

A Woman's Hood with Pieced Liripipe

Festival of the Passing of the Ice Dragon
March 17, AS XLI (2007)
Barony of the Rydderich Hael

Description

This is hand-sewn woman's hood, based on fragments of similar hoods of the 14th century found in London. It is of fulled wool, sewn with linen thread, and features a pieced liripipe, cast pewter buttons and silk-edged buttonholes.

This my second attempt at constructing a piece using only hand sewing, and my first attempt at using only period materials.

A 14th-century hood from London

Among the 14th century fabric and clothing fragments excavated in London and described in Elisabeth Crowfoot's book, *Textiles and Clothing: 1150-1450*, is item no. 246, a nearly complete woman's hood, now in six pieces, of medium weight tabby-woven cloth. The hood features triangular gussets under the ears to give added fullness to the lower portion. The construction is also known from several other extant 14th century hoods, including two from Greenland. Although the front edge hem around the face opening has been trimmed away, as has the lower hem, the two edges under the chin remain intact. One edge features nine buttonholes, a small hem, and evidence of stitching about an inch from the hem, indicating the likelihood of a narrow linen facing to reinforce the buttonholes. The other edge also features a small hem, and evidence of a facing, as well as stitching holes for buttons that are no longer attached.

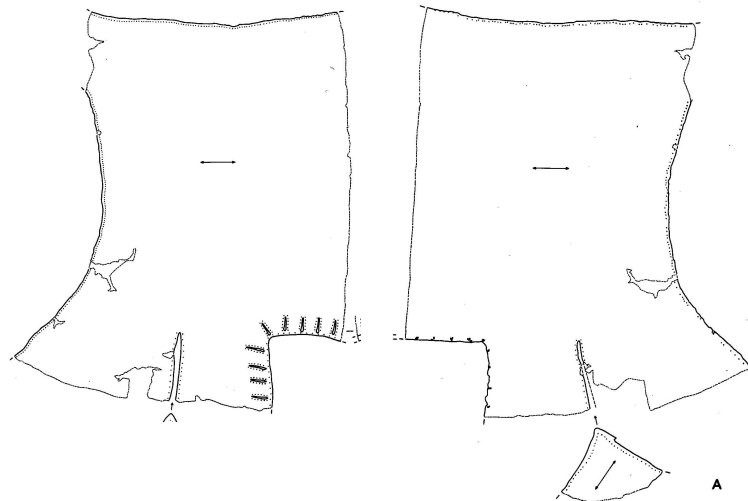


Reconstruction of 14th century hood, item no. 246, according to Crowfoot et al.

My hood

The Pattern

Crowfoot gives a scale diagram of both of the two large head sections of the hood. I scanned the diagram and resized it to actual size. I made a muslin mock-up, and discovered that the size was too small for my head. I rescaled the diagram to 130% of the size of the extant pieces, and made a second mockup. This proved to be a good size.



Hood, item no. 246 (Crowfoot, fig 170)

The material

I chose to use up a bit of red wool cloth that was left over from a previous project. The cloth is a fairly heavy tabby-woven fulled wool, in a color reminiscent of madder. I do not know what the fabric is dyed with, but I would presume it to have been commercially dyed with modern dye. Because of the size of the remnant, I need to piece the liripipe in two sections. Very little fabric was left after cutting the pattern.

Sewing

I used linen thread waxed with beeswax to sew the hood together. According to Crowfoot, linen thread does not survive well in burial conditions, and the vast absence of surviving sewing thread among the London finds supports the conclusion that linen thread was the most commonly used, followed by silk. I used a seam construction that Crowfoot describes as evidenced on extant hose sections. Either a running or a backstitch is used to sew the seam and the seam allowances are then sewn down using a running stitch. Although Crowfoot describes this seam construction only on hose fragments, it is possible that it was used elsewhere, either for added strength or for decorative purposes.

The gussets were sewn first. Then the liripipe was pieced onto each of the two head sections. Then, the two head sections were sewn together. The hems of the face opening and the lower edges were sewn next.

Facings

According to Crowfoot, silk and linen facings were routinely used to give added strength the both sides of buttoned closures. Where silk was used, the facing has sometimes survived. Where the facing has completely decomposed, it may be assumed that the facing was linen. Crowfoot states that there is no evidence of bias cut facings among the London finds. The silk facings that have survived are all cut straight along the grain. For my facings, I used a brown linen cut to one-inch width for the button side, and one-and-one-quarter inch on the button hole side.

The buttonholes

Crowfoot describes the surviving buttonhole finishing as somewhat undeveloped, noting that buttonholes appear to have been works both clockwise and counter-clockwise, without the added strength of either radial stitching or bars at the ends of the slits. All are worked in two-ply (Z-twisted, S-plied) silk thread in buttonhole stitch. I worked my buttonholes with black two-ply (Z-twisted, S-plied) spun silk, using a buttonhole stitch. I did work some radial stitching for added strength, since this project is planned for regular use.

The buttons

No buttons survive on item no. 246. The buttons described in Crowfoot are all cloth buttons, since the subject of that volume is cloth artifacts. Geoff Egan's volume from the same series, *Dress Accessories: 1150-1450*, offers ample evidence of cast lead/tin shank buttons. Since I did not have enough fabric left over to make cloth buttons, I chose to use 5/8-inch cast pewter shank buttons that I had on hand. The resulting buttonhole size matches those on the extant hood no. 246, as measured on the scale diagram in Crowfoot.

Bibliography

Crowfoot, Elisabeth, Frances Pritchard and Kay Staniland, *Textiles and Clothing 1150-1450*. (London: Museum of London, 1992, 2001)

Egan, Geoff and Frances Pritchard, *Dress Accessories: 1150-1450*. (London: Museum of London, 1991, 2002)