Reconstruction

The gowns have a common design: the seams are sewn shut in the front, down the sides, and on the arms. There are no buttons or hook and eyes on any of the displayed gowns though they are options seen in historical art.

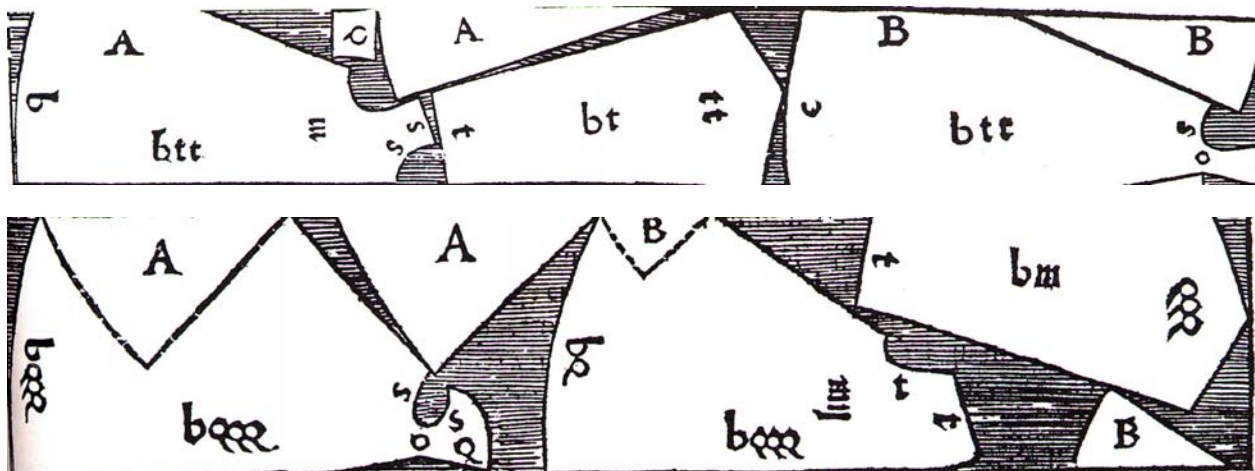
- The yellow gown is a basic gown for an archer there is no need to line the gown in linen or fur; many painters including Hieronymus Bosch will paint the inside of a gown showing and there is no lining or fur. Examples include: Death and the Miser and Triptych of Haywai. In this case there is not set in place pleating; the gown is pleated with the belt. It is worn with civilian clothing or with maille and a jack on cold days. The lengths run between mid thigh and knee length. The English manuscript the Seige of Thebes, La Cité de Dieu, Valerius Maximus, and the Jean Froissart Chronicles show men with gowns over their armor.
- The dark brown wool with a linen lining and currently a fur edging of mink (to be fully fur lined). It is also pre-pleated into a wool waste band. Even the lower class would have fur lined gowns

The pattern is derived from similar gowns from the 16th century you can find in the Tailor's Pattern Book 1589. The shape is like a widened doublet to get enough material to pleat.

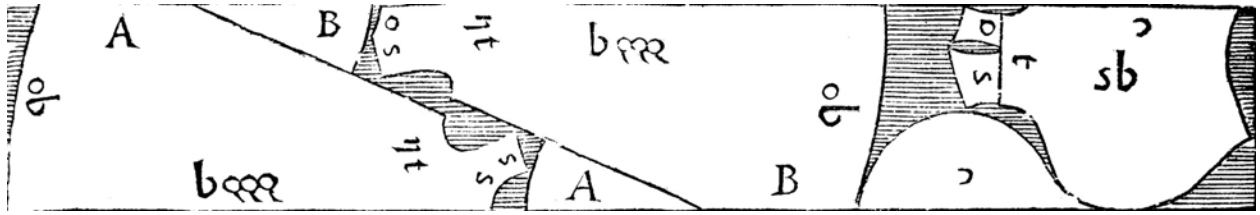
The Pattern:



16th century Gowns and Ropa¹⁸



¹⁸ Juan De Alcega J. L. Nevinson. Tailor's Pattern Book 1589 Quite Specific Media Group. 1999;
March 3, 2008



Depictions of Gowns



The Acorn or Flemish Hat

Acorn hats and chaperons appear in the second quarter of the 15th century through to the end of the 15th century. There are no extant examples of these hats so construction of these garments is pure speculation. The acorn hat seems to be popular across a wide range of people from the lower class to the upper class where the chaperon seems to be a hat only the wealthy wear. In the fourth and fifth images in the gallery you can see lower class men wearing acorn hats; chaperons are worn by well dressed men and not by the lower class.

Observations of Construction of an Acorn Hat:

- Acorn hats are seemingly one piece in art so they might be felt
- Another possibility is that they are cut of normal wool to have one seam that is in the back
- Some are short like modern fez and others are tall.

The reconstruction

- The design is one seam in the back made of wool with a linen lining.
- It is a one piece hat.

Depictions of Acorn Hats 1440 - 1490:

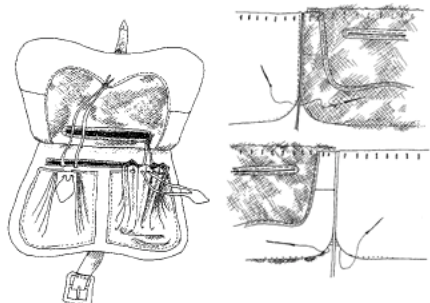


Belt and Pouch

The belt is made with silver 15th century fittings from Blackwood Jewelry. It is made to look like several finds from the 15th century that look like the belt in the Grimani Breviary painting (3rd image in the gallery) and the unknown manuscript image (4th image in the gallery). The buckle is based on the ornate oval buckle BIG82-2302 and the fittings are based on BWB83-1571 in Dress Accessories, c.1150-c.1450.



The kidney pouch is designed mainly after the pouch in Petrus Christus painting (1st image in the gallery) the extant find in Dordrecht (pictured right).



The pouch is 100% hand sewn out of 2oz vegetable tanned goat skin same as the Dordrecht pouch was. The pieces together with white linen waxed; linen thread was used on the original. The inside has one cloth (linen) pocket like the original (pictured left¹⁹) from though no part of the original fabric remains so the material could

have been wool, linen or silk; only impressions of the fiber on the leather remains. The other pocket has two smaller drawstring pouches attached like the original design. The straps are attached in the same way as the original but used a pewter buckle instead of a brass like the original. Other types of leather could be used for a bag like this to; here are some other examples: early 16th century AB092 (calfskin)²⁰ from. Late 14th and early 15th century finds TL74-306 (deer skin), TL74- 426 (deerskin), and BWB83-311 (calfskin)²¹



Depictions of pouches



¹⁹ Olaf Goubitz, Purses in Pieces; Archeological finds of the late Middle Ages and the 16th Century leather purses, pouches, bags, and cases in the Netherlands. SPA Uitgevers 2007; 24

²⁰ Material culture in London in an age of transition: Tudor and Stuart period finds c. 1450 - c. 1700; 40

²¹ Dress Accessories, c.1150-c.1450; 135

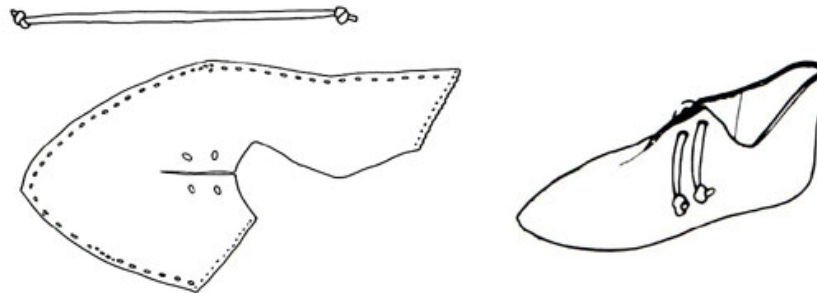
Shoes

The most common styles of footwear found in art work of this time period are pointed toe shoes and low boots. The displayed shoes are based off a London find from the late 14th or early 15th century and give the look of the shoe pictured below in the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian. One pair is a basic turn shoe while the other has a heel reinforcement and a turn welt to attach a second sole. Heel reinforcements and a turn welts had been used in shoes from the 13th century on; turn welts were only used as a wedge to help keep water out of the shoe until the 1420s when they started using turn welts to attach a second sole.

Turn Welt. The rand is sewn between upper and sole of a turn shoe, but is made extra broad so that a second sole can be stitched on; the rand will show two rows of stitch holes if used in this way and is then called a turn welt.²²

An interesting note about the heel reinforcement, if you take a careful look the stitching holding the reinforcement in place does not pierce through the leather to show stitching on the flesh part of the shoe; a blind split hold or tunnel stitch²³ is used to sew the reinforcement.

Scan of London Shoe Find



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Shoes from the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian and St. John the Baptist 3rd quarter of the 15th century



²² Goubitz. Stepping Through Time. Stitchin Promotie Archeologie 2001

²³ Francis Grew. Shoes and Pattens. London: Boydell Press, 2004; 48

²⁴ Francis Grew; 65

Leather Pattens

These stacked leather pattens are based off of several different extant pairs: GAS88 <161> and <207>²⁵, Leather Pattens (early/mid 15th century) A whole additional layer was nailed onto the undersid as a final repair²⁶, Middlburg and Ebam finds²⁷.

This patten is five layers of leather with two extra layers in the heel like most of the above mention pairs. The three center layers and the two heel lifts are sewn together with waxed linen thread and the bottom layer is nailed on with hob nails several examples from the 13th to 15th century have hobnails like the 15th century patten from London²⁸. The straps are sewn in-between the whole layers in the middle. This design will work for the 14th and 15th century.



Here you can see in the below image the layers being glued together with heel lifts between the full layers. Leather compresses under weight and the heel gets more weight than the rest of a shoe or patten so medieval people added layers under the heel to prevent compression issues from causing to walk funny; heels on shoes did not appear for until the later part of the 16th century. The end of the heel lifts in the center of the patten is tapered with a skiving tool. Notice the outside edges of the heel pieces are a little larger than the rest of the patten; it was later cut to match with a knife:

The straps are added between the top and second layers like the extant examples mentioned at the top of the page. I added tooling which is common in strap finds²⁹

Heel Lifts Being Added to the Layers



²⁵ Geoff Egan; 29 - 31

²⁶ Francis Grew; 101

²⁷ Olaf Goubitz; 269

²⁸ Francis Grew; 101

²⁹ Olaf Goubitz; 264, 265

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