

A Woman's Houppelande at the turn of the 15th century.

1400-1410

Image of final garment on intended

By Lady Isabelle Montfort de Bretagne
AKA Raven Cutrano

earthboundhavens@yahoo.com

Table of contents

Introduction-	3
Images of houppelandes in artwork-	4
Houppelandes in wardrobe accounts-	7
Extent Houppelande-	9
My reconstruction-	
The reasoning behind my madness-	11
Conclusions-	16
Appendix-	
A- Conservation Photos and Documents-Prague Houppelande	17
B- More examples of Houppelandes in art	19
Sources-	27



Grande Bible historiale
complétée. Auteur : Maître du
livre d'heures de Johannette
Ravenelle. 1402- f 294r

Introduction

Houppelande was a french term given to a voluminous over garment worn by both sexes. It is thought to have developed from the older garderobe of the 13th and 14th centuries. When the French King Jean was captured and held in the English court in 1360, the houppelande came with. In 1361 the english royal account has an entry of "eight ells of canabis to make a pattern for a long gown for the king." Over the next couple years the term gowne is interchangeable with the term Houppelande, which eventually completely replaces the term. (*Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince*) The popularity of the Houppelande steadily increased over the course of the late 14th century, especially in France.

There are several contemporary artworks of the period that depict this style of over gown. This is an attempt to recreate a 1400-1410 houppelande. Because there are not extent garments of this exact time period, I have used some general trends shown in the art work before and after this time along with a 1416 detailed wardrobe account, to infer details of the garment. There is one surviving extent houppelande- the funeral garment of John of Görlitz's, also known as the Prauge Houppelande, dated to 1396, which this garment was heavily based off of, with some changes influenced by the art and accounts.



Detail - The Tres Riches Heures -Duc du Berry, April, 1416.

The woman is wearing a voluminous pink houppelande. The garment falls in pleats around her bust with a wide belt cinching the garment just under her bust. The garment appears to be fully lined with gray fur. The long open bell sleeves trail on the gown. The collar is tall and folds over itself at the neck. The front of the garment appears to open above the belt.

Houppelandes in ArtWork



Giovanni Boccaccio, De Claris mulieribus; Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France MSS Français 598; French; 1403, 125r.

In this image we see two ladies wearing green and blue houppelandes in the center front. The green one has a folded collar, and the blue has a high collar with white buttons down the front of the chest. Both garments have long trailing pendant sleeves lined in fur.



Detail- A Young Nobleman Petitions The Queen, Christine de Pisan, Collected Works; London, BL, Harley MS 4431, fol. 48, Paris, 1414

These two ladies are wearing fur lined houppelandes. The blue one has straight sleeves where the red one again has the traditional pendant sleeves seen in the artwork. Both have regular pleats held in place by a decorative belt under the bust. Neither of these has any discernible opening in the front.

Please note that during this time period there is also a fitted surcotte style of gown that is still very popular, and also often have the extravagant pendant like sleeves.

After surveying about 1,000 examples of of this style of gown in art, statues and brasses from 1380 to 1420 in England, France, Netherlands, Germany and Italy, I have come to a few conclusions.

Before 1390- there is little visual evidence of the Houppelande except for English and German brasses and statues. It is often mention in accounts of the time period. It wasn't a popular garment to illustrate. It may have been considered a practical garment for warmth than fashion, since the slim fitted style of garments were the fashionable choice. What is noticeable is that the garment is not refined to a narrow style range. The collars can be wide exposing the collar bone, or the could be high and tight up to the chin. They have large prominent buttons down the front of the garment, often the whole length. The garment is usually ankle to floor length, and has quite a bit less volume to the fabric. Sleeves are usually strait sleeves, although a few examples also have bagged sleeves.

1390 to 1400- We start to see more of this garment in the illuminations. Especially in Italy and France. Angel wing surcotte start to be popular at this time, and the wings quickly are transposed onto the houppelande. The houppelande becomes increasingly more voluminous also. Most hems at the ground or past it. Collars are almost all high necked to the chin, and we start to see the use of below the bust belts. When visible the linings are always a light colored fur, with ermine being depicted as the most common. Buttons are shown from the top of the belt up through the collar.

1400-1410- This is Our time frame of focus for the recreation of this garment. The houppelande explodes! It is everywhere. It's popularity competes with the fitted surcoat. It is during this time that the houppelande has settled into a more distinct style. The sleeves are extravagant pendant sleeves, near or trailing on the ground. Loose straight sleeves are rare. The houppelande has gained a lot of excessive volume throughout the garment, pleating at the belt is quite significant. The hems trail over the ground. Collars are larger, usually up to the chin of the wearer, sometimes the collar is folded over itself, other times completely open and resting on the shoulders. There are visible openings at the bust, sometimes with buttons, but most often without.

1410-1420, the houppelandes is very uniform in style. The fitted surcotte has waned in popularity with the noble class, making the houppelande the preferable fashion garment. There are no visible front openings or buttons, the sleeves are almost always full bell sleeves that drag on or near the floor. We often see some dagging on the edge of the sleeve or bezants covering one of the sleeves. The collars are open and wide, and usually cover a significant portion of the shoulders. We also start to see a lot more patterned fabrics and a preference for deeper richer colors. Linings are still fur, except a few Italian example of colored linings (most likely a silk). The fur linings tend to include

more browns, darker grays and even black. Which the wardrobe accounts and extent example of fabric can confirm.

After 1420- The houppelande during this time period completely dominates until the 1430 when the more fitted bust burgundian style comes into play. The English hold on the the big voluminous look of the 1410 era for a bit longer, but otherwise the focus shifts to expensive fabrics. There are many patterns varied velvets. The garments and furs are darker, the hems brushing the floor. The collars are wide open, sometimes doubled, and the V neck opening creeps in. Bagged sleeves become more popular. Towards the end of the 1430's we start to see more loose straight sleeves.



Giovanni Boccaccio, De Klaris of mulieribus, Traduction Guest of En français Livre Des fatal Noble and renommees. 1403. Folio 78r

See Appendix B for more examples of houppelandes in art including statues and brasses.

Houppelandes in the wardrobe account

Note- Most of this information in this section is extracted from the *Inventaire du mobilier du chateau Chaillou de l'annee 1416*, By De Beaurepaire, Charles de Robillard. 1866.

The 1416 wardrobe account of the castle Chaillou in Normandy France has been a treasure trove of information. The document is in french however, so I haven't been able to fully translate all the introductory information. I have however been able to translate a significant portion of the actual items detailed. However except in two cases none of the garments are labelled as being a men's or women's.

An interesting tidbit is that the French word of fur and the word for lining have the same root. Fourrure is fur, where as fourrée translates into to stuff or line.

The first entry of a houppelande is as follows- "*Une hopellande à femme de vert brun, partie fourrée de gris rouge et de aingneaux.*" A feminine houppelande of brown and green (lined with) half fur of red squirrel half fur from Aingneaux. It is listed with 2 other surcottes and a cotehardie.

Another entry reads- "*Une hopelande noyce fourrée de matres ; une houpelande de volloux fourrée de satin noir*" One Houppelande black with martin fur, One houppelande of velvet lined with black satin.

"*Item, un pou de drap damas de meifmez la houpelande de mondit seigneur de Vieupont.*" Item- a length of damask cloth from the same houppelande of Monseur de Vieupont.

Item, une houppellande de drap de damas noir, fourrée de gris. One houppelande of black damask cloth lined in grey squirrel.

Item, une houppellande d'écarllate vermoille, fourrée de gris. One houppelande of vermillion scarlet (a fine wool) lined in grey squirrel.

Item, une houppellande noire, fourré de menu ver. A black houppelande lined with vair.

Item, une houppellande de drap gris, fourrée de croufpez de gris et les manchez d'icelle fourrées de gris. A houppelande of grey cloth, lined with fur of cut grey squirrel sleeves also lined in grey squirrel.

Item, quatre houppellandes de quoi l'en se queuvre, donc l'une d'icelle et fourrée de connins et deux aultres font fourrées de vieullez croufpez de gris, et l'aultre qui refte desdiétes quatre houppellandes eft verte et fourrée d'aigneaux

Noirs. Four houppelandes ...(what is it?).... One here is lined with rabbit, two others have cut grey squirrels, the other is said to be four houppelande is green and lined with black fur from Aigneaux. Note-I know it doesn't add up or make total sense. I am working on refining this translation.

Item, une aultre petite houppellande fourrée de connins. Another short houppelande lined with rabbit.

There are a handful more entries of smaller items intended to go with the houppelandes also listed within this account.

So extracting some generalized trends from these entries, we see that most houppelandes are lined with fur, with one lined with silk satin. Outer fabric can be a fine wool, silk or wool damask, silk velvet, and is often black, green, or red.

Also within this account there are several mentions of pearls, at least there of which are referring to pearl buttons. This is what inspired the use of pearls as buttons for the recreation of the garment.

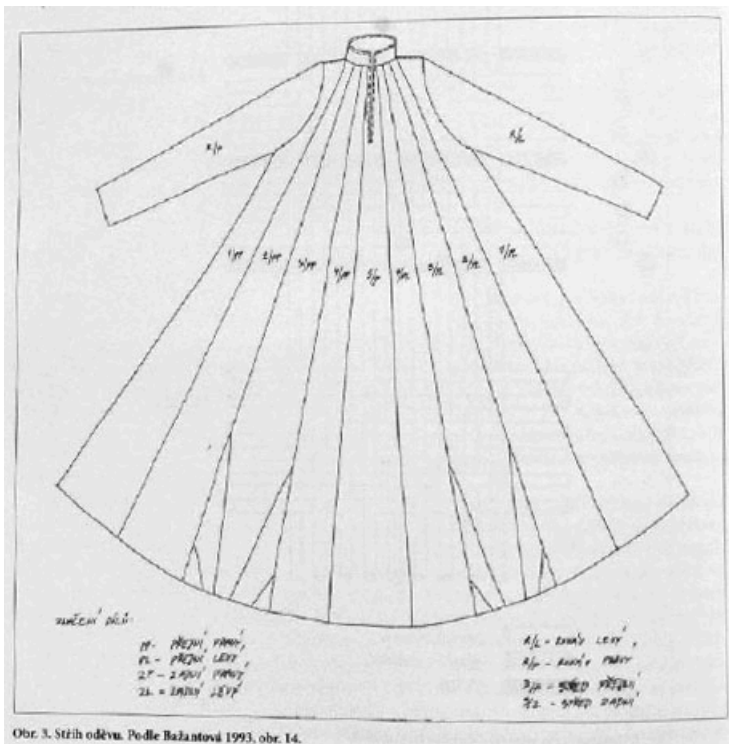
Item, un bouton de menues perles. A button of small pearls

Item, deux paires de longes à boutons de perles, l'une et l'autre à boutons et besans d'or et un cournet d'or à une perle. Two pairs of pearl buttons sets, one and another have buttons and besantes of gold, and one a cournet gold with a pearl.

Extent Houppelande of John of Görlitz



John of Gorlitz also known as Jan Zhorelecky was the last son of king Charles IV. In 1396 he died suddenly. Since he was not royal heir he was buried in fashionable secular clothing. The garment was constructed in haste. It is created from a single layer of monochrome velvet. (*John of Görlitz's Funerary Clothing*)



It is created from 18 trapezoidal panels. 14 of the 18 panel measure 150 by 25.5 cm, four panels at the shoulders measure 150 by 33.5 cm.

Four of the panels have been pieced at the bottom. See diagram to the left. The center front panel is split for the neck opening. There is a short standing collar.

Note- See more conservation photos in Appendix A

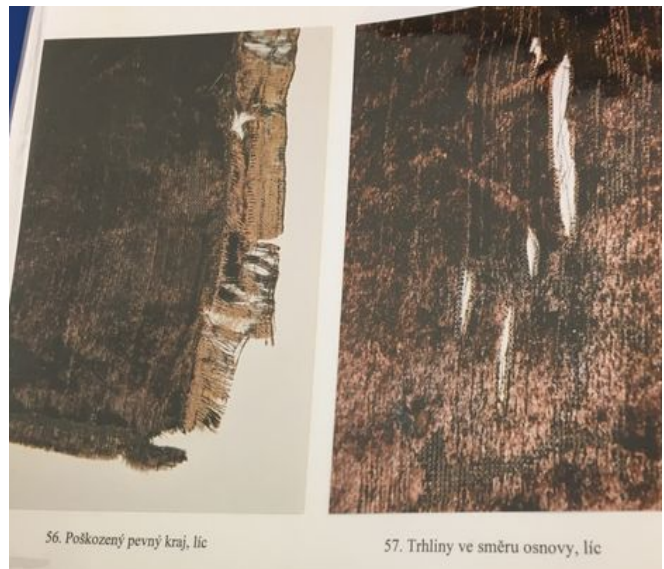
The sleeves of this garment are long and straight, have a seam down the back and have a curved sleeve head. (JGFC)



47. Fragment č. 3, 89 x 26 cm a fragment č. 4, 106,5 x 27 cm, líc

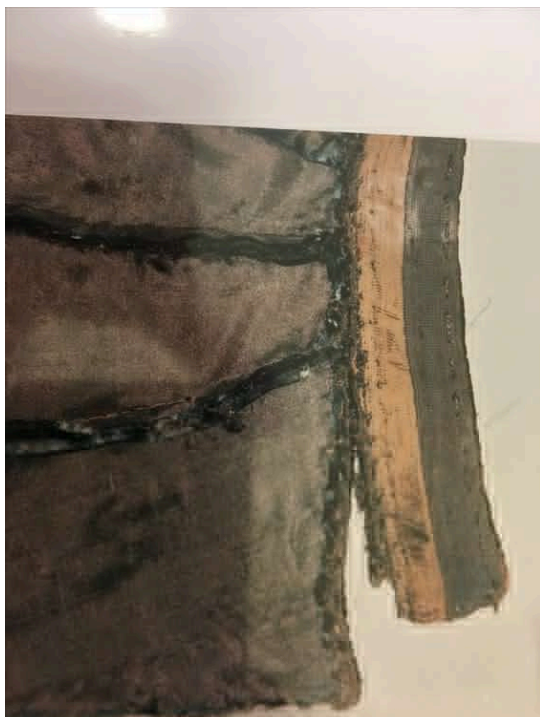
Left and below- Panel fragments of the John of Gorlitz.

Whenever possible the selvage of the fabric was used. Each of the panels have been cut so that one long edge is along the straight grain, and the other is on a slightly bias cut. When sewn together the straight grain to bias caused the garment to form natural pleats. (Conservation photos)



56. Poškozený pevný kraj, líc

57. Trhlina ve směru osnovy, líc



Left- A close up of the collar and some interior stitching.

An interesting feature of the garment is that the only place that is lined is the collar. The collar is also the only place where original extent stitches remain intact. The stitches here and impression elsewhere on the garment show very wide spacing, simple running stitches 3 stitches to the inch, which confirms that this garment was solely intended to cover a body.

The garment is currently brown, but recent analysis has confirmed that it was originally black. (Master Charles De Bourbon)

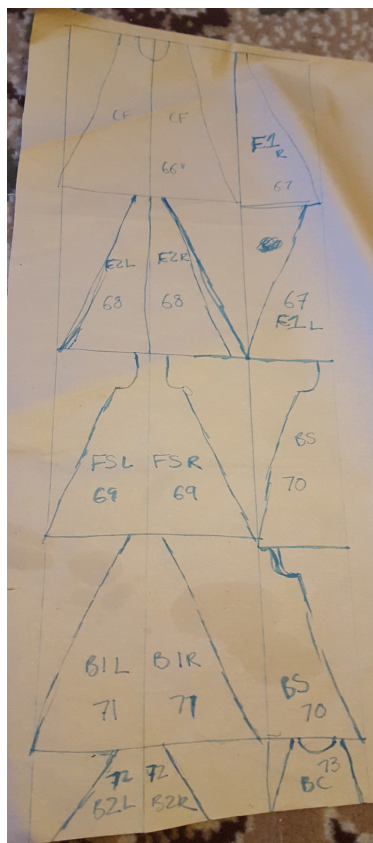
My reconstruction-

The method behind my madness. Including deviations from period methods.



This project was not originally planned as an documentable project, but gradually evolved into one. It is also a commissioned garment, Because of this there were a few early decisions that I would have otherwise modified. The main one being a slight pattern adjustment due to new information found after the pattern was cut.

The intent was to create a garment based off of the panel construction of the 1396 Prague houppelande, tailored to the style of the 1400-1410 era. I had originally got information about the Prague houppelande from the <http://www.chesholme.com> website. While very helpful, I discovered that some of the details of patterning of the garment were erroneous, and many details were missing. The old pattern had most of the panels originating from the shoulders, where as the panels originate from the collar in the extent garment.



This garment is made in a similar panel construction of the Prague houppelande, although due to fabric constraints and time spent sewing the number of panels was reduced from 18 to 15. I also choose to have 2 center front panels instead of one with a split for the neck due to ease of construction. This garment is also tailored for the intended wearer, so her personal measurements were used in lieu of the extent garment's.

Per request the fabric was cut so that the all the panels had the nap laying in the same direction. See the cutting layout on the left, however It generated a large amount of scrap which would have been unlikely in period. The nap would have probably been situated so one side of the garment went one direction and the other side the opposite.

This garment also has a modest train, the popular classic pendant sleeves, and pearl buttons for closures on the bodice, which are all details that deviate from the extent Prague houppe, but are seen in art and wardrobe accounts. The fabric was chosen and provided by the intended wearer. This is similar to a process documented in Italy where a client would provide fabric for the construction of the garment. The fabric would be weighed before and after the garment was constructed to insure the Tailor was honest. (The Rise, Expansion, and Decline of the Italian....)

The outer fabric is a light green cotton velveteen. This fabric has a short pile and a drape similar to some extent fabrics of the time period so it was used as a close approximation of period velvet. (Merchants, Princes and Painters) It took 9 ¾ yards of fabric at 56" for the body of this garment, and an additional 3 yards for the sleeves.



In period the lining would have been most likely fur or occasional silk. (Inventaire du mobilier) But due to the cost and availability a middle weight red linen was chosen for the lining. Red was a popular dye color for silks, (Inventaire du mobilier) and an Italian fresco shows an image of a houppe lined in red. See image to the left.

left-Church of Santa Maria in Piano (Loreto Aprutino, PE, Abruzzo - Italy). St. Ursula, fresco dating back to 1420 c. Houppe with red lining.

All seams were sewn with a cotton thread to match the properties of the fabrics. In period the thread would have been most likely silk thread as was the extent garment.

This garment is mostly handsewn. The stitches used on the garment are simple ones found throughout the medieval period, Extent medieval garments usually are stitches anywhere from 4 to 2mm apart which translates to 6 to 12 stitches per inch. (Some Clothing of the...). Back stitch, running stitch, and whipstitch were used, with an average of 7 stitches per inch for this garment. There is no machine stitching visible on the finished garment.

The lining was sewn separately from the outer layer. 3/4 of the main seams in the lining are machine sewn due to the time involved. The few seams that were hand sewn were stitched with back stitches. One long seam took 2 ½ hours to back stitch vs less than 10 min per with the machine. Then all



the seam allowances were flat felled and hand stitched with whipstitching. This created a sturdy seam that prevents the fraying of the linen.

The outer layer is completely hand sewn. The main seams are all back stitched, using approximately 7 stitches per inch.

The seam allowances were the splayed open and each side sewn down with a running stitch with 3 to 4 stitches per inch.

Because of the weight of the garment and stress on the seams I decided to also add another whipstitch down the center of the seams for additional strength.

The outer fabric and the lining were then stitched together using approximately 7 back stitches per inch, and a running stitch through all the layers from the surface.



View of finished seams during a fitting.

Patterning the sleeves was an interesting adventure. The extent Houppelande had long slim sleeves, but this garment was to have the pendant sleeves so popular in the artwork of the time. I played around with several patterns of sleeves before stumbling onto the pattern that created the right shape and draping of the art.

The pattern that evolved is one that is also based off of trapezoidal panels similar to the main body of the garment. You can see a mock up on the right, that was decided to be scaled down a bit, but has very the elegant draping.



The sleeve pattern mockup shown on the mannequin above. It was decided that all eight panels were excessive so we went with five instead, essential creating shape that was three quarters of an elongated oval.

Each panel was cut so that one sewn edge was on the bias, and one along the straight grain, which creates natural folds and pleating when the sleeve hangs.

It is hard to tell but the sleeve head on the main garment is a curved for an inset sleeve. The sleeve pattern has the armscye offset from the center to account for the extra fabric needed over the top of the shoulder.



Photos of completed garment forthcoming... for now in progress fitting photos...



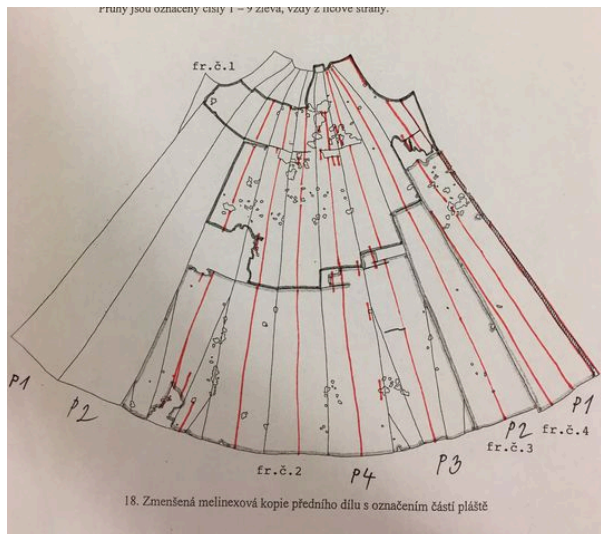
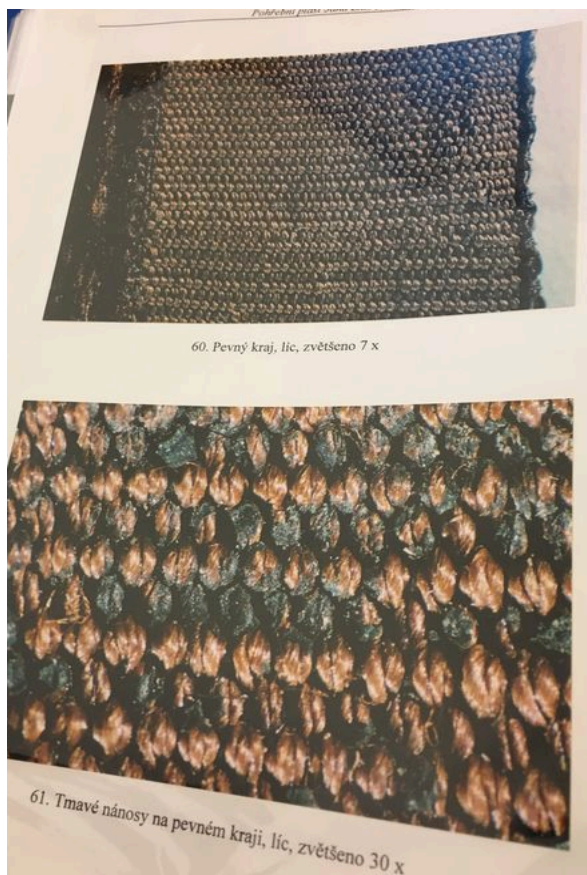
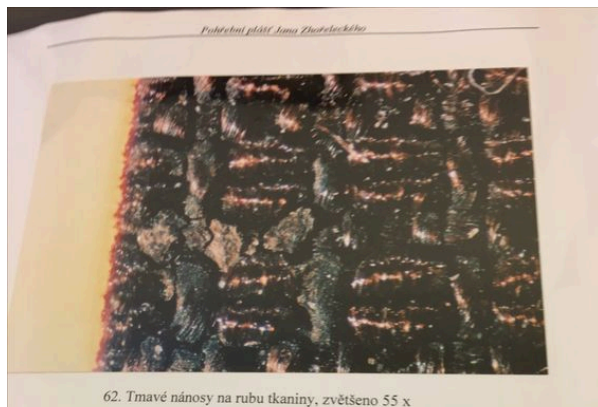
Thoughts and conclusions-

As mentioned previously there are some minor discrepancies between the Extent garment and this one, which is being explored further to see how much it affects the fit and drape. Also this garment seems to lack body seen in the artwork, it has natural drape that creates pleats/folds, but the are fine and lacking body. I suspect that the fur lining seen in the accounts and in the art would help add body to the garment.

Had I the opportunity I would have preferred to line with silk or fur. Colored linen was virtually non existent in the medieval period to to the fact that linen is notorious not color fast with natural dyes.

I am still pleased with the results of this garment much more than I have been with some other popular patterns for drafting houppelandes. Had I reversed the nap of some pieces this pattern would have been much more efficient use of fabric than the quarter circle patterns. I am also currently exploring a more efficient cutting pattern, that achieves almost the same luxuriness with $\frac{1}{3}$ less yardage needed.

Appendix A– Additional Conservation Photos of Prague Houppelande



Above- conservation diagram-front

Above Left- close up of the black silk velvet

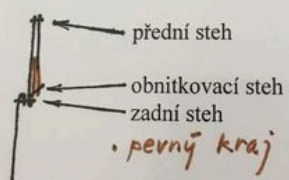
Below Left- close up of the selvage edge

Below right- Panel fragments





27. Stojáček z rubové strany
(detail)

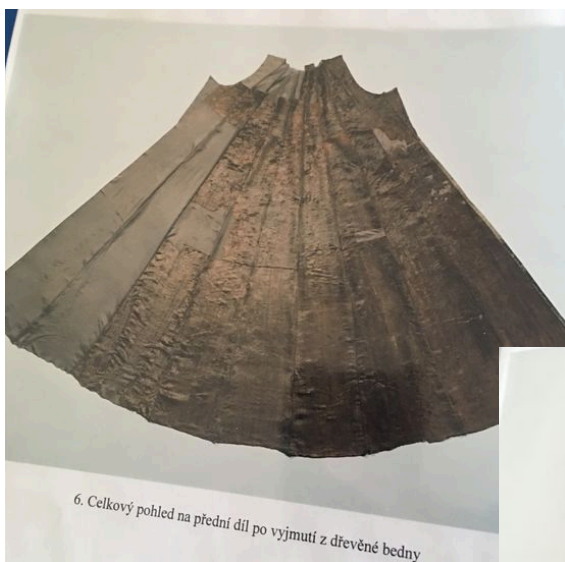


28. Kresba přišití stojáčku



Above left- collar and stitch diagram.

Above Right- close up of only extant stitches. Silk thread.



6. Celkový pohled na přední díl po vyjmutí z dřevěné bedny

Left- Back of the Houppelande laid out
Below- Front of the Houppelande laid out



7. Celkový pohled na zadní díl po vyjmutí z dřevěné bedny

Appendix B—More artwork of the time period

Pre 1390–



Margaret Briggs 1370

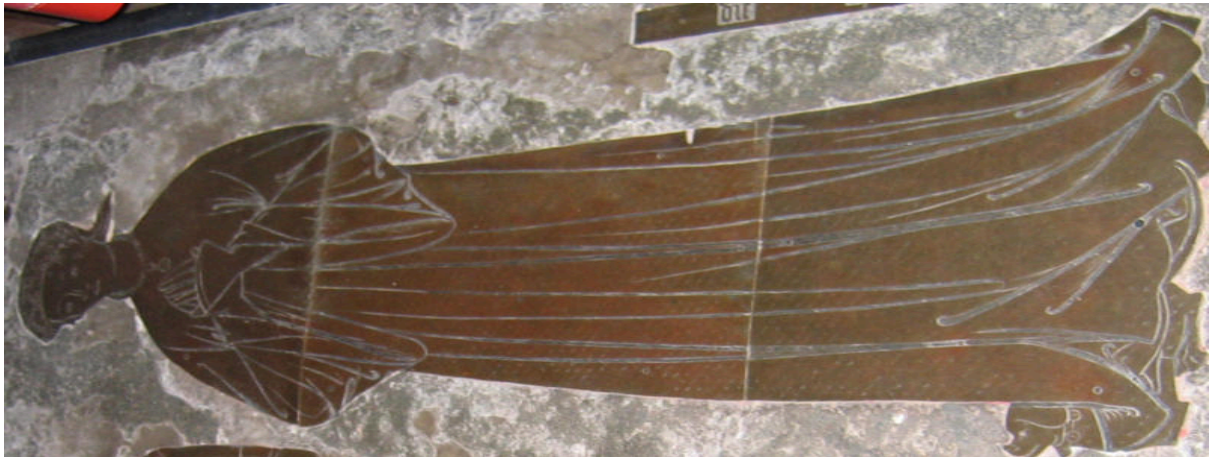


Katherine de Norwich 1381



Lady Malyns 1385

1390-1400



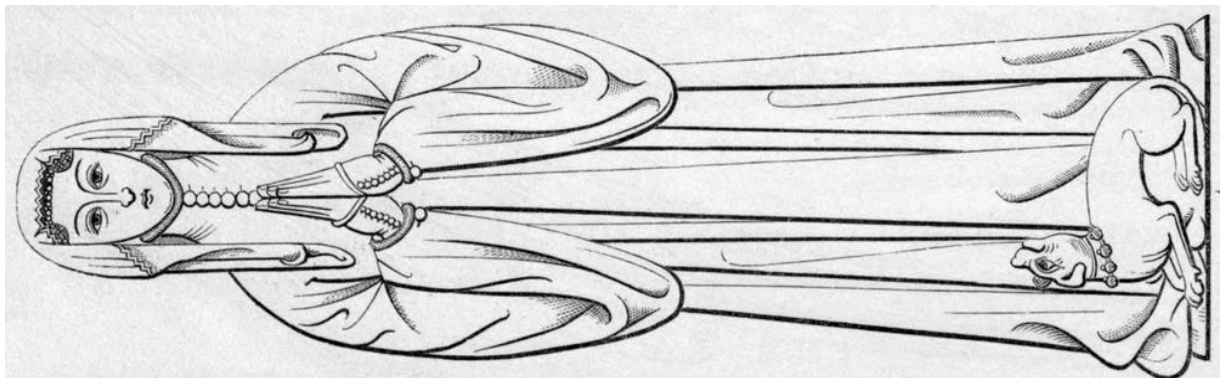
Lora de St Quintin 1397-Italy



Blanche de Navarre 1398- Paris France



Alice Cassey 1400- England



Tillbrook woman 1400- Bedfordshire England

1400-1410



Harley 1319 Jean Creton, La Prinse et mort du roy Richart (Book of the Capture and Death of King Richard II) France, Central (Paris); c. 1401 - c. 1405



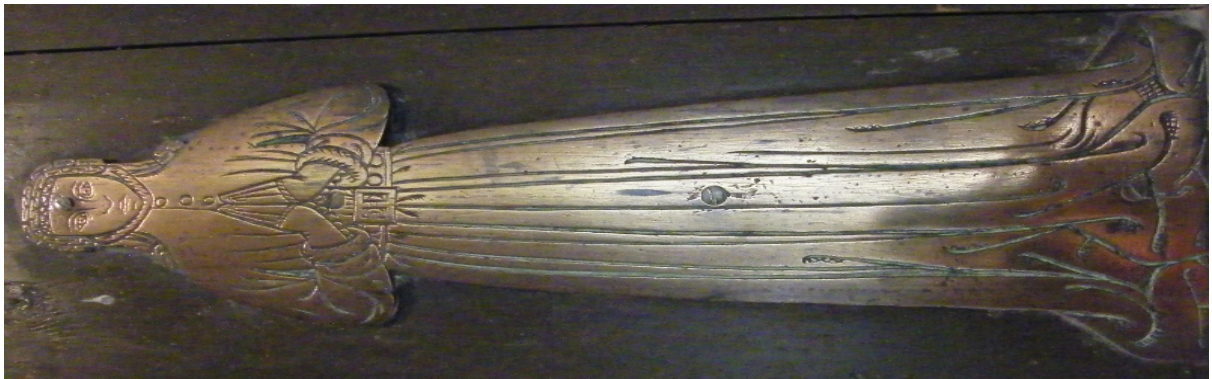
From frescoes at the Castello Buonconsiglio, c. 1405-1410



Clarices de Freville 1410-Cambridgeshire England



Ilaria del Caretto 1405- Denmark Copenhagen



Wife of Henry Nottingham 1405-England



Anna von Dalberg 1410-Germany

1410-1420



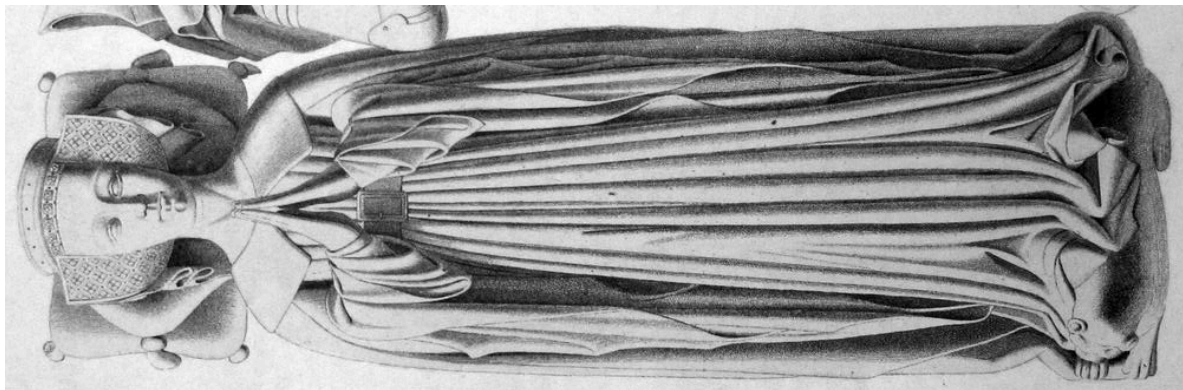
1) Left -Saint George and the dragon. 1415, picture from Fenis Castle in Italy

2) Above- Publius Terencius Afer, Comoediae [comédies de Térence] ca. 1411; Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms-664 réserve, 131v



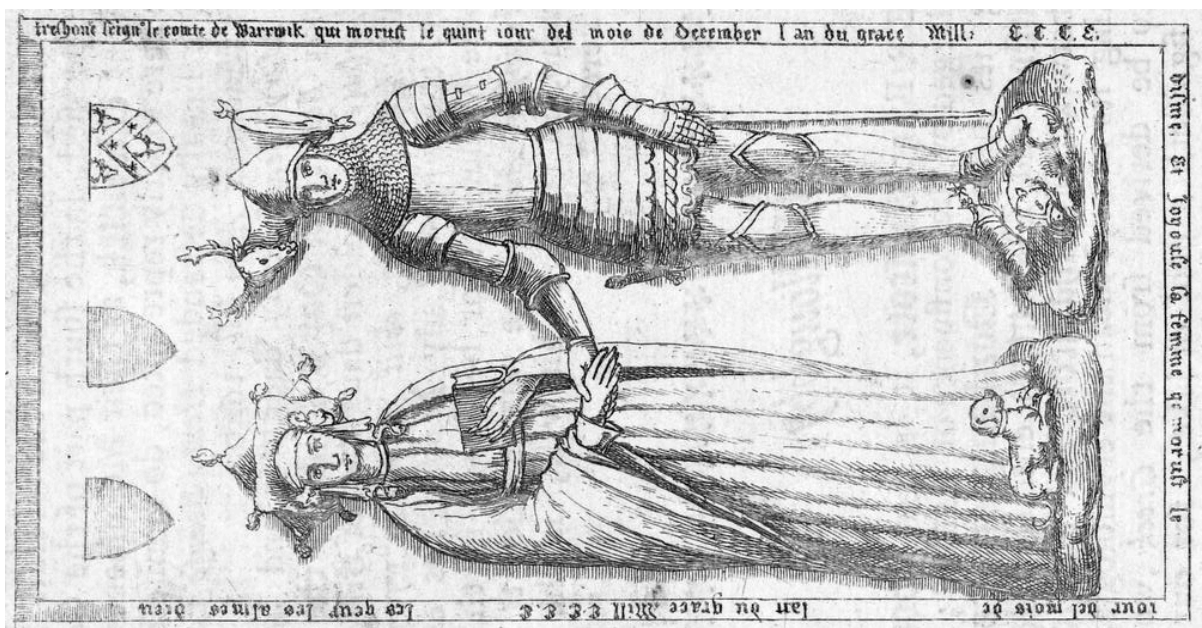
Above- Lucy first wife of William Willoughby 5th Baron Willoughby 1412

Below- Katharine de Stafford Countess of Suffolk-1415 Suffolk England





- 1) Above- Harley 4431 fol 117v detail (Apollo). Paris, France 1410-1414.
- 2) Right- Detail- The Tres Riches Heures -Duc du Berry, September, 1416.
Note- The lady in green at the back is wearing a houppelande, the lady in green in front has a fitted surcotte.
- 3) Below- Joyouse of Warwick- Warwickshire England- 1410



After 1420-



Above- Devonshire Tapestry-Falconry (detail), woven wool tapestry, Netherlands, possibly Arras, 1420-30s. Museum no. T.202-1957



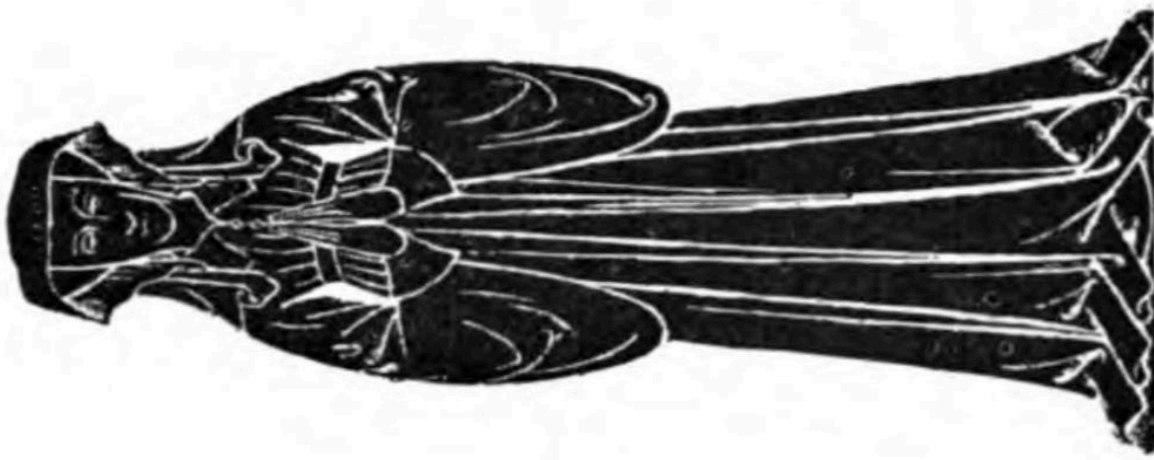
Left- Christine de Pisan presents her book to Queen Isabeau circa 1420

Below- Maude of Norwich 1428-Suffolk England





Unknown lady 1420- St Barts England



Harlow Women-1430- Essex England



Stuttgart Playing Cards - Royal (Queen) of Harts, c.1430 Germany

Sources

De Beaurepaire, Charles de Robillard: *Inventaire du mobilier du chateau Chaillou de l'annee 1416, 1866*. Gallica Bibliotheque Numerique copyright 1978

John of Görlitz's Funerary Clothing from the Royal Tomb of the Saint Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle, Dr. Milena Bravermanová 2005, Translated to English by Master Charles de Bourbon.

Conservation Photos and Documents-Prague Houppelande: John of Görlitz Funerary robe 1396, Master Charles De Bourbon, personal communications, Dec 2017.

Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince, Stella Mary Newton, The Boydell Press, c 1980

Illuminating Fashion; Dress in the Art of Medieval France and the Netherlands, Anne H. van Buren, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, c 2011

Textiles and Clothing 1150-1450, Elisabeth Crowfoot, Frances Pritchard, Kay Staniland, Boydell Press, c 2001

Dress Accessories 1150-1450, Geoff Egan and Frances Pritchard, Boydell Press, c 2002

Merchants, Princes and Painters, Silk Fabrics in Italian and Northern Paintings 1300-1550, Lisa Monnas, Yale University Press, c 2008

The History of Dress Series- Late Gothic Europe, 1400-1500, Margaret Scott, Mills & Boon Limited, Humanities Press, c 1980

A Visual History of Costume- the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Margaret Scott, B.T. Batsford Ltd, c 1986

Western European Illuminated Manuscripts, Tamara Voronova, Andrei Sterligov, Confidential Concepts, c 2006

The Royal Grave Clothing of 14th Century Bohemia, Tasha Kelly Mele, La Cotte Simple,
www.cottesimple.com/garments/royal-grave-clothing-14th-century-bohemia/

The Brazen Burgundian-Costume and Culture in 15th century Burgundy and France, Master Charles de Bourbon, <http://www.medievalburgundy.com/>

The Medieval Combat Society; Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Female Civilian Costume;

<http://www.themcs.org/costume/14th%20century%20Female%20Clothing.htm>

The Rise, Expansion, and Decline of the Italian Wool-Based Cloth Industries, 1100–1730: A Study in International Competition, Transaction Costs, and Comparative Advantage, John H. Munro, University of Toronto, c 2012

Effigies and Brasses;

<http://effigiesandbrasses.com>

Manuscript Miniatures;

<http://manuscriptminiatures.com>

14th century stitches, Dame Helen

<http://www.damehelen.com/clothing/sewing/>

Some clothing of the middle ages; Marc Carlson;

<http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~marc-carlson/cloth/bockhome.html> c 2006

Prague Style Houppelande

<http://www.chesholme.com/~jack/prague-houp/>

Houppelande of Jan Zhorelecky

http://www.kostym.cz/Anglicky/1_Originaly/01_Goticke/I_01_26.htm



Giovanni Boccaccio, *De Claris mulieribus*; Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France MSS Français 598; French; 1403, 12r.