

## 14th Century Woman's Hood

Hoods and mantles were a standard accessory during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. The peasant class, all the way up to the royalty, used it. Interesting enough, while it is seen constantly on men, in the illuminations of the time, women are very rarely seen wearing them until the 15<sup>th</sup> century and then generally in the lower classes. This may be because the women featured in the illuminations tended to be royalty or saints and usually had a coronet or veil. The written accounts however describe the hoods, which while would not have been worn for a coronation, could have been used on other official occasions

**Materials:** Cashmere Blend Wool (for hood), Linen (for lining)  
Wool / Silk Blend Thread – chosen for sheen and strength

**Technique:** Free embroidery – split stitch

### History and Background

The image of this woman wearing a hood shows fine lines just about the hemlines representing embellishment. It is uncommon to see any image of an embroidered hood. It is in the written documentation that mention of embroidery on hoods.

In 1342, wardrobe accounts of princess Joan, the daughter of Edward the Black Prince, go into great detail about the elaborate embroidery that embellished the princess's clothing: *"the green ghita ( an unidentified outergarment ) was embroidered in a gold design which included rose arbours" a second garment had "whole ground powdered with gold leaves* (Newton 33).



Hood: MS264 Bodleian Library

Queen Philippa was noted to have had special garments made for her first appearance after the birth of her son in 1348. On it she had a supertunic which was embroidered with gold birds, each one surrounded by a circle of pearls (Newton 34).

John of Reading, in his writings from 1362, ever critical of the fashion trends of the time, noted about men that they were: *"acting like women and wearing tiny little hoods buttoned tightly about their necks and decorated all about with embroidery of gold and silver and precious stones, with lire pipes down to their heels"*. (Newton 54)

### Embroidery

The design was adapted from a German alterhanging from the 1300's. The leaf and vine motif were prevalent designs in embroidery during the 14th century. Featured in decorative bands it was very simple to adapt the motif to be used on the hood. There are no extant hoods with intact embroidery.



There are however numerous embroideries in existence from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and it is from these embroideries that examples can be drawn. A 14th century extant purse, held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg has an intricate design of scrolling leaves within its pattern. This is very indicative of the types of embroidery described in the written accounts.

## Construction:

Coat weight cashmere wool was left unwashed to retain the “sleekness” of the nap of the wool. The weight of the wool would mimic the weight of some of the heavier velvets but was a more practical solution. The shade, while vibrant is a shade purple can be replicated by period dyes.

The hood was cut out based pattern from extant hoods found in the London digs conducted by the Museum of London <sup>(Crowfoot et al 190)</sup> and the Nerjolfnes hoods as documented by Nockert. The shape of the hood is much narrower around the face similar to the Nockert hoods and in this fashion I would not have to fold back the edge of the hood.

The gores and back seam were first sewn together with silk thread using a backstitch. The seam allowances were then laid open and tacked down with a tiny top stitch to hold the seams flat for the embroidery. The hood was not put on a frame or in a hoop to do the embroidery. The pattern was drawn freehand using chalk and put down as the embroidery was done. A silk/wool thread was used for the embroidery. The addition of the silk in the thread reduced breakage and added a sheen to the embroidery.

When the embroidery was completed, the hood was lined with linen. In order to keep a smooth edge, I opted to turn the wool under and stitch the lining down similar to a bag lining.

## Image References

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