

Griffin Needle Challenge 2023

Les Tres Riches Heures

(The Frenchies have shenanigans again!)



Les Tres Riches Heures du duc de Berry; Avril (1)

Charles, duc d'Orleans and Bonne d'Armagnac marriage at the Chateau de Dourdan
ca 1415 century noble French womens toilet

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With leather and fur work contributions by Godefroy de Lyon (Grant Johannes)



Inspiration figure from the manuscript (2)
Detail of Bonne d'Armagnac in the foreground

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Thanks to Professor Remi Daviet and Edwin Atta Bridge for helping me acquire research materials, and lending my dyslexic and often French mode brain their proofreading skills.

Thank you to Godefroy de Lyon for starting this particular shenanigan and helping source a team, unwavering support, encouragement and light hearted grumbles about the work he volunteered for. He also completed the shoes and hat roll within 3 dedicated evenings.

Thank you Clydwyn for being back up support and use of your Kumihimo cord machine.

Introduction and Scope

France and especially Paris in the early 15th century was a place of strife, war, and economic chaos. The aristocratic court became quite confined and insular. Within the confines of the court the appearance of one's garments showed power. A new era of opulence to achieve distinction, and with this a new fashion sense evolved.

This time period had increased contact with the muslim world, which began to influence western fashion. The return to flowing gowns for women (3), silken Fabrics, new dye colours, the turban like rolled hats (4), and the heavy use of bells and coral mimic Arabic culture of the Maghreb, that persists today. In fact in 1390, there was the Barbary Crusade in North Africa, which ultimately was defeated by the Berbers, but resulted in the French and Genoa courts having trade contracts with Tunis and Bejaia. (5)(6) And just like modern day people, these new exotic fashions are often only accessible by the elite, and entirely twisted by different cultural norms. Cultural appropriation appears to be deeply ingrained even then.



A rash of new Illuminated Manuscripts commissioned by these elite showcased the new idealised life of the nobility. The manuscripts became the equivalent of today's fashion magazines. (7)

As one can imagine, manuscripts often represented the noble ideal more than reality. In this project we are attempting to recreate the idealised trousseau of a lady from 1415. We have chosen the April folio of Duc de Berry's manuscript *Les Très Riche Heures*, dated from 1413-1416 France. We are recreating the outfit of Bonne d'Armagnac seen in blue patterned gown and black fur hat in the foreground. See figure 1 on the left. (2)

Given My Persona is also from a similar noble background as Bonne, this image felt appropriate to recreate. Also Real life Raven has budget concerns and this style of gown uses less fabric yardage, and has less seams needed to be done, both of which makes the goal of GNC more achievable, while maintaining the noble idea of being extra, than the houppe style also depicted in this image.

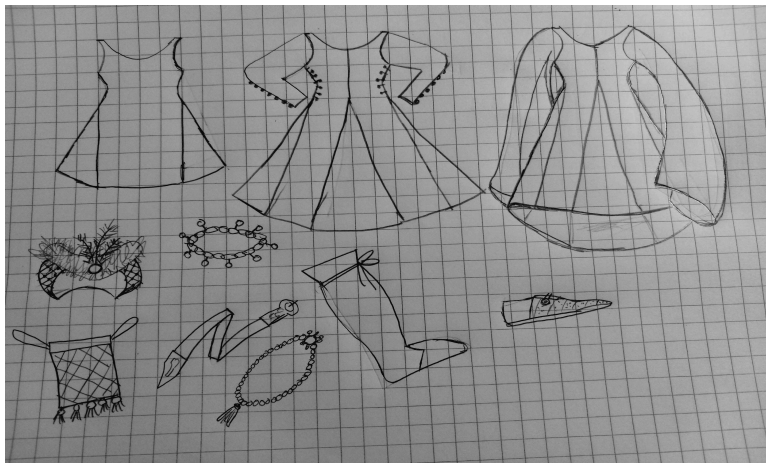
What does the image itself reveal?

The Inspiration image shows a young lady, Bonne de Armagnac, at her marriage to Charles D'Orleans. It is in an exceedingly decorated style. The black fur hat with feathers, the long, voluminous, visibly patterned fabrics with touches of gold, the fine snow white fur, the long chain of coral beads, the necklace.

It shows a gold under gown. In a close zoom you can see small regular dots in the exposed gown area, indicating a patterned or embroidered fabric. which could be a fine wool or most likely a silk given the rest of her outfit. It's tight at the sleeves, and trails several inches on the ground.

The outer fabric of the fashion gown has a soft drape, and could be a velvet, but is richly patterned in a way that velvet had not yet achieved, and the inventories I have studied have never indicated velvet for use in a fitted gown, and my own fitting experience shows that velvet would not have the strength for a fitted gown, so it is likely to be silk, or possibly figured wool, but again assumptions given her status, the rest of her outfit, and the occasion, most likely would be representing silk.

It also depicts a lining of pure white, most likely this would have been depicting a white fur lining of russian weasel, or possibly ermine, its snow white qualities would also be a noble trait because it meant you had the means and resources to keep it white, especially while dragging it around outdoors.



Given that information, we are attempting to recreate a fitted cotte, and a courtly surcote and headdress, along with a chemise, hose and shoes that would be the standard undergarments of this period, within the time frame allotted to this challenge. We have made a few accessories ahead of time to complete the lady's wardrobe, such as a coral paternoster, a gold necklace, a

fur hat roll, a purse, and a pair of shoes. A few decorative items that fit into this mediaeval ideal have also been purchased to complete the look.

Some of these items such as the necklaces, and headdress, are recreations of the scant visual representation, along with logical assumptions and in the spirit of chasing the noble ideal, as much as possible given material resources available within our budget, time, and current skills and knowledge. Just as the nobility themselves were doing. In the following pages I have attempted to document not only the materials found in the research, but also the symbolism and attitudes behind the mediaeval options to paint a wider picture of the significance such an outfit would carry in the court of Charles IV in 1415.



Left- Fabrics for this project

Black and gold brocade viscose cotton blend in a reproduction pattern
 Black tropical weight wool
 Hankie weight linen
 Red melton wool
 Gold "silk" a rayon mimicking a shantung
 Purple poly velvet and 8mm silk for lining

Notes-

- 1-Cover image- Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry; Avril
- 2-Détail Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry; Avril
- 3-Perrine Mane, Françoise Piponnier (1998). *Dress in the Middle Ages*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 89-90
- 4-Gabriel d'Èze (pseud.); A. Marcel (1886). *Histoire de la coiffure des femmes en France* (in French). Ollendorff. p. xx.
- 5-Hazard, Harry W. "Moslem North Africa, 1049–1394", pp. 457–485. In Harry W. Hazard, ed., *A History of the Crusades, Volume III: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.
- 6-Mirot, Léon. "Une expédition française en Tunisie au XIVe siècle: le siège de Mahdia, 1390". *Revue des études historiques*, 47 (1931), 357–406.
- 7-Blanc, Odile; *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress; From Battlefield to Court*, pp 159-161. Palgrave MacMillan; 2002

Coral Pater Noster Cord-



This object is very much in the spirit of mediaeval aesthetic, but I can document the historic use and significance, and individual elements of such a coral chain. It was made ahead of time specifically for this project. Evidence suggests this is a Pater Noster cord. Because I am not Catholic, I have chosen to deviate from the traditional bead pattern used in practice.

Coral jewellery in Europe has ancient roots. The Greeks believed it was the blood of Medusa, and Pliny the Elder recommended it as a talisman against lightning and temptresses. Medieval folks believed that it had mystical and religious properties that warded off the evil eye and was often given to children to protect them. (Erica Weiner) (8)

Coral was considered a precious material and grew in the deep waters of the mediterranean sea. Coral jewellery was lucrative, and was one of the major European industries to connect with and dispute fishing privileges on the North African coast. By the 15th century there were coral workshops set up in Genoa, Livorno, Marseille, and Cassis. (Mediterranean red coral) (9) A likely result of the trade contracts set up after the Barbary crusade. These products were then exported throughout Europe and Asia.

Starting around the 15th century, there was a great influx of coral, and guilds were established to create, regulate and control artistic works. This earned it the moniker of red Gold, and the guilds were extensively employed to produce sacred objects and other

artefacts designed to embellish courts all over Europe. However by the late 16th century it became a common commodity in Genoa, so much that the middle class was often found wearing coral ([Precious Coral and the Legacy of the Coral Road](#)). (10)

Several artistic examples of coral necklaces exist. One of the earliest being the Altarpiece of St. Proculus, Madonna and Child 1332 - by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, (Figure CC1) Many many italian artworks depict children wearing various small lengths of coral, or rattles. Some other religious depictions can be found on the e-Arthistory blog post on coral. (11)

<http://e-arthistory5.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-coral-of-it-all-part-i.html>

Through further research I discovered the primary use of coral beads were for Pater Noster cords. Because they represented devotion to God, the church didn't enact any sumptuary laws to ban them, also along with the children's necklaces, they could not be taxed, and so so the paternoster's cords were a way that women could easily show off wealth, and they often selected luxury beads, cords and tassels. ([Rosalie Medieval women](#)). (12)



See an extent 15th century piece ([figure XXX](#)), on the left and several artworks as seen in [figures XXX in Appendix X](#), and I've created a pinterest board with multiple images of coral used in paternoster cords from the 14th and 15th century. [link](#)

Closer to home, and the French nobility, French artworks I've been able to find include; In the same manuscript as our inspiration, Bonne is again in the May scene depicted wearing this same coral chain. (Figure CC2) In the [XXX](#) manuscript we see two young ladies wearing coral necklaces (figure CC3), and Also in a later manuscript, Hunting with falcons at the court of Philippe III, Duc de Bourgogne, c. 1460, depicting a scene of this same time frame we see two other ladies wearing long coral chains (Figures CC4, CC5) similar to the one Bonne wears in our inspiration image.

Left Figure XXX- Rosary of twelve times five sets, coral beads, silver Paternoster beads, with Crucifixion group, silver gilded, German, late 15th century.

In the Dijon inventories, in a 1397 entry, I found my first mention of coral paternosters. It reads as "*Item deux paternosters, les unes d'ember ou il y a une petite croix et 1 boton ou il a des perles de semance et les autres paternosters de botons d'argent, de coraul et d'ember, et y a unr petite croix d'argent et 1 petit boton de perles de semance. Prisiees : II frans*" ([13 p 267](#))

Translation- Item two paternosters, one of amber where there is a small cross and 1 button where there are seed pearls and the other paternosters of silver, coral and amber beads, and there is a small cross of silver and 1 small seed pearl button. Priced: II frans

Also the 1416 inventory of Chateau de Chaillou mentions “paternouster de courail” on page IX, page 2, page 3,

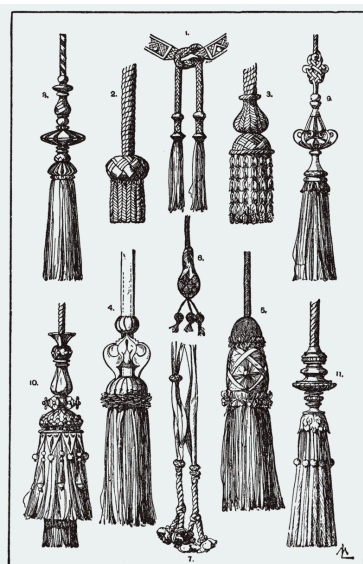
Such a long chain of large coral beads is expensive and ethically dubious given the current endangered state of coral. So I chose to use a few authentic coral beads I already had in my possession. I am not catholic, I chose to not follow the traditional pattern usually consisting of 50 or 150 beads with a larger bead at intervals of 5 or 10, and instead I chose a pattern which was both pleasing to me and has a bit of personal spiritual meaning. I placed the authentic coral beads closest to the front pin, then found more sustainable simulated coral beads that matched the size and colour to the best of my ability given my budget, and interspaced them with faux pearls and with faux gold beads to achieve the length depicted in the inspiration image.

I chose pearls as a filler because they were a symbol of both Power and Purity, and would often be given to children, much like coral, for protection. (Pearls: Piety, Poetry and Pre-Raphaelites) (14) Pearls have a long historical use, but before modern cultivation, natural pearls were imported from Persia, India, Red sea, or even China and Japan, making them expensive in Europe, (PBS Nova History of pearls) (15), and so very popular among the nobility as evidenced by images, inventories, and even have been found on extant paternosters, and are shown in some of the previous examples. The inventory entry of the coral paternoster also mentions seed pearls as a part of the item. (13)

So They seemed to be “two households both alike in dignity”, meaning they are well matched in both symbolism and luxury. I also had a large quantity of faux pearls in my possession from previous projects, and are comparatively budget friendly in the modern sense.

The faux gold beads were chosen because there are many instances of gold and or silver gilt beads being in the inventories, stories, artwork and even extant pieces, as seen on the paternoster previously mentioned. (figure x) They also added another element of perceived luxury to the cord and were budget friendly, being already in my possession.

Rosalie Medieval women’s website indicates gold thread was a material used in the period. (12) I used two strands of metallic gold thread, that is most likely a polyester fibre, chosen for its lustre, strength, and affordability. The beads are tied at intervals around the gold beads to minimise loss in case of breakage.



Tassels

Left- Illustration of various tassels, from *A Handbook of Ornament*, by Franz Sales Meyer (17)

Tassels Have an ancient history, They had significant symbolism in both the jewish and muslim world. They could remind one of the commandments, or protect you from evil. And so with contact with the Levant and the Arab world in the high middle ages they became popular in France and Spain, and a common element to the paternosters.(18) history of tassels

And their creation was a highly skilled craft that the French eventually became the primary exporter of silk tassels. The tassels in the period most likely would have been gold silk fibre, and tied around a wooden button. (19) [wikipedia](#)

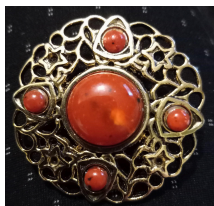
I don't have that much silk fibre available to me, or bandwidth to create tassels, so I purchased a modern dupe of rayon and added a few beads until I felt like it matched.

The Centre Brooch



The Inspiration manuscript image doesn't show how this paternoster is attached, but the extent pieces and the imagery shows that a religious symbol, such as a pilgrim badge or a cross would have been typical. However, again I am not catholic, I decided to add a piece from my collection with a personal significance, This brooch was given to me on my travels abroad. I don't know the exact origin or date of this brooch, but given the source it's most likely a 19th century bijoux created for the European tourist market in Algeria. But what I do know is that it is real gold and coral, and is very similar in style to mediaeval pieces. [See figures](#)

[xxx](#) It also brings in another element to the spirit of North African influence to early 15th century fashion.



As this piece was missing a few charbons, I added some pearls with bead findings in ways that wouldn't alter or damage the existing piece, and to further match the mediaeval visual aesthetic. It also continues on the theme of Coral and pearls. See its original state in the photo on the left.



In it's final state this coral chain is reminiscent of the bijoux depicted in figure x on the left dated from later in the 15th century

[IL PERUGINO e aiuti - Tondo della Vergine col Bambino tra due sante e due angeli, dettaglio - 1490-1495 - Museo del Louvre, Parigi](#) [translate this!](#)

Notes-

8- <https://ericaweiner.com/history-lessons/coral-and-the-grand-tour>

<https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/material-civilization/transnational-consumption-and-circulations/mediterranean-red-coral-a-european-merchandise-first-globalization>

<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-5275-6783-2-sample.pdf>

<http://e-arthistory5.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-coral-of-it-all.html>

<http://e-arthistory5.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-coral-of-it-all-part-ii.html>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/history-pearls/>

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/pearls-piety-poetry-and-pre-raphaelites-part-one>

<https://rosaliegilbert.com/paternosters.html>

<https://books.openedition.org/pumi/41938>

<https://so-sew-easy.com/a-short-history-of-tassels/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tassel#:~:text=During%20the%20Middle%20Ages%20tassels,term%20by%20their%20French%20creators.>

Gold necklace



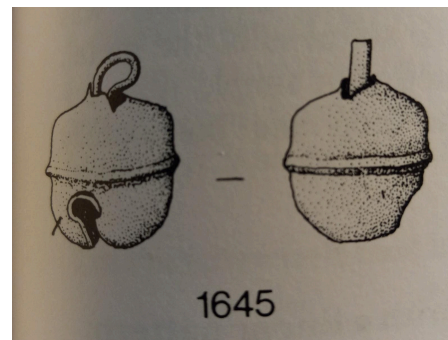
In the inspiration image, you can see bonne and the lady behind her wearing gold necklaces, with round objects hanging from them. In this period, this might have been beads, pearls, bells, or even cast buttons. In much the same way as the coral bead chain, this necklace is in the spirit of the atheistic.

I chose bells, because there are many images of the time period with bells hanging from sleeves, or belts. Often called Folly bells, These became a popular phenomenon in the beginning of the 15th century. See figure [x](#) on the left, along with the [appendix figures x-x](#).




Several examples of bells have been found in the London digs. One of which, [figure x](#), is depicted below, is of a similar shape, size and material as the brass bells I have chosen.

Right- Figure [x](#) Item 1645 brass with iron pea, d 13mm, loop 18mm. Dress Accessories p.338



I suspect that Bells arose in popularity due to a few factors, the first was that bells had been a longstanding religious symbol, often representing purity and protection. Below are some photos taken by Kasia Gromek of a 15th century Penitential pilgrims' chain with bells. Figures [x,x](#).



According to The Air of History (Part II) Medicine in the Middle Ages during the black plague- "Others believed that the air had become "stiff" and had to be broken up by loud noises. So, bells were rung, guns were fired, and birds were released to fly around rooms."  So the practice of wearing bells may have been inspired by plague superstitions.

Also bells had been worn in many islamic cultures and the increased contact with these cultures may also have been a factor in the popularity in dress at this time period.

I simply purchased some gold chain, closures, jump rings and brass bells of an appropriate size that seemed to match the scale in the original image from a craft store, and used some needle nosed pliers to assemble them together.

notes-

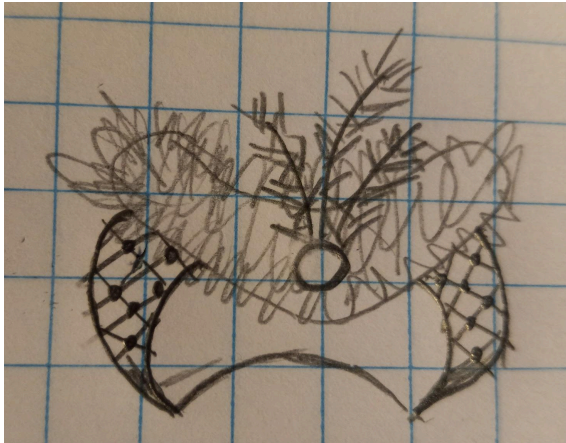
<https://www.langantiques.com/university/renaissance-jewelry/>

<https://www.britannica.com/art/bell-musical-instrument>

<https://www.virtue.to/articles/bells.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3573364/>

Bourrelet and Escoffion



Rolled hats were very common in the artwork of this era, see **figures x-x** in the appendix, however this is only one of two examples i've seen of a hat clearly depicted as fur, nor have come across any in any inventories. So again this accessory is in the spirit of chasing the mediaeval ideal. While this particular hat could be a simple round roll, 95% of the imagery of this particular hat are shaped, and supported either by intricate hairstyles or some sort of framework. I don't have the hair to achieve this, so I choose to create a framework to support it.

The **bourrelet**, a word that originally simply means something stuffed or padded. **(x)** Also the term chaplet could refer to a decorative circlet or a padded roll of silk and ribbon. **(x)**

I have found references to Bourrelets in the inventories, which seemed to be of the stuffed roll variety only, but the majority of the french inventories I've studied are based on the late 1390's, which follows the artwork of the time just starting to depict these kinds of hats, often without a base. So for this project I am referring to the stuffed roll as a bourrelet, and the entire headdress as a Escoffion.

Gabriel d'Èze (pseud.); A. Marcel (1886). *Histoire de la coiffure des femmes en France*
<https://rosaliegilbert.com/glossary.html>

Bourrelet



The Bourrelet evolved from the rolled chaperones of the previous decades. It wasn't uncommon to find chaperones lined in beaver, Sable , Martin or black lamb at the end of the 14th century Dijon inventories. If these hats were to be rolled to expose the fur lining then I speculate that a fur Bourrelet worn by Bonne wouldn't be unusual.

Besides, what project would Godefroy be involved in without something fur?

Dark furs became fashionable in the 15th century, Sable being often depicted as black in Heraldry, along with Beaver and black lamb being valuable. **(x)** *Dress in the Middle Ages*.

It is actually a circle! I swear! Lol.



We attempted to order a fur that was a match for this project, but the vendor was on vacation, and wouldn't arrive in time for G to complete this part. So instead we found a budget friendly fur, that matched the floof of the fur in the inspiration image, in this case a repurposed fox sleeve, as a substitution. Fox was often used in other garments of the period, often seen depicted as a lining on men's houppelandes, and repurpose fur was also a period practice, even in noble castles. (veale XXX)



We used a base from a previously made rolled hat, it was simply a study cotton fabric stuffed with polyester batting. I suspect that In period this would have probably been a linen cover, because linen was a common material for interlining fur, and stuffed with wool, or cotton, or maybe even scraps of old fabrics. We used the old fashion fabric as a pattern, and using period fur sewing techniques, G sewed a fur cover for it.

This particular fur is too fluffy, the proportion is way off from the image, but It's what we have to work with at the moment. Given time, I will adjust this, I hope to cut down on the bulk, by sliming down the roll. Lesson learned! Sable/Martin or beaver definitely would have been the preferred fur for this project! And is the fur usually mentioned for hat use in the inventories.

In order to retain the shaping needed I added a thick wire and threaded it through the centre of the roll before adjusting and closing it up.

Framework



Due to not having an extent example, most of this framework is experimental and based on art images a decade or two later, see image to the left (X), and other people's interpretations.

In this case I followed the example of Cynthia Virtue, found on her website

<https://www.virtue.to/articles/arnolfini.html>

<https://www.virtue.to/articles/reticulated.html>



Above- Detail of Anne of Burgundy, Bedford hours, Paris 1423-30 ms18850 f257v

Left- Giovanni Boccaccio (Italian, 1313-1375). *Decameron* (detail), 1418-1419.

Insert Progress photos of creating the framework, and the lining of linen.

The London finds show several pieces of bent wires ranging from .2mm to 1.5mm that have been covered by silk fragments, assumed to be parts of headdresses. (x) dress accessories p 295-296 I used a 1mm wire to create the basic framework. And used linen to cover the framework, to protect my hair, skin to cushion to fashion fabric.

I chose a royal purple velvet for the fashion covering. Most recreators of this hat use velvet, and it's kind of been cemented in my brain. I don't know how accurate that is, but I do know that Velvet was becoming extremely popular, yet expensive, in this era as the Italian silk market perfected the art. Royal Purple was also an expensive dye, often created by importing and grinding Cochineal shells to get the dye. So again it just seems appropriate given my knowledge. This is not real silk, but a decent modern interpretation of silk velvets.

The decoration on this shall be a net of gold couching and pearl beads. The metallic threads are synthetic, and we will use a mixture of real and faux pearls.

The brooch and feather decoration-

Many bourrelets in the artwork show a gold centrepiece, and a chance to add a touch more bling to the outfit to help achieve the mediaeval ideal of more is more! This was simply a case of me finding a pretty mediaeval looking brooch on Amazon that matched the theme, gold and pearls, and a few peacock feathers.



The piece I chose for the center was reminiscent of this reproduction piece based off of Holbein in the 16th century. Image from danegeld.co.uk

Hat notes

Shoes



The shoes for this project are a revision of a previous version and the documentation can be found here.

A late 14th/Early 15th Century Shoe- 2nd Attempt!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mkFX-O5hajh8ThSzIW6rLabRHUAskjkyZN5fGl1Jt2w/edit?usp=drivesdk>

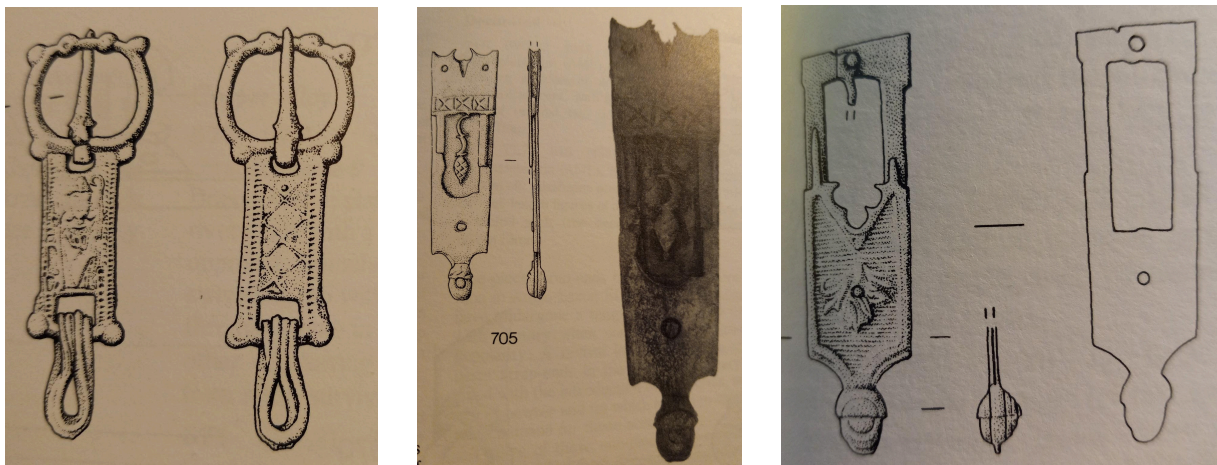
The bulk of these shoes was done ahead of time by Godefroy, however there are some finishing details such as seam treatments and buckles that did need to be finished on site for this challenge.

Belt

When your teammates decide last minute you need an embroidered purse, then you must have a belt to go with it right? Right? Sigh scope creep.

Since this was a last minute addition, I don't have as much research on this. But there are many examples of these kinds of belts, in art, in the inventories, in the London finds, and in many museums. I've bookmarked a few websites, a few pinterest links of extent bits and bobs, and examples in both the inventories and Dress Accessories book. Just ask me to show you!

These images are extent belt buckles and strap ends found in the London digs.
Dress Accessories P. 122 and 148



This is the buckle and strap end I found on amazon! Clearly made by a reenactor who knows their stuff! The originals are copper alloy, and this reproduction is brass.

These findings are meant for a 1" belt, so we also acquired a 51" black leather belt blank in that size.

We also acquired a brass rivet kit, and watched a few youtube videos of how to mount them. Hopefully between our collective knowledge and my hole punch from the shoe project we can get this quick project together!

Future plans include adding more mounts as is proper for a noble woman's belt.

<http://www.larsdatter.com/belts.htm>

<https://rosaliegilbert.com/beltsandgirdles.html>

Cords and Aglets?

The need to tie your clothing to your body with string, it's a very mediaeval problem. In this project, we need string for the purse, for the lacing on the cotte, and for hose garters.

Because of time constraints we chose to cheat. Clydwyn had a friendship bracelet machine that essentially makes Kumihimo cord.

Kumihimo braiding was an ancient Japanese art, while period, it probably would not have been found much in Europe at this time. Other forms of braid, such as lucet cord, finger weaving, or even basic braids probably been more appropriate.

Again, time and money being a factor, I picked up some cotton embroidery floss and after a bit of practice made some basic cords. It's not perfect, but will do for less visible areas.



For the purse strings I have chosen to use a twisted gold braid because it is a more visible item, and I've seen quite a few entries in the inventories about gold braids being a popular household item in a woman's trousseau.

Item- II petiz heneaulx d'or, en l'un des quelx il a 1 petite saphir, et en l'autre IIII petites perles et VI autres verges d'or pesans IIII treseaulx et demi prisiez: III frans IIII gros demi

Translation- 2 small gold braids, one of them has 1 small sapphire, and the other has 4 small pearls and 9 gold bars, weighing 4 treseaulx (?) and a half. Priced 3 francs and 3 large halves. (x) Dijon inventory p267

I did order brass reproduction aglets (or chapes) for the end of the cords, but they went missing, and budget and time don't allow for another order.

Embroidered Purse

Seeing as my teammates are fond of embroidery and were influential, silly scope creep. As such This purse was a last minute inclusion to our project.

I chose to use the same velvet from the headdress for the purse. There is an example of a velvet purse with tassels in Dress Accessories.



“Description drawstring pouch made from a rectangular strip of half silk velvet folded double and finished along both the sides and top opening with tablet woven edge; the tassels in the corners are made from the warp ends of the tablet woven edging with some extra threads woven in, and the tassel in the centre is sewn on to the velvet. H 80mm; W 75mm” (Dress accessories p 348)

Our team will use our knowledge and examples of period embroidery to choose a pattern that was more likely to be achievable and period appropriate. One site.

We Have gathered a bunch of different embroidery floss, some silk, some cotton, gold couching braid, pearls, for this project.

Some examples of embroidered purses can be found in the pinterest links, Tasha’s site <https://cottesimple.com/articles/medieval-embroidery-on-clothing/>, and images below.



Swiss Alms Purse 1320 Zurich



Germany 1300-99



French 14th century (MET)

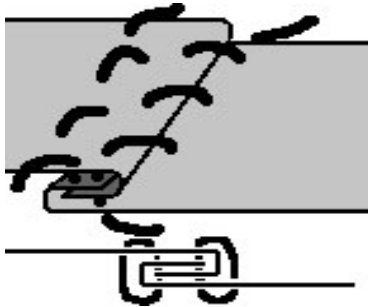


French 14th century

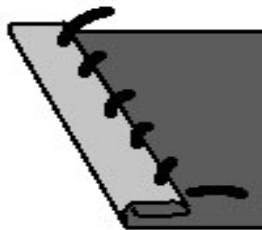
Basic Sewing Techniques

These drawings come from the Archaeological Sewing website, for ease of depicting the stitches and techniques used.

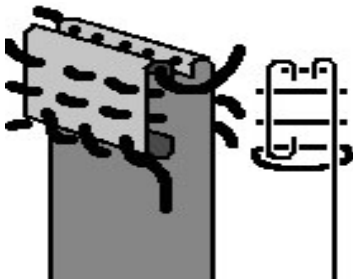
<http://heatherrosejones.com/archaeologicalsewing/wool.html#WSRunning>



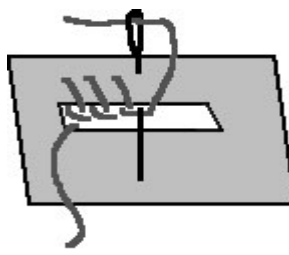
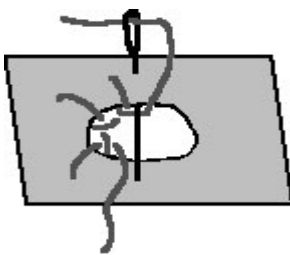
For this project we are using basic sewing stitches. A running stitch on the seams, with the occasional backstitch, about 5-7 stitches per inch. Because all the fabric I have chosen have a tendency to fray, the seam allowances will need to be finished with a flat felling.



For Hems and any other edges a simply fold the raw edge under and hem stitch.



The neck, and edges on the cote for lacing and button sleeves on the cote will have a bit of silk facing for strength.

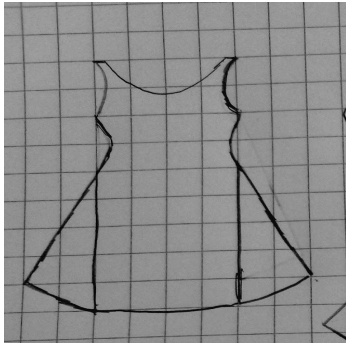


Eyelets and Button holes with basic blanket stitches

Threads-

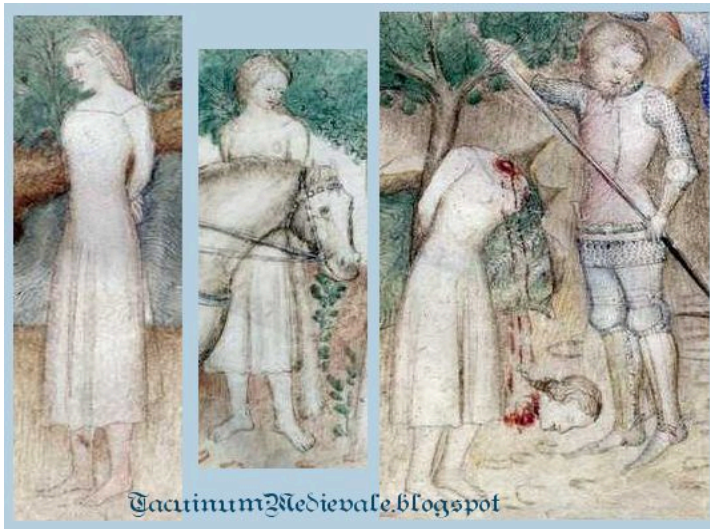
A project of this size and scope gets expensive, and has a lot of tiny factors at play. One of the things that was affected by budget and time, was the types of threads we used. Some of the threads are silk, as would have been the expected threads for working with fine wools, silks and velvets, notably some of the black and white threads. A lot of the decorative threads are cotton or polyester, chosen for their colour, metallic properties, strength, or availability.

Underdress/Chemise-



In the late 14th, early 15th century bathing was still popular, although it did wane as the century progressed due to fears of the plague. But the best way to stay fresh in this era was to have the proper undergarments. The underdress was meant to absorb sweat and body oils and help protect the subsequent layers from odours. This layer was often white linen which was known to wick moisture away. It would be changed daily, and washed frequently and laid out in the sun to bleach out bacteria and odours. Oftentimes people also would have body clothes

that would be used for daily rubbing of the body.



There are quite a few different sources of undergarments throughout the 14th century, both written and depicted in art. In both there is quite a bit of variation. You can see many full long sleeved garments depicted in the artwork earlier in the century,

Most depictions of undergarments are very similar to the image on the left. A slightly shaped garment, to mid calf with long sleeves and a neckline low enough to not show when under other layers. This would

have been to go to standard. Due to ease of construction, functionality, and ability to hold up to washing.

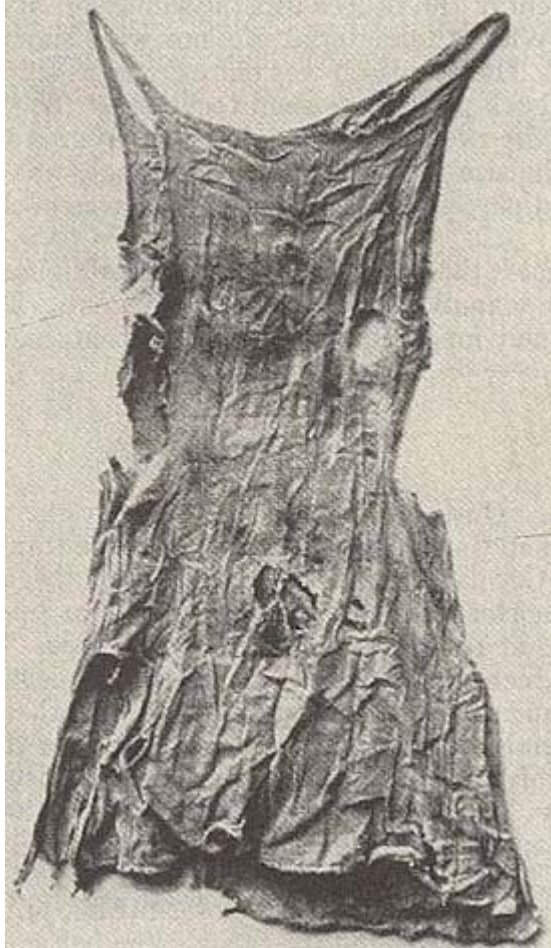


Bible of Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia, 1389

However In writing there are descriptions of breast band, binding, tightly laced undergarments, and even breast bags sewn into them to support the bust, the Tyrol castle finds being an excellent example. There are some sleeveless options depicted in the 1389 Wenceslaus bible- some of which show front lacing.

So my take on it is that the undergarments were largely a personal preference based on your body type and the shape you are trying to achieve.

So due to ease of construction and the fact that a bulky underdress causes severe sensory issues with me I have chosen the bit more scandalous route of choosing a body skimming, sleeveless undergarment for this project. There was an extant garment that was shorter and sleeveless like a modern day slip, although it was unfortunately lost in WWII there are still some photos and documentation floating around.



Chemise ladie's undergarment, 14th century, *castle Ranis, Thuringen (Germany*
A History of Costume; Kohler.

Linen-

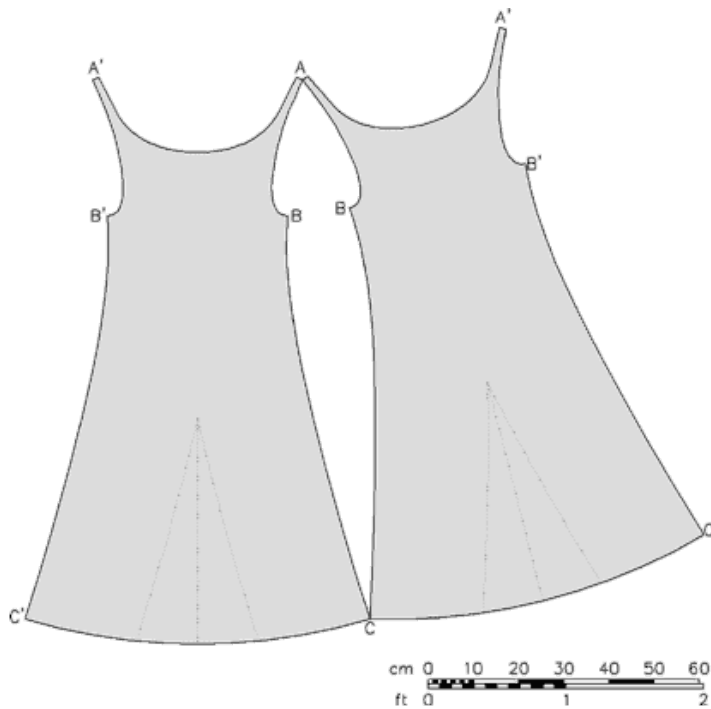
It's a fascinating thing, in both the 1390's Dijon and chateau de Chaillou inventories I've been studying, there is very little mention of anything I can discern as being undergarments, however the French Inventories of this time mention various places where linens were acquired, Reims, Paris, Lincoln, etc... each with an easily discernible quality by sight. It is clear that linen tends to be graded by the place it came from, and each has their own price, and therefore an assumed quality.

(show) with translation

I suspect that this is heavily based on the guild system, because each city would have had access to flax grown in different conditions, and each guild typically having their own unique processes that were often regarded as secrets.

Due to personal limitations, I wasn't able to source linen from these places, instead my source was Lin de Fabric-store.com- a common modern online linen vendor, known more for its price and variety more than its quality. I chose the lightest weight linen, which is their finest available. This linen i am pretty sure is of a shorter staple, and not as fine quality as would be found in a noble household. Period linens would have been long staple, with very few slubs, and probably softer and more durable. I have washed the linen several times in an attempt to help soften it, and remove any sizing that is a part of modern fabric production.

Construction-



Pattern from <http://www.kostym.cz>

Based on: A History of Costume; Carl Köhler

This extant garment was sleeveless, constructed from 2 body panels, and was about knee length, and split gores in the front and back of the body panels.

The pattern has been adjusted to my personal measurement.

The extant garment has a small 2cm silk facing. This facing would have been used to stabilise stretch and the longevity of the garment that would have been used daily, and gone through harsh washing techniques . I have

chosen to forgo this facing because I don't use these garments daily, I have the modern luxury of gentle washing methods, and frankly I prefer the stretch in the neckline because I use my undergarments with a variety of different necklines, and the silk is a change in texture against my skin which can be problematic. Plus it saves time for a challenge such as this.

Due to time, ease, and the resulting drape and/or bias stretch of the garment, We have chosen to insert solid gores into the side seams instead, just below the waist line for maximum movement and comfort. .

We used basic stitches on this garment: a simple running stitch with the seam allowances flat felled, and a simple turned hem tacked with a whip stitch. **See figures (x)**

Hose!

There are very few examples of women's hose, But we know they were a standard garment for everyday wear as depicted by the art of the time period. There are several examples that show women with knee length coloured hose that are tied around the knee.



Here is an image of an extant pair, Image from

<https://www.greydragon.org/library/underwear3.html>

Anyways, the few surviving examples of hose were always wool, and cut on the bias, which makes sense since wool absorbs body secretions and mitigates odours, and has the stretch needed for fitting a curvy body.

I chose a pattern that minimised seams and bulk in areas that would cause me distress. Modifying my garments to accommodate my sensory issues. In this case a pattern that has a distinctive M seam on the fore part of the foot and a solid sole piece.

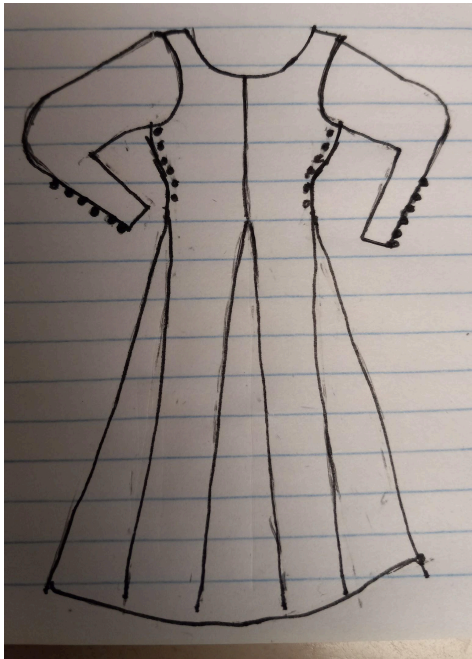




I arrived at my pattern by steps. The first time, I used paper and tape to create a cast of my leg, and marked the seam placement and cut it out along those lines.

It turns out that wool is stretchy, especially when cut on the bias! My first mockup was quite large. And needed to be taken in quite a bit! But soon it turned into a functional pattern! Which I have successfully worn in the past.

Fitted Cotte Simple-



The mediaeval silhouette is one that is highly shaped and supported at this time. With a high curvy bust being revealed by a low round neckline, and slim fit waist. Since many of the fashion garments are lined with fur or silk, have buttons, or are loose houppelandes, it would be extremely hard to achieve the level of fit and support needed, so the layers underneath are the foundation garments providing this shape.

The cotte, godet, or kirtle in English, is the foundation layer for all classes, and when the nobility is in domestic or agricultural scenes doing stuff and things, they are depicted in the highly fitted cotte with fitted sleeves. Occasionally we can see the cotte is depicted as being laced either in the centre or on the side and often with buttons on the sleeve, although that seems to be fading out for the nobility by 1415.

I feel that with such an event depicted in our inspiration image, A typical mediaeval person would have probably chosen the finest material for the cotte as well as the fashion surcotte, which in this time would have been a fine silk. If we look closely at the image, the cotte looks to be gold coloured and dotted with small red flecks of embroidery.

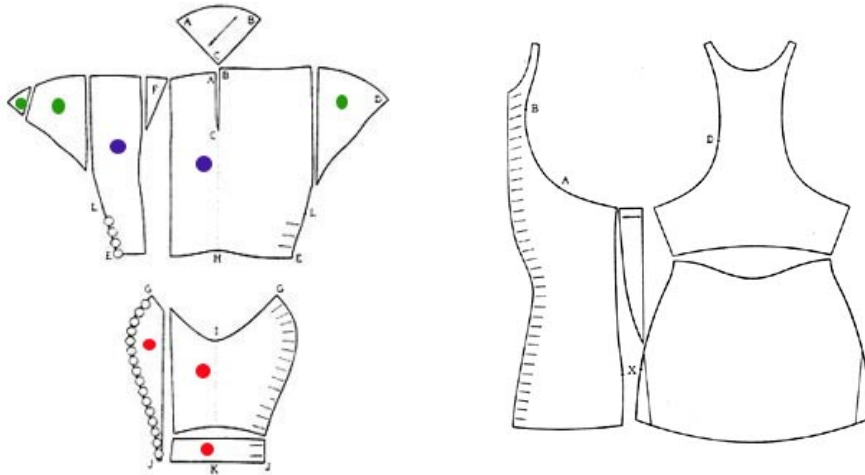
However, I cannot afford gold embroidered silk. So I chose a fine tropical weight black wool from my stash for this project. It is 100% wool with a soft hand and drape, yet sturdy enough to be a sole supportive layer for my body type. Because it is so light weight it is also versatile, being an adaptation due to the fact that we often reenact indoors, or in humid summers. I have yet to study the finer details of the different weights and drapes of wool available in period, but I do know they had many more different grades and qualities available modernly. This wool however seems to fit the mediaeval ideal of highest quality one can afford. And there are plans to add embroidery at a later date.

The colour of the wool was an important factor. Unlike the modern era of cheap dyes, in the 15th century colour played a significant role in showing one's wealth. New dying techniques towards the end of the 14th century resulted in deeper blacks being achieved by multiple dye baths. **(rennaissance velvets)** Making it both expensive and popular. The 1416 Normandy castle inventory reveals that approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the garments were created by multiple dye baths or expensive kermes dyes. **(x) Inventaire du mobilier du chateau**

Many inventory entries call out cottes as wool or occasionally silk. Unlike the outer layers, most often cottes are listed as simple or single without a lining worthy of note, so either they were typically one layer, or lined in an inexpensive fabric such as linen. So following that route I am leaving this cotte unlined since I don't require the support a lining provides, and want to save time in the construction.

Fitting and patterning!

This is a four panel gown with four gores, one of which might be a split gore, making use of the selvedge and reducing waste, which was a very period practice. Even the pourpoint of Charles de Bois, a rival but also an equal of my persona, had his silk pieced together. See the sketches from Cotte simple below.



<https://cottesimple.com/articles/tailoring-grande-assiette/>

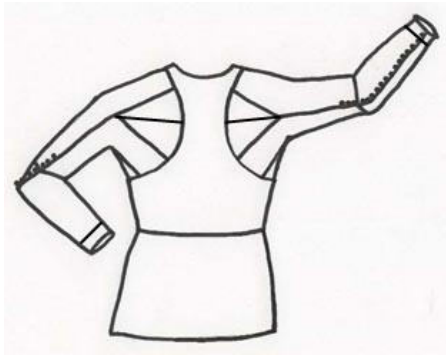
Visible fastenings down the front seemed to have fallen out of fashion, but in order to maintain the bust support and silhouette of the time period, I need it to fit tighter under the bust than a pull over in wool can maintain. Spiral lacing on a curved seam tends to bunch, looking messy and feeling uncomfortable, so I chose to add some eyelets and spiral lacing under the arms, so the front would maintain smoothness for the fashion layer, and minimise bunching, which would also be less visible under the sleeves.



Here are a few visual examples of side lacing from cadieux.medium.com.

Also see my Pinterest link for more!

Sleeve treatment-



I am also using the pourpoint of Charles de Bois as a reference for the fitting of the sleeves on this cote. For ease of movement and versatility I have chosen a modified grande assiette sleeve construction. See sketch from Cotte simple on the left.

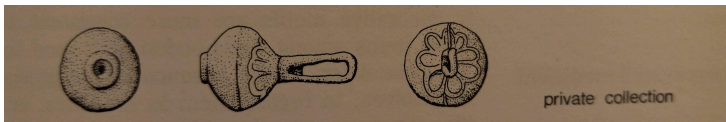
While mine are simplified, I'm still using a wider shoulder and gores in the back of my sleeve for a fuller range of movement.

One of the reasons I decided to use buttons on these sleeves was due to an entry in the 1416 castle inventory. **(x)Inventaire du mobilier du chateau Chailloue**

Item, deux paires de longues à boutons de pearls, l'une et l'autre à boutons et dedans d'or et un tournet d'or a une perle

Translation- item, 2 pairs of pearl lanyards, one with gold buttons and one with gold twisted around a pearl. (p3)

Which shows that buttons were still very much in use in 1416, and I do like pearls, and since the secondary color of this outfit seems to have become gold, I found a set of faux gold and pearl buttons. The style of the buttons also closely matches a metal button found in the London digs, **(x)**



Dress Accessories p.277



My gold and pearl buttons

Cottes often had small amounts of silk used as facings or as structure being lacings or button holes. As seen in textiles and clothing 1150-1450 book pages 159-164, 168

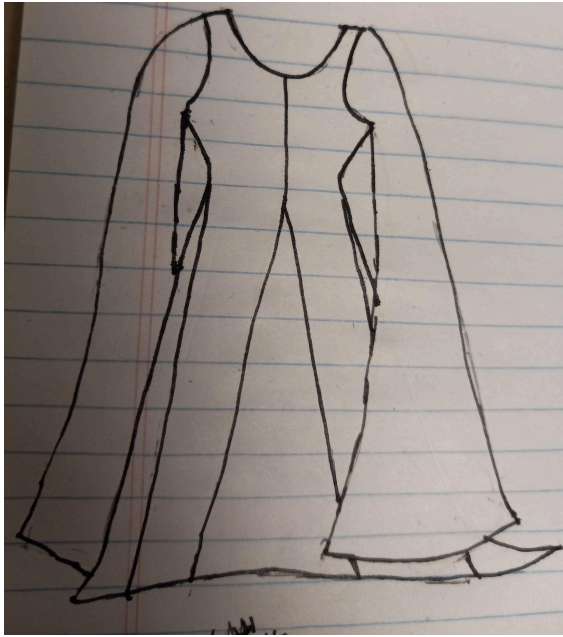
Because this cote is unlined, I felt it was essential to include these small details for the longevity of the garment. There is silk facing at the neck, at the side laced opening and along both sides of the sleeve buttons. I chose to have a spiral laced side opening because I didn't want the lacing to be visible or ghost through the fashion layer, and much of the artwork depicting these cottes at this time seems to minimise the visibility of any lacing. I decided to add buttons on the sleeves, for 2 reasons, it adds a bit of extra detailing that would have been the mediaeval ideal, and for the fact that it adds to the adaptability to the garment for actual use.

Drafting a Fitted Gown- See my previous research document on this here!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pH9TqOp1OJYLT2p8W6P3KePwlqhrpLxQjB08RISe7L0/edit#heading=h.vha6iatpih09>

notes-

Fashion layer- Cotehardie with Bombard sleeves



The most visible layer on our inspiration figure is a blue brocade garment. It is form fitting with large wide hanging sleeves. Commonly called a cotehardie with bombard sleeves. It was a fashionable style lasting about 15 years from about 1400 to 1415.

So fashionable and excessive was this style that côte-hardies with bombards were criticised by Christine de Pizan in her writings:

“And isn’t it a great outrage, even a silly thing, that which a grown tailor in Paris told the other day, that he had made for an ordinary lady living in the Gâtinois a côte-hardie into which he put five Paris ells of large-measured Brussels cloth, which trails a good three quarters (of an ell) on

the ground, and into its bombard sleeves, which hang all the way to the feet?” (Pizan 159).

Bonne’s hem is dagged and it reveals a layer of white, trailing on the ground, which most likely would have been a fur lining. White furs were extremely popular lining on womens’ marecottes, surcottes, and houppelande in the inventories of Dijon and Chailloué at this time.



1- Bibliotheque de l'Arsenal (Paris) -- Manuscrit Ms-5070 reserve 368r detail

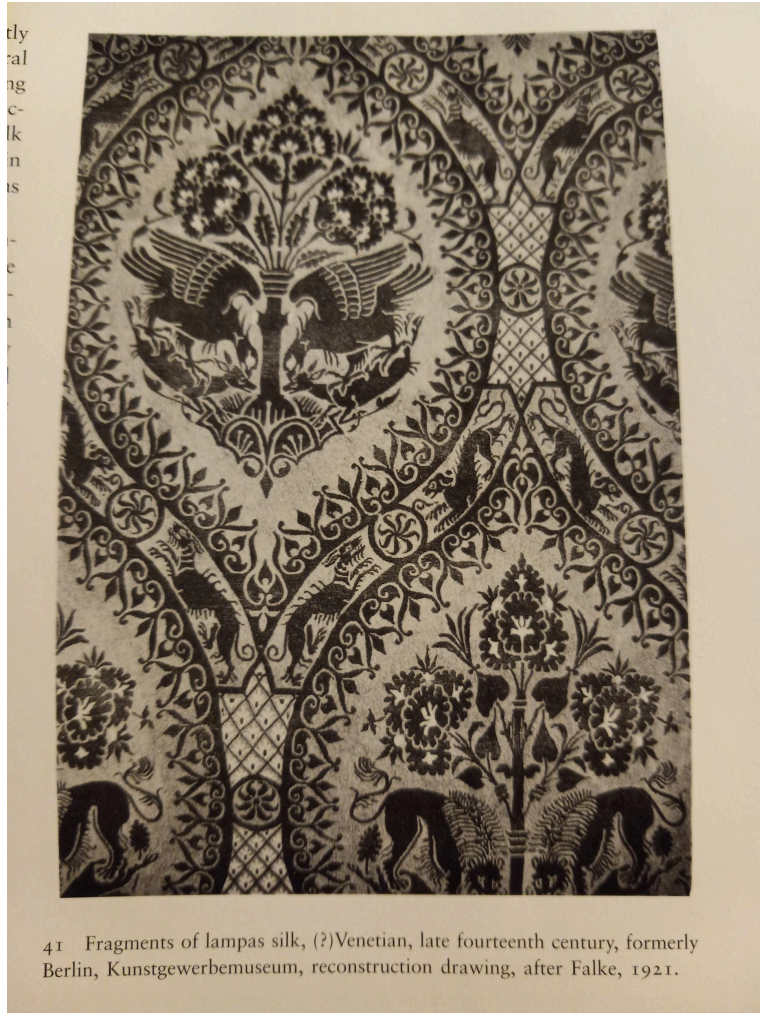
2- Harley 4431 f. 128 Hippomenes and Atalante

3- Detail of a miniature of the Judgement of Paris, between Athena, Juno and Venus, in 'L'Épître Othéa'.

4-15th century (first quarter?) France? Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Français 606:

While I wasn't able to acquire a blue brocade as depicted in the inspiration image, I was able to find a reproduction black and gold brocade.

<https://www.hedva-fashion.com/historic/historic-brocade-160-51056-pomegranate-black/>



The Fabric supplier had this fabric listed as a historical ecclesiastical brocade, without much documentation, But I've been able to locate several Italian velvet extent pieces, along with some detailed artworks from the mid 15th century that have a strong similarity to this pomegranate pattern.



These Photos are from Renaissance velvets. Colour modified to better show patterns

Fragment of blue voided satin velvet
Italy, possibly Venice, second quarter of the 15th century
V&A: 8685-1863



In this period, A black and gold brocade fabric might have been considerably more valuable than the blue brocade depicted. Whereas Blue dyes were relatively inexpensive and common among all classes. As previously mentioned not all colours were of equal value. Artwork and the inventories of the period often show that black as a sought after colour for the nobility, in fact two of the noble ladies in the image behind Bonne are wearing black. Metallic gold was often talked about in the literature and shown as being the highest ideal, and there is only a rare example of gold cloth being used in the most illustrious inventories.

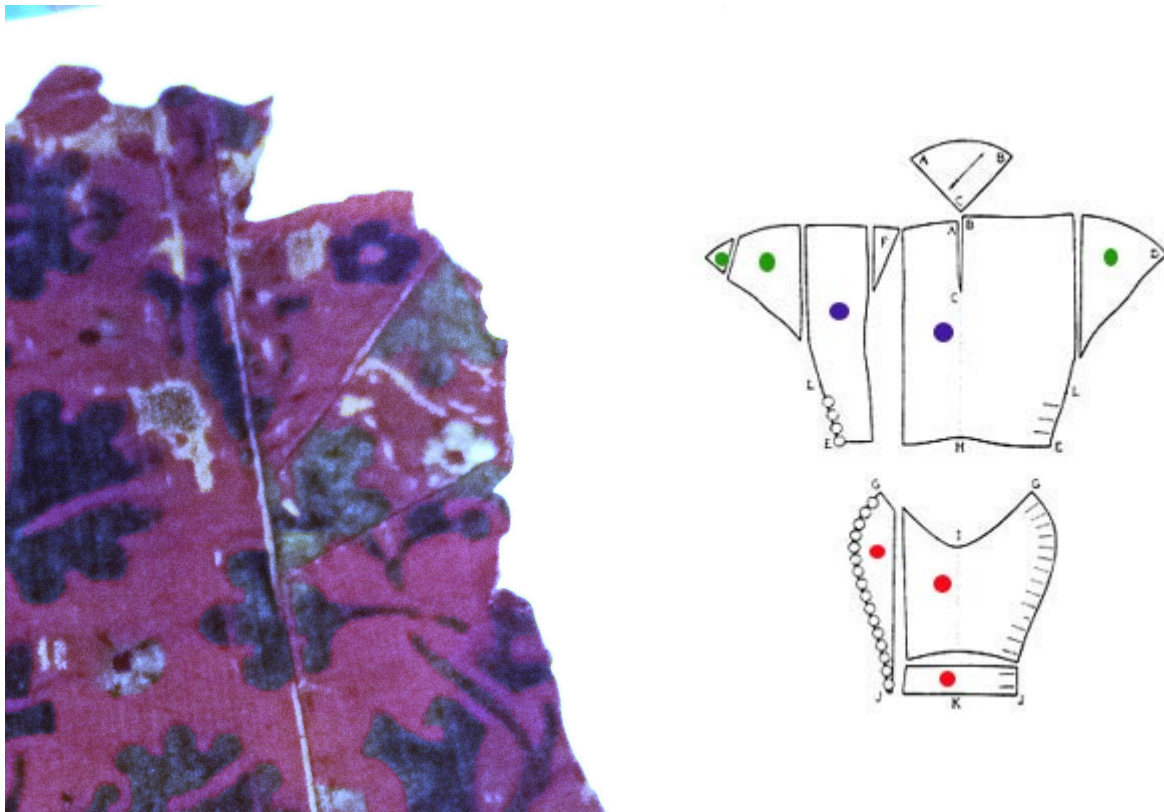
The colour black arrived to western Europe in the form of silk garments through Italy, where sumptuary laws prevented the nouveau riche from wearing silk in colours other than black, thus allowing it to spread rapidly. Black silk was often used as the ground for cloth of gold to best show off the metallic threads. Black garments were often lined in bright colours for contrast. **(dress in the middle ages p 72-73)**

This fabric is a clearly a reproduction from later in the 15th century, and is a cotton/rayon blend (modern day silk dupe) and a brocade instead of velvet, but It is also very common for rich brocades to be listed in the inventories, so It's not an unreasonable approximation. Given the difficulty and cost of finding exact reproductions, in a significant amount of yardage, we decided that this fabric is good enough.

Because this gown is a variation of a fitted gown, we used the same body pattern for this layer as the cotte, and I added 1/8th ease at each edge to it to accommodate the fact that this particular fabric doesn't stretch, nor does it need to do the work of support or shaping. This ease allows it to skim the body and to be a pull over style. Which matches the many depictions with no visible closure of this style, and also makes it less time consuming.

We also opted to forgo the dagged hem, for time constraints. At a later date when I have the time to finish the edges to prevent fraying, I plan to scallop the hem and sleeves to better reveal the gold lining fabric I have chosen.


Pattern direction- for économie of fabric use, some of the gores have the pattern in the opposite direction. This is not just a modern problem. We also see creative use of nap/pattern direction on the John of Gorlitz (x) houppelande (1396) and the pourpoint of Charles de Bois (date), both garments of the nobility of the same Era. One italiane source stated it wasn't uncommon for silk to be weighed before and after garment construction to ensure that fabric was being economically used, and not being skimmed by the tailor. (Find this source)



The lining-

We deviated from the fur lining, due to budget constraints, and the viability of working with a large fur project in an enclosed space with many other folks seemed inconsiderate. So instead of fur lined as is depicted in the image, we used an alternative silk lining.

Silk lining was also period, especially in warmer climates, many visual examples of this in southern France, Italy and Spain show colourful linings, and the inventories often mention grades of silk as linings.

I chose a gold silk in part to represent the high status that a cloth of gold would represent in lieu of the white fur, it harmonises well with the fashion fabric, and accommodates my personal sense of sensory overload with too many contrasting colours and patterns. Mediaeval fashion sense however often would have dictated that the lining be contrasting, more colours being the preference, although they may have made an exception to that for gold silk. In the inspiration image, a fur lining would have most likely been removable, and noted in several writings and (sources) this  of fur linings being sold.

Due to ease and time constraints we choose to flatline.

Apendexies Figures



Figure CC1

Detail

1332 - Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Altarpiece of St. Proculus, Madonna and Child,



Figure CC2

Detail Les Tres Riches Heures du duc de Berry Mai

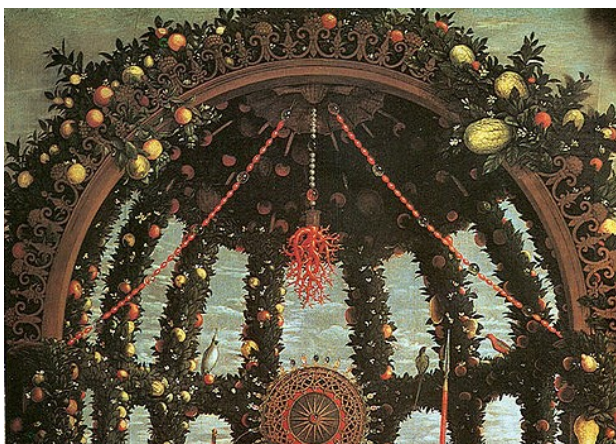


Figure CC3

Detail

Madonna of the Victory, Madonna della Vittoria, a painting of 1496 by Mantegna



Visual search for the exact manuscript!

Figure CC4



Figure CC5

Detail A

Hunting with falcons at the court of Philippe III, Duc de Bourgogne, c. 1460

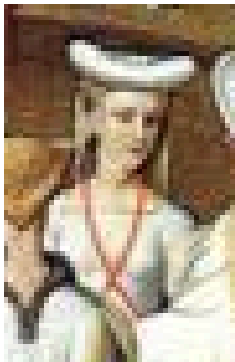


Figure CC6

Detail B

Hunting with falcons at the court of Philippe III, Duc de Bourgogne, c. 1460



Figure XXX

Rosary of twelve times five sets, coral Ave beads, silver Paternoster beads, with Crucifixion group, silver gilded, German, late 15th century.

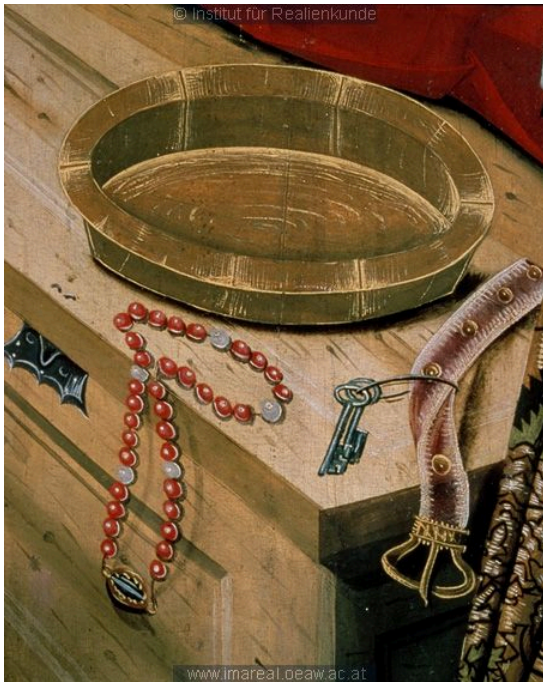


Figure XXX above left
Birth of Mary 1481 Triptych Master of Eggelsberg Altar, Linz, Castle Museum, Austria - detail



Figure XXX above right
Painting, Austria (1448)

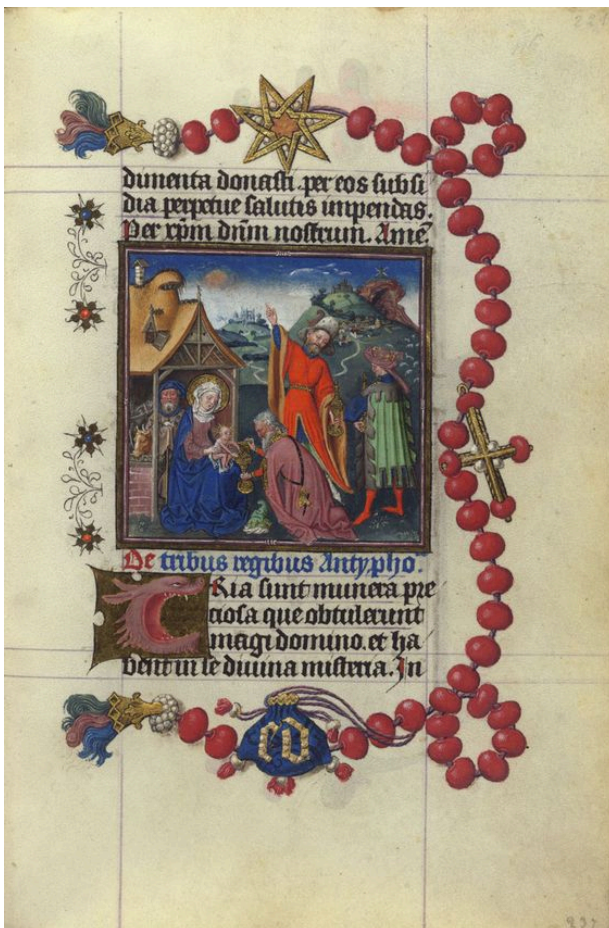


Figure XXX
Adoration of the Magi | Hours of Catherine of Cleves | Illuminated Manuscript | ca. 1440 | The Morgan Library & Museum

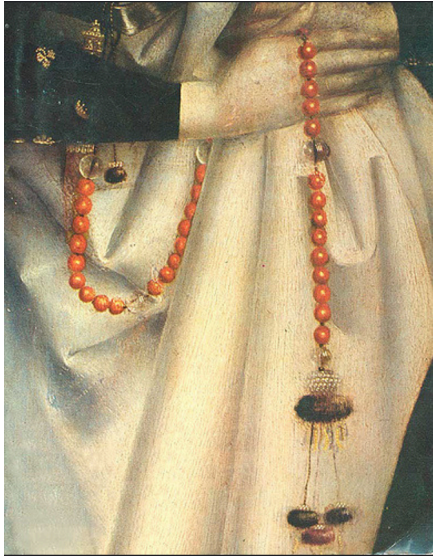


Figure XXX
detail from Adoration of the Magi, by Stefan Lochner



Figure XXX

Cross pendant
Germany
1500-40
Gold, rubies and pearls
Museum no. M.74-1953
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Figure xxx

Pendant reliquary cross, unknown maker, about
1450-1475, Germany. Museum no. 4561-1858. ©
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Pinterest boards

Sigh, time caught up with me. Extra figures can be found in the mirad of books I bought with or in the pinterest links below. Just ask! These are boards I have compiled myself as a useful visual reference guide, and a database of links to source material. In general I try to vet and verify dates and authenticity as reliable sources, but I am human.

Coral paternosters-

<https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/coral-paternosters-14th-15th-century/>

Jewellery- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/medieval-jewelery/>

folly bells- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/folly-bells/>

Reticulated headdresses details-

<https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/bourrelets-and-reticulated-headresses/>

Shoes- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/turn-shoes/>

Belts- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/medieval-belts/>

Embroidered Purses- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/14th-century-purses/>

Undergarments- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/medieval-underware/>

Hose- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/womens-hose/>

Simple Cottes- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/early-15th-century-cottes/>

Side lacing- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/side-lacing/>

Surcottes with Bombard sleeves-

<https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/cotehardies-with-bombard-sleeves/>

Fabrics- <https://www.pinterest.com/paganrosemama/extent-fabrics-1415th-century/>

Some of my previous documentation.

This project is a continuation of my previous research, some of it is linked below.

The Evolving 14th and Early 15th century Gown

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NaKEoAhjzkMNvc9gDiSvrBSyZSddlcr0ALzBLixG7ZA/edit>

Drafting a fitted Gown

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pH9TqOp1OJYLT2p8W6P3KePwlqhrpLxQjB08RISe7L0/edit#heading=h.vha6iatpih09>

The Noble Lady's Handbook of 14th and early 15th Century Clothing (work in progress)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LmWkCzcTDu8vPfnjQUSS75_zpGyibjY88tYv65nbCgQ/edit

A Woman's Houppelande at the Turn of the 15th Century

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12lxzFLRUBPXjsmUH4QK_S7r2miXudOy2Yp2N_L2TW2k/edit

A Women Houppelandes of the 15th Century

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UXnd78rmXrdaunbxsVDHgfyQoICl0RoJcOS-FT_7ms/edit

A late 14th early 15th Century Shoe

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MJK7QD2IHIFHxgOyOxVqZR7X8JzAE-AhfNvyO-XODA/edit>

My old blog, hasn't been updated in a long time

<http://labellerobemedievale.blogspot.com/>

In particular relevance is this post

<http://labellerobemedievale.blogspot.com/2015/03/angel-wing-surcotes.html>

Unfortunately I lost my official website due to life circumstances, but when I get it back up and running I'll add it here.

Websites

These are a variety of blogs of other folks, or museum links that I've built my knowledge upon for this project.

Museum of London shoe finds link.

<https://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/search/#!/results?search=AND%3BgroupRef%3Bgroup-20518&searchtitle=Medieval%20leather%20shoes&advanced=true>

Rosalie's Medieval Woman

<https://rosaliegilbert.com>

<https://rosaliegilbert.com/paternosters.html>

<https://rosaliegilbert.com/sewingtechniques.html>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's online mediaeval art collection

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search?showOnly=highlights&department=17>

Pearls: Piety, Poetry and Pre-Raphaelites – Part One - V&A Museum

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/pearls-piety-poetry-and-pre-raphaelites-part-one>

Fashion History Timeline

<https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1400-1409/>

A detailed analysis of the inspiration image

<https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1416-limbourg-april/>

A Cotte Simple Late mediaeval fashion redressed- various articles

<https://cottesimple.com/articles/>

<https://cottesimple.com/articles/medieval-embroidery-on-clothing/>

<https://cottesimple.com/articles/elbow-hinge/>

<https://cottesimple.com/articles/tailoring-grande-assiette/>

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