

14th Century Woman's Hood

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Hoods and mantles were a standard accessory during the 14th and 15th 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 15th 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

This women's hood has been constructed for Geneviere d'Alsace as part of her coronation clothing. This was done to match that of Gaufred Kelson, in his colors and in a coordinating pattern with the addition of her badge, a martlet, which was added to personalize the design.

Materials:

Black Cashmere Wool, Silk Floss, Japan #7 Gold Thread, Japan #5 Silver Thread
3 mm Freshwater Pearls, Silk Twill, 10mm Silk, Jacquard brand silk dye for lining.

History and Background



Hood: *Tacuinum Sanitatis* (1)

In a tailor's account dating from 1342, three velvet hoods are mentioned for the queen and her sister in law. (Newton 26) Another inventory, that of the wife of Ponce Clair, a lawyer from Valence-sur-Rhone accounted in 1345 also discusses a very elaborate hood:

“capucium mulieris- with embroidery in beaten gold and twenty one large white pearls and eight silver buttons (Newton 27)”

There are two other hoods noted in this account were made of camelin (a woolen cloth) lined with green sandeli (silk) and the other lined with black cloth (Newton27). An image from *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, from, shows a hood scattered with such a hood (Arano).

The usage of pearls on the clothing is well documented in accounts from the era. In 1356, a chronicler noted that the usage of pearls on clothing had escalated to such a degree that there was a shortage of pearls (Newton 33).

Embroidery as well as pearls was used for embellishment on the 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).

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)

Buttons were usually noted very specifically in the wardrobe accounts because they were not just functional but were a necessary fashion item and as an expensive accessory, usually worthy of note.

Embroidery

The design was adapted from a page from the Breviary of Marguerite, done by Renaud de Bar in 1302. This manuscript was used as the basis for an upcoming website for the reign of Kelson and Genevieve.



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 14th century and it is from these embroideries that examples can be drawn. A 14th century extant purse, held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum (2) 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.



Goldwork itself was extremely common in the 13th, 14th and 15th century embroideries. It was usually done in some form of laid work, couched down with silk thread like in these two embroidered bands from the Victoria and Albert Museum. (3) (4)

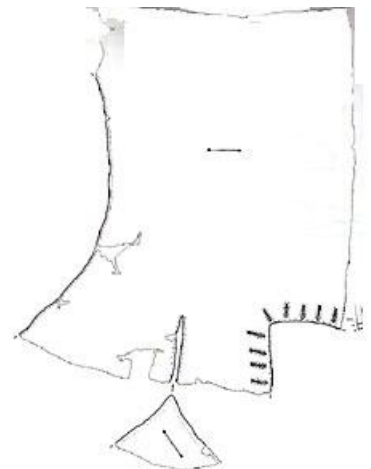


The small appliqués of a martlet, the personal device of Genevieve, were added as accents to the hood. While in period they could have been made out of anything from silk or wool to gold or pewter and sewn on the hood. This 15th century embroidery has leaves and flowers appliquéd and outlined with metal thread for accent. (5)

Construction:

Coat weight cashmere wool was washed twice and fulling in the dryer to get a nice dense thickness to the fabric weave so that when the wool was cut the edges would hold without raveling. The weight of the wool would mimic the weight of some of the heavier velvets but was a more practical solution. Black, based on Gaufréd Kelson’s personal heraldry, would not have been commonly used in period because the dye was expensive and black would not hold its color well. The hood was cut out based on a pattern from an extant hood found in the London digs conducted by the Museum of London (Crowfoot et al 190).

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.



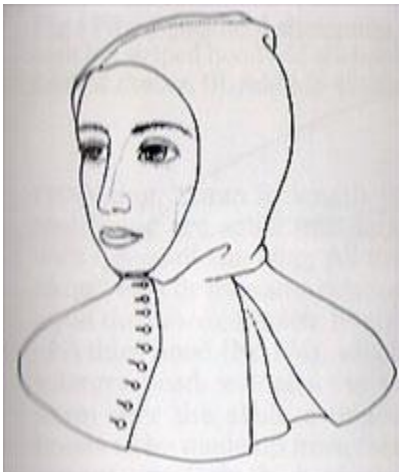
The embroidery itself was done with double strands of the Japan #7, couched with silk floss. A minimum of the gold thread is lost to the underside of the garment by using the couched style.

Often designs would be further enhanced by filling in the area with either silk floss of various colors executed in split stitch or finer gold thread as seen in the embroideries shown earlier. Due to lack of time in completing the project the embroidery was modified to tiny chain stitches as the veins of the leaves.

The hood was not put on a frame or in a hoop to do the embroidery. I found that it stretched the wool out too much and when it was released off the frame the gold rippled. Additionally the gold had to be couched not more than ¼ inch between stitches to keep the Japan gold from waving. Even so in places it still wants to twist and wave this is a problem common with the Mylar used in the Japan gold's. In period where real gold or guilt silver would have been used the stiffness of the metal would have helped prevented this wave effect.

The martlets were made from silk twill that was back with wonder under to help adhere it to the wool. They were then outlined, again using a couching stitch, with Japan Silver #5. Triads of pearls were used to accent the curves of the design.

When the embroidery was completed, the hood was lined in dyed silk, by turning in the seam allowance on the silk and stitched into place using a running stitch. The lining goes right to the edge of the face opening but ends just above the bottom edge of the hood, just below the embroidery to help prevent the silk from drooping below the hemline.



If one looks at many illuminations you will find contrasting colors on the lining verses the outer fabric. The red is part of Kelson's heraldry and it adds a nice contrast to the rich black and gold.

The front was finished with buttons as indicated in the extant piece and in the wardrobe accounts. The buttons are brass colored and evoke the style of the extant buttons from the period.

(7)

Conclusions

I had a lot of fun working on this project. It was a challenge to come up with ideas that would personalize the garment, make it simple enough to be done quickly and yet make it beautiful enough to be worthy of coronation clothing. I would like to do another hood one more in keeping with the elaborate embroideries described in the written accounts, but because I was giving this hood away, and I had limited time, the embroidery had to be fairly simple but still flashy. All in all I am very pleased with the hood. I would use a heavier silk next time as the thin silk tended to slip too much and was difficult to work with. Otherwise the project was very satisfying and it was a privilege to have the opportunity to create an image for our Queen!

Image References

1. Arano, Luisa Cogliati. *Medieval Health Handbook Tacuinum Sanitatis*. Geroge Braziller Inc. New York, NY. 1976. "Celery" Paris f28.
2. Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Inv Nr T1213 Almonsentasche. C 1301-1315 Image located at <http://www.bildindex.de/> Bildarchiv zur Kunst und Architektur in Deutschland. Accessed March 2004.
3. 12-13th century embroidered band From "A Stitch Out of Time" by Timothy J Mitchell. Image located at <http://home.earthlink.net/~wymarc/asoot/band/band2.jpg> at <http://home.earthlink.net/~wymarc/>. March 2004.
4. 14th century embroidery. Couched goldwork, split stitch embroidery. Located at Victoria and Albert Museum. Photograph by Sheree Krasley.
5. Couched goldwork, appliqué embroidery. C1470-1500. Victoria and Albert Museum : Inventory number T 194-1911 . Image located at <http://images.vam.ac.uk/>. January 2004.
6. Pattern of hood from extant fragments. Crowfoot, Elisabeth, Pritchard, Frances and Staniland, Kay. *Excavation in Medieval Finds from London: 4 Textiles and Clothing 1150-1450*. Museum of London. The Boydell Press, Rochester NY. 1992, 2001 ISBN 0-85115-840-4 Page 190.
7. Drawing of possible construction of hood. Crowfoot, Elisabeth, Pritchard, Frances and Staniland, Kay. *Excavation in Medieval Finds from London: 4 Textiles and Clothing 1150-1450*. Museum of London. The Boydell Press, Rochester NY. 1992, 2001 ISBN 0-85115-840-4 Page 191.

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