

INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS ON COSTUME
IN
MEDIEVAL EUROPE

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by

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INTRODUCTION

The dress of any given time as well as other forms of art is said to be an expression of that period. In the words of Parsons, "The results in costume, as in other mediums, are but a material record of the great ideals that swayed nations at the time of their creation (26, p. XXIV)." Hurlock (18) states further that fashions are closely related to the social conditions of the nation.

The purpose of this report was to study some of the social conditions of the Middle Ages and to point out their influence on medieval dress.

The Middle Ages included the period from the fall of Rome (476 A.D.) to the fall of Constantinople (1463 A.D.). The social aspects which were investigated were feudalism, the form of government that existed in the Middle Ages, and the Church, the dominant unifying force of the Middle Ages. The consideration of costume was confined to that of the nobility. Parsons (26) and other authorities on costume, state that under the feudal system, only the nobles and their families wore fine costume. The costume considered was for Europe in general because fashion was more or less the same all over Europe. Boehn said, "Clothing of the Middle Ages was very much alike, the differences negligible among nations (5, p. 256)."

This paper should be of interest and value to students of history of costume, since, to my knowledge, no study has been done relating social conditions to the costume of the Middle Ages. My interest in the study was stimulated by the fact that I am affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church and teach clothing in a parochial high school.

SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Feudalism was a system of government that existed in Europe during the Middle Ages. Some historians trace the origins of feudalism to the Roman institution of precarium. Others attribute its origins to the German comitatus. In the former institutions, weaker men took refuge with stronger ones of wealth and position. The comitatus consisted of a personal relationship entered into by the German chief and his friends for mutual protection, service, and support.

Several conditions existed that contributed to the development of feudalism. Raids by the Vikings, Hungarians, and Moelms terrorized the people and isolated areas by disrupting communications. The power of the empire was decentralized and unable to protect the people. Nobles settled down and developed their own fighting forces for protection (Stephenson, 29).

Feudal society was composed of nobility who were lords and vassals. The lord and vassal entered into a gentlemanly contract whereby a mutual bond of loyalty and support existed. A man acknowledged himself to a lord declaring himself as the lord's man thus becoming his vassal. The lord gave a piece of land with its laborers, a fief, to his vassal. The vassal also received military protection and judicial protection as administered by the lord's court. In return, the vassal furnished and supported a mounted soldier or knight in the lord's army,

who also served in the lord's court as a judge, witness, or defendant. Political and social support were given to the lord at ceremonial functions and diplomatic ventures. Hospitality was shown to the lord when he visited the fief. The lord received financial assistance from the vassal at the time of knighting of the lord's son, marriage of his eldest daughter, or when captured and held for ransom. A vassal also paid a feudal incident to the lord when the vassal's eldest son inherited the fief. If the vassal had no sons, the eldest daughter inherited the fief upon marriage to a vassal designated by the lord. Meanwhile, the fief was held by the lord who received its income (Stephenson, 29).

The noble's eldest son became a knight. The other sons, except those of royal blood, remained esquires unless they carved out lands and titles for themselves. A man began training for knighthood at an early age. He learned the strategy of war and the social graces by attending the knights and their ladies as an apprentice in a feudal court other than his own. After proving himself, the candidate was nominated for knighthood. He fasted and prayed and was dubbed a knight. The religious and colorful rite was symbolic of what he as a knight hoped to be--a man physically and spiritually pure and able to face death for honor or God. As a knight he wore an armor of chainmail that included a helmet which covered the head and neck, and a surcoat. By the 14th century, plate armor had replaced the armor made of chainmail. With this armor, the knight wore a doublet as an undergarment, hose attached to the

doublet, and a surcoat. The surcoat, a sleeveless tunic, developed during the Crusades was worn over the armor to eliminate the glare of the sun (Durant, 13).

It was an accepted convention that each knight reward a noble lady. According to medieval poetry, the knight pledged his services to this lady. She gave him her colors to wear and asked of his dangerous feats. He invoked her name in combat. If he served her well, she rewarded him with her affection. Each knight wore a veil, mantle, or other token of his lady in tournaments and war. The code of conduct for the knight that came to include the above feminine implications was known as chivalry, a social aspect of feudalism (Durant, 13).

Another social aspect of feudalism was heraldry. It was the science and art of armorial bearings or coats of arms, devices used in Medieval western Europe on shields and surcoats. Heraldry was developed because of a need for the identification of knights on the battlefield, in tournaments and during the Crusades. It was symbolic of the adventures and hopes of the knight. His marital status was shown by his coat of arms.

The knight adopted his family's coat of arms. His children inherited his arms. All sons, except the eldest, permanently changed their father's arms by changing colors, adding a new device or border. The daughters used their coats of arms and placed them in a diamond-shaped lozenge. When they married the family coat was placed beside the husband's on his shield. If a daughter was an heiress, her coat of arms was placed upon

her husband's shield. As heirs accumulated armorial bearings, shields were quartered, that is, divided into equal quarters in which inherited coats of arms were placed. Eventually each quarter was subdivided to accommodate extra coats (Boutell, 6, Moncrieff and Pottinger, 23).

Placement of the coats of arms was done according to the points on the shield; rank designated by the position on the shield. For example, the Dexter or right side of a shield was more honorable than the Sinister or left side. The armorial bearings were made of components, i.e. metals, colors, and furs. The background of the shield or surcoat was of one component. The devices or emblems charged or placed upon it were of one or both of the remaining components (Boutell, 6, Moncrieff and Pottinger, 23).

To help maintain the hierarchy of the feudal system during the Middle Ages many sumptuary laws were passed. The laws, particularly those regulating dress, were used primarily to preserve class distinctions. According to Baldwin (3), D. J. Medley in his "Social England" stated that medieval society was dominated with the idea of caste and was outwardly marked by a difference in costume. Ordinances strove to preserve the natural differences in dress and thus to bolster up class distinctions on which they were founded.

In England, a sumptuary law of 1362 set down what items of apparel could not be worn by certain classes of people. Craftsmen and artisans and their families "shall not wear cloth of a higher price for their vesture or hosing, than

within forty shilling the whole cloth,' that they shall neither buy such cloth, nor acquire it in any other manner (Baldwin, 3, p. 36)." This class was also forbidden to wear precious stones, cloth of silver, silk, girdles, knives, buttons, rings, brooches, chains, etc. of gold or silver, and embroidered or silken clothing. Their wives were not to wear a veil or kerchief of silk. No fur except lamb, coney, cat, or fox could be worn.

The same law directed esquires and gentlemen below the rank of knight not possessing land or rent in value of one hundred pounds a year not to wear cloth costing more than four marks and a half in amount needed for one suit. Cloth of gold or silver, silk, etc. as above, as well as harness of gold or silver, precious stones, pearls or any kind of fur were also forbidden. An exception was made of esquires and gentlemen possessing lands or rents in value of two hundred marks or more a year. This group was permitted the use of cloth worth five marks a piece, silk, cloth of silver, ribbons, girdles, etc. reasonably trimmed with silver. Use of miniver without ermine or letuss or trimmed with precious stones was allowed (Baldwin, 3, pp. 48, 49).

Merchants, citizens and burgoesses, if possessing goods and chattels worth five hundred pounds, were authorized to wear clothes similar to esquire and gentlemen with an income of one hundred pounds.

Knights, with an income of less than two hundred marks were not allowed to use cloth worth more than six marks, cloth of gold, nor cloaks, mantles, or gowns furred with miniver, nor

sleeves of ermine, nor any apparel embroidered with precious stones or with anything else. Knights with incomes from four hundred to one thousand marks a year could wear anything except ermine, etc. as above.

A year later the above law was repealed at the request of parliament. The king noted that the ordinance had done very little good. In future years other ordinances were passed but also to little avail (Baldwin, 3).

In Germany, the Nuremberg council strove to curb extravagances rather than to preserve class distinctions. However, an ordinance was passed in Nuremberg, where class distinctions were definitely cited. ". . . 'henceforth no male person,' . . . 'except doctors (of the law) and knights, shall wear in any part of his garb any strings, borders or lace, which are wholly or in part gold' (Greenfield, 15, p. 117)." "Burgher ladies, . . . must not put on a veil or a headdress that had in it more than a certain quality of material and were not to wear it in such a way 'that the ends in front lie upon the head' (Greenfield, 15, p. 108)."

Specified ornaments which were regarded as extravagant or dandified in the ordinance were silver bage, fine pearls, and elased shoes or coats. Men and women were to refrain from wearing any sort of clasps or rings or buttons on their sleeves higher than their elbow, under pain of forfeiting one pound haller a day.

The Bishop of Bamberg requested the council to instruct cobblers to make no more peaks on shoes. The council did so,

penalizing the offending cobblers. This instance shows how closely the sphere assumed by the council was related to the Church. In this ordinance appeared: "No man or woman, . . . should wear any sort of shoe longer, in proportion to the size of the foot . . . (Greenfield, 15, p. 110)." Penalty was inflicted on the wearer as well as the cobbler.

In the same ordinance the wearing of cloth of gold or of silver, velvet, satin, or other silk materials, furs, coats of camel's hair; garments of scharlock and echarlatin, and pearls were forbidden. Other materials might be worn only in specified measure or up to a given value. Styles were also censured. For example, women were forbidden to wear garments out too low at the neck. Considered too low was anything exceeding one finger's breadth below the throat in front and a half quarter-ell in the back. Confiscation of garments that offended the law, in addition to fines, were used as penalty for offending the law (Greenfield, 15).

Even when the laws were enforced, class distinction remained only until the wealth of a country shifted from the hands of the nobility to the hands of the lower classes (Hurlock, 18).

Feudalism reached its peak in the 11th and 12th centuries. The Crusades, the development of towns in the later centuries and the rise of the bourgeoisie helped to break down feudalism and to degenerate the noble classes. As the nobles sank lower in importance, they flaunted their pride of birth and feudal traditions. Knighthood and chivalry had degenerated to the

point of ridiculousness (Stephenson, 29).

The Church remained the unifying force of the Middle Ages. It was a communal society in which everyone was a member as a result of God's grace. The importance of the Church is indicated by Fernoud, who writes:

The importance of the role played by the Church will be seen . . . if one goes back to the state of society during the centuries commonly referred to as the Early Middle Ages, a period of crumbling forces and one during which the Church represented the only organized hierarchy (27, p. 103).

The Church alone could unite the scattered groups of people who were entrenched on their own domains.

Both secular and ecclesiastical, spiritual and temporal, domains were continually overlapping.

If one makes a distinction between that which is God's and that which is Caesar's, the same personages could be represented each in turn, the two powers were complementary. Bishops and abbots were also administrators of domains and it was not unusual to see secular and ecclesiastical authorities dividing the same castellany between them (Fernoud, 27, p. 104).

Members of the Church felt united by the bond of supernatural love and a single ultimate goal to gain eternal happiness in the life hereafter. In attainment of this goal, material and physical goods tended to be despised. The body was mortified and considered good when used in attainment of heaven (Boehn, 5). Decrees were passed forbidding dress that called attention to the body. The clergy preached against luxurious costume and ridiculed the follies of fashion. Church councils emphasized differentiation of costume among peoples other than Christian (Hansen, 17) " . . . many notions which belonged to canon law became incorporated into customary law (Fernoud, 27,

p. 110)."

It is a moot point whether the vision of hell, evoked with such mastery by painters and poets, engendered the paralyzing terror one is apt to imagine, and if the mortification of the passions advocated by the Church, robbed our ancestors entirely of the joys of life (Pernoud, 27, p. 118).

Such a unifying institution as the Church affected every facet of life. Its effects were visibly seen in the arts. The Church promoted them for use in her cathedrales, monasteries, chapels, and for private use by her clergy. "A synod urged the representation on Church walls of scenes from Holy Scripture, for this enables illiterate people to learn what books cannot teach them (Daniel-Rops, 11, p. 376)." St. Gregory the Great promulgated the same idea. Architecture, sculpture, wall-painting, stained-glass windows, tapestries, and book illuminations, carried out these religious themes. Cathedrales served as encyclopedias of Holy Scriptures telling their stories in various art forms. Such were the intentions of Romanesque and Gothic artists, who were so dedicated that they remained anonymous giving credit only to God (Daniel-Rops, 11).

Medieval art was divided into two categories: Romanesque and Gothic. The former was predominant in the early part of the period and the latter characterized art of the later years.

Romanesque art was stiff, unemotional, and solemn. It promoted a feeling that corresponded to an inner spirituality whose dominant virtue was faith. Cathedrales were horizontal and low to the ground. Windows were small and caused the interiors to be dark. The walls were massive and afforded much space for wall painting which along with sculpture was sub-

ordinated to architecture. Themes of wall paintings were scenes from the Old and New Testament. Some colors had the brilliance of enamel and other colors were almost monochrome. Some subjects reminded viewers of mosaics and of illuminated manuscripts (Daniel-Rops, 11). The statues as a rule were carved from the same stone that was used in building the church, and were made to fit into the architectural scheme. Their aim was to express saintliness and devotion or to symbolize some Christian doctrine or mystery (Thorndyke, 30). The human figure and other forms were rigidly portrayed. Figures used were taken from contemporary life, even though the scenes were taken from sacred history (Daniel-Rops, 11).

Of the term 'Gothic' Hansen says:

Vasari, a painter and leading art critic in his day, said of the architecture of the immediately preceding period (the late Middle Ages) that it had been invented by the Goths. . . Vasari's ironic term Gothic style, which originated in France, has no connection with the Goths of the period of the great migrations. But, like 'Baroque', it is no longer used disparagingly (17, p. 120).

Art of the Gothic style was unrestrained and bold. In architecture, the cathedrals drew the eye heavenward because of their spired and vertical dimensions. Pointed arches increased in height until they were replaced by the flattened ogival form. This form is thought to have been adapted from the Arabian arch that was introduced by the Crusaders. Flying buttresses, characteristic of Gothic architecture, aided in emphasizing the verticality of the structure (Daniel-Rops, 11, Stephenson, 29). The decreased amount of wall space of Gothic architecture reduced wall painting to panel painting, and promoted the use

of stained-glass windows. The rays of light passing through these fragments were broken up and there was much blending of different colors and very brilliant effects were produced like the glittering of jewels (Thorndyke, 30). Romanesque stained-glass windows used symbolism or were divided into compartments, each compartment depicting a scene from an episode taken from the Gospels or from the life of a saint. This 'story-book' form of painting continued into the Gothic period. Side by side with the 'story-book' type of window appeared others devoted to a single figure such as the image of Christ or His Blessed Mother. When someone conceived the idea of setting rose windows high up in the facade, light poured in and the cathedral at length appeared as a visible sign and promise, so to speak, of heaven (Daniel-Rops, 11). Statuary continued to be dependent on architecture. The human forms were slender, with delicate limbs clothed in long flowing drapery. The humanistic tendency in sculpture caused these figures to be animated, emotional, and individual (Daniel-Rops, 11, Stephenson, 29).

Figures woven into tapestry followed the predominant styles of art--Romanesque rigidity and Gothic animation. Tapestries were wall hangings originally used for protection from the cold of the stone walls; later they were used only for decorative purposes (Gandee, 9).

During the early feudal era monasteries were the treasure-houses of tapestries. These havens were built strong and were sufficiently manned to ward off attack of warring peoples. Any articles of concentrated value were given to the monasteries

for safe-keeping (Candee, 9).

Being persons with leisure and having a great deal of safety within the monastery, monks and friars came to execute the art.

The subjects executed inside the monastery were . . . religious, many revelling in the horrors of martyrology, and those intended as gifts or those ordered by the clergy were religious in subject for the sake of appropriateness (Candee, 9, p. 22).

Religious compositions remained undoubtedly numerous, although from the 13th century the secular element acquired an importance which increased year by year (Muntz, 24). Subjects taken from the Scriptures were given a modern touch by introducing portraits of kings and emperors and their animals transfixed in ways peculiar to the nature of the art of the day (Candee, 9). Convents occasionally had hangings of subjects from mythology. Romances of chivalry, contemporary scenes, and allegory came to the fore in the 15th century (Muntz, 24). When representations of people of mediæval times were depicted in tapestry, a true picture of men and women and how they lived and what they wore was given (Candee, 9). Queen Matilda's Bayeux Tapestry, is a historical document representing the conquest of England by the Normans. The clearness of its story, the precision of its types, costumes, and armor are interesting in the highest degree (Muntz, 24).

When wealth was acquired by the rising nobility, tapestries were used not only by the Church and the clergy. Noblemen commissioned the weaving of these hangings. The tapestry industry came to be situated in towns and was often under royal

patronage (Candee, 9, Huntz, 24).

Candee says:

Tapestry more than any other handicraft has left us a pictorial history of events in a time when records were scarce. The effect of the crusades was noticeable in the impetus it gave to tapestry, not only by bringing Europe into fresh contact with Oriental design but by increasing the desire for luxurious stuffs. The returning crusaders--what traveller's tales did they not tell of the fabrics of the great Oriental sovereigns and their subjects, the soft rugs, the tent coverings, the gorgeous raiment; and these tales they illustrated with what fragments they could port in their travellers' packs (9, p. 24).

Another art pursued by the monks was manuscript illumination. Middleton (22) related that Benedictine monasteries became active centers for the production of fine illuminated manuscripts. Celtic monks exerted a definite influence on miniature through their missionary work on the continent and in England. Years were spent bordering pages and decorating the first letter of each page with figures. Later, the first illuminated letter came to fill a whole page which was colored in jewel-like tones. "Portraits of kings were often introduced at the beginnings of books . . . , a fashion which in later times was extended to other than royal patrons of art and learning (Middleton, 22, p. 70)."

The intertwined figures and initials presented accurate representations of life and costumes. The miniature of the Psalter of Saint Louis depicts "the historical scenes from the Old Testament . . . , after the usual fashion of the time, the Hebrew warriors and their enemies were represented as medieval knights in armour (Middleton, 22, p. 126)."

The monastic artists . . . wished to suggest that the scene they were painting was one that had happened long ago, and therefore they introduced what was the oldest armour they were acquainted with . . . Middleton continued that as time went on . . . the heroes of ancient and sacred history are represented exactly like kings and warriors of the artist's own time (22, p. 128).

The other arts were inspired by illuminated manuscripts. It is recorded that a painter borrowed a prayer book that contained miniatures from which he copied the illuminations in wall painting. "The embroidered miniature on . . . pieces of needlework resemble closely in style the illuminations . . . , and in many cases have been obviously copied from miniatures (Middleton, 22, p. 112)." " . . . there is nothing exceptional that these miniatures . . . might have served as excellent motives for a glass-painter (Middleton, 22, p. 103)."

The Church reached the height of its power during the Crusades. The Crusades were military expeditions undertaken by Christian powers in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries to recover the Holy Land from the Moslems. The Crusades were initiated by the Pope. The remission of sins was promised to sincere crusaders. Even material debts were suspended. All peoples of Europe, noblemen, merchants, clergymen, criminals, beggars, shared in the movement. Pilgrims to the Holy Land brought back tales of ill-treatment of Christians there and helped crystallize the main objective of recovering Jerusalem with its Holy Places from the Mohammedans (Thorndyke, 30).

"While the rank and file in the crusading armies were actuated by motives of genuine religious enthusiasm, the principal leaders regarded the enterprise as also an act of political

conquest in which they could hope to carve out principalities for themselves . . . (Newhall, 25, p. 40)." Here was an opportunity for indulging in warlike adventure under the guise of asceticism (Newhall, 25).

The First Crusade was launched personally by Pope Urban II. The crusaders, under the leadership of feudal lords, took different routes, and met at Constantinople. Joining forces, they opened the way across Asia Minor, through Nicea, down the coast of Syria to Palestine. Upon entering Asia Minor, leaders began to think of territorial conquests for themselves. Despite the desertions of men for their own ends, plague, and famine, the crusading host captured Jerusalem. For the most part, the crusading pilgrims returned home feeling justified having defeated the infidels, prayed at the Holy Sepulchre, and bathed in the Jordan. Some crusaders continued to strive to conquer new fiefs. Few Westerners settled permanently in the new Christian state (Newhall, 25).

The recovery of the Holy Places, and the recurrent necessity of defending them, greatly stimulated travel from Europe to Syria. Pilgrims by the thousands visited the Holy Land, . . . returned to their homes, bringing back novelties learned over-seas, having developed the larger point of view which comes with travel and from contact with a different and superior civilization (Newhall, 25, p. 50).

Vessels sailed regularly from southern France and Italy to Syria.

In all there were seven Crusades. Some historians maintain that there were nine Crusades. Thorndyke states, "The crusades increased the prestige of the Church, and showed how religion colored every side of medieval life (30, p. 324)."

Newhall (25) shows the other side of the coin by maintaining that the subsequent failure and misuse of the Crusades for selfish purposes seriously discredited the papacy. Failures were attributed to the judgment of God and the blame was shifted to the papacy. Too often the popes were suspected of using a Crusade as a political expedient and as an excuse for levying taxes. A breakdown of Church discipline resulted from expiation of temporal punishment due to sin and the sacrament of penance came to be less highly regarded. Plenary indulgences were given much too freely.

Feudal nobility was weakened. Many nobles, who impoverished themselves in order to go on the Crusades or neglected their fiefs by long absences, upon their return found their estates in the hands of the lower classes or rival nobles (Thorndyke, 30). "The noble class as a whole lost both wealth and personnel by its active participation in the holy war, and this resulted in diminishing its political and military importance (Newhall, 25, p. 90)."

Association with so many knights stimulated the social sides of feudalism and developed greatly the usage of feudalism, such as tournaments, heraldic devices, and coats of arms (Thorndyke, 30). Nationalism, never known before, became apparent (Durant, 13). Exploits and adventures of the crusaders abroad added glamour and dignity to knighthood (Thorndyke, 30).

"One of the greatest benefits conferred on society by the crusades was the raising of the standard of comfort through the spread of luxury (Archer, 2, p. 436)." Trade routes being

established, close relations with the Greeks, Saracens, and less directly with more distant nations as Persia, Egypt, India, and China, desires of the Westerners were satisfied. The expansion of trade brought into common use spices, perfumes, and other products of the East which had previously been the luxury of the few. Silk-weaving was introduced from Greece. Cotton and silken goods were brought from Syria, perfume from Persia and spices and jewels from India (Archer, 2).

COSTUME OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Early Middle Ages to the Twelfth Century

As the Middle Ages opened, men and women wore a tunic-like garment with sleeves and a mantle. The tunic, girdled at the waistline, fell in numerous folds and was so long that only the tips of the shoes could be seen. Often several tunics were worn, one on top of another. The sleeves of the outer tunic were elbow length, allowing the sleeves of the contrasting under-tunic to be seen. Next to the body, a boneless close-fitting waist was worn. Men also wore breeches under the tunics. The mantle was secured by a clasp in front. Sometimes the mantle was thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm free. A full cloak made of gold tissue was worn unless the occasion, such as bad weather, demanded otherwise (Lester, 21).

Under the Merovingian and Carolingian monarchies (5th Century to the 10th Century), men wore a sock-like boot that came to the calf of the leg, or a fabric hose was drawn up over the breeches. If looser breeches were worn, longer hose were bound to the leg with cross-gartering. Later the hose were tied below the knee so that the wide top hung down in a cuff, or a knot was tied at the top of the short hose which made them serve as a sort of fitted boot. Men usually wore no headgear.

The heads of women were covered by veils susceptible to arrangement (Davenport, 12).

Fabrics of hemp and woollens used in garments were woven in twilled and diapered designs. Bright-colored stripes and checks, multi-colored braids and tapes, fringes, nets were favored (Davenport, 12). Felt and camel, a coarse cloth of camel's hair, of the Merovingian monarchy (428-752), gave way to finer fabrics of linen, cotton, and silk for the nobility (Lester, 21).

Queen Clotilde, wife of Clovis (481-511) is often pictured wearing a tunic confined at the waist by a band of precious material. A mantle was laced across the chest, over which fell her plaits of hair. Since, according to court rule, the Merovingians were forbidden to cut their hair, the plaited hair often reached the floor. Women of rank and wealth grew to love ornaments, wearing many jeweled bracelets, rings, and necklaces. Girdles were of gold and later gilded embroideries enriched the borders of tunics and cloaks, an influence of the Byzantine court (Lester, 21), Challamel, 10).

In the Frankish court, Christianity came to play an important part in the costumes and textiles of the succeeding ages. Under the direction of royalty, designs were developed that expressed early Christian ideals. Tapestries which hung in churches used Christian symbols such as the cross, vine, circle, square, lamb, and dove. Soon fabrics for tunics and mantles were woven which used the same symbols in their designs. Colors also took on a religious significance. White symbolized

purity; blue symbolized heavenly trust and sanctification; red, love of God; purple, dignity; green, eternal youth; gold, virtue; bright yellow, fertility; and violet, humility (Lester, 21).

With the development of feudalism, costume came to play a more and more important role in medieval society. Feudalism brought class divisions which in turn made fine clothes and richness in costume symbolic of noble rank. The richer and finer the costume, the more important and higher the rank of the lord (Parsons, 26).

During the reign of Charlemagne (768-814) fortunes were spent by the nobility to out-vie their equals and social inferiors in dress. Charlemagne tried to regulate extravagant dress by setting an example of simplicity. Dressing in the manner of his father, he usually wore a linen shirt and linen drawers under a knee-length tunic. Bands were wound around his legs in a cross-gartered effect. A small cap was worn over short hair. The nobles also affected short hair in imitation of Charlemagne, who brought the style from the East. The Byzantine court also influenced the costume worn by Charlemagne on festive occasions. Only on two such occasions did he wear gold-brocade clothing, jewelled shoes, a mantle secured with a gold clasp, and a gold diadem on his head (Boehn, 5). Binder (4) and Boehn (5) give an example of Charlemagne's lesson in economy. The nobles were invited to a hunt. Their king attired himself in a simple sheepskin in contrast to their own silks and jewels. Torn from trekking through bramble and wet from

rain, the nobles were forced to appear in court the next day in the same torn and wet attire. Charlemagne had remained dry and untorn.

Apparently this lesson had been directed to the men. It is recorded that the ladies of the royal household set the tone of costume for women of the Empire, which was luxurious and extravagant. The noble ladies followed suit (Boehn, 5). The most elegant ladies wore two close-fitting tunics of different colors. The neck, sleeves, and hems of the tunics and mantle were often trimmed with wide bands of embroidery. The fabrics were transparent and clinging. Later, heavier fabrics were used as dresses became more ample. The jeweled girdle was worn just above the hips. A diadem or band held embroidered veils upon the head. Long hair, plaited and intertwined with ribbons and purple bands continued to be worn by noble ladies (Lester, 21).

Women were admonished by the Church for giving so much attention to themselves. St. Bernard admonished his own sister for giving so much attention to her dress. Even though clothing was of a standard cut for both sexes, the attire of women tended to be wider and longer, and to conceal the human figure more completely. The early Christian Church regarded the body of woman as a continual invitation to sin. St. Clement advised women to hide their face as well as their hair. Couverchefs, squares of white linen framing the face and concealing the hair, were worn. It was considered indecent and disrespectful to wear nothing on the head in church. Veiling

of the hair also symbolized the dependence of women upon men. The cloak, worn by both sexes, came to be secured on the right shoulder with a clasp. Men's narrow-sleeved coats were shortened to the thigh (Boehn, 5, Lester, 21).

With the Crusades, which lasted through the 11th, 12th, and 13th Centuries, all Christendom was brought into contact and trade with the East. The bliaud, which reflected many Eastern influences, was worn by both men and women. It was a long, straight garment with long, shaped sleeves that were either funnel shaped or tight-fitting to the elbow and widening suddenly below the elbow. Sometimes the cuffs on the sleeves were so long that they were tied in knots to prevent trailing on the ground. A jewelled or plain girdle sometimes belted the bliaud. An ankle-length tunic of linen, a chainse, with long, straight sleeves, a belt and a high neckline fastening at the neck, was worn under the bliaud. The bliaud was worn long by women and from below the knee to very long by the men. Breeches or trousers held up by a belt to which hose were laced, were worn next to the body by men. The legs continued to be cross-gartered from the knees down. A mantle, fastened in front by a large brooch or buckle, was worn over the entire costume (Davenport, 12, Evans, 14). Ladies' mantles or capes were fastened in front by a cord running across the chest, where it would be held by two fingers. By the 11th century, handkerchiefs and gloves were in established use (Davenport, 12).

During Charlemagne's reign only the upper classes were privileged to wear real gloves. Gloves played an important

part in feudal transactions as Allen states:

A feudal lord would give a glove to his vassal as a sign of his authority over him . . . on the other hand, vassal often had to give gloves to their overlords as a sign of submission. When a king sent someone . . . to do some important business for him he would give him a staff with his glove attached to it, to show that he represented the king, and when Charlemagne conferred upon a town the right to hold a market, he sent the townsmen his glove (1, p. 96).

When a knight wanted to challenge another he struck him with a glove or threw the glove on the ground. When a fight was arranged, gloves were exchanged as pledges of participation by both parties. No one appeared before their king in gloves (Allen, 1).

Eleventh century clothes were lined and adorned with fur such as ermine, squirrel, marten, rabbit, etc. Extravagance in the use of furs had reached so far that in the Crusade of 1190, King Phillip of France and King Richard of England thought it fit to prohibit knights from wearing furs, but to no avail (Davenport, 12).

The armor of the knights and garments worn under armor affected men's and women's costume (Boehn, 5, Davenport, 12). Knights wore conical helmets with nosepieces and hooded hauberks, type of sleeveless jacket, made of chainmail. Chainmail consisted of rings linked together in over-lapping scale fashion. The Bayeaux Tapestry shows that other hauberks were also made of quilted material or of leather with short sleeves. Hauberks were knee-length in the 11th century. To facilitate riding, the hauberk had elits in front and back. The forearms of the knight were protected by long sleeves of the undergarment which

was probably quilted. The legs were covered by cross-gartering above separate shoes. During the 12th and 13th centuries, chainmail came to cover the arms, hands, and legs of the knight (Davenport, 12).

Twelfth Century

In the 12th century the knight's hauberk had a shorter, fuller skirt eliminating the need for slits. The sleeves were long, ending in mittens. The coif-de-mailles surrounded the head closely and covered the chin so that the helmet was not always worn. By the end of the century, the helmet was rounded, having lost its conical shape. A long under-tunic with trailing, gored fullness was worn under the hauberk. Sometimes the skirt was slit for the sake of convenience. A surcoat, worn over the armor of the knight, was introduced in the middle of the century (Davenport, 12).

As the knight's armor became more concealing, the necessity of distinguishing one from another was met by the development of armorial bearings. Fur-decorated shields soon became elaborated with ubiquitous color. The beginnings of armorial bearings were shown on the Bayeux Tapestry. There was a parallel growth of interest in all-over patterns on garments and the new lavish use of small piece furs; both were allied with the rise of patterned armorial bearings (Davenport, 12).

Blianda continued to be worn by both men and women. By the 12th century, the women's bliand was a fitted dress, lacing at the sides or back. The sleeve either turned back, hung

over the hand concealing it, or the trailing cuff continued to be tied in knote. Decorative bands and orphreys, woven by monks and ladies, formerly worn at the neck and wrists, moved to horizontal positions around the upper arm, and across the shortened, narrowed skirt of the b্লাuid. The full skirt of the chainse, contrasting in color, was seen and frequently was so long that it trailed on the ground. Woven girdles, like orphreys, were worn, a wide one at the waistline and a narrower one knotted below (Davenport, 12).

Pointed shoes, poulaines, invented by Faulk of Anjou to hide his ill-formed feet, began to appear. Wooden pattens were devised to protect the poulaines in bad weather. High boots, often with turned down cuffs, were not uncommon (Davenport, 12).

Both men and women wore fur-lined mantles, pelissons, by the end of the century. In England, the short Angevin mantle introduced by Henry Courtmartel was worn. For traveling the bell-shaped hooded cape continued to be used. Up until the 13th century, a cloak was taken off as a sign of respect. Historians recorded, ". . . whenever men of breeding appear before their leige lord they should not wear their cloaks, and that whoever is ignorant of this rule shows he is a churl (Hansen, 17, p. 121)." In later 12th century, men wore berete or brimmed hats (Davenport, 12).

Women wore their hair parted and flowing, or braided and wound about with a ribbon. Hair of young girls was completely uncovered or bound by a fillet. The veil of married women was

smaller, circular, and held in place by a circlet or crown (Davenport, 12).

Short hair was worn by the Norman men until the 11th and 12th centuries, when they replaced it with the long hair style of the English. Subject to much regulation, long hair and beards became standard. In 1104, Henry I of England was harangued by Bishop Serlo, who said that the men wearing beards resembled Saracens rather than Christians. King Henry and several noblemen, filled with remorse, permitted their beards to be trimmed by the Bishop. Later in the century, beards were censured and became definitely less common. Long hair was also frowned upon. Priests carried scissors to cut locks whenever deemed necessary. King Henry's conscience bothered him so that he cut his long tresses. "All the knights copied this for a year or so . . . (Davenport, 12, p. 132)."

Chief articles of jewelry were large high brooches set with massive stones, fastening the slit bodice at the throat. Similar stones were used on crowns and circlets. Clasps were used for the ends of the cords that fastened capes. The beginnings of parti-color and dagging from Germany were apparent (Davenport, 12).

Thirteenth Century

This century opened what Hansen (17) called the 'Gothic' period of the Middle Ages. "Gothic costume . . . gave slenderness to the body and emphasized the vertical line, like the architecture which was contemporary with it (Hansen, 17, p. 121)."

The Gothic partiality for these slender forms was shown in long loose tunics worn by both sexes. Discovered by the Crusaders when they passed through Byzantium, the tunic was brought back to Europe along with the pointed arch. Over the long tunics were worn sleeveless surcoats adopted from the knights' garments worn by the Crusaders over their armor as a protection from the glare of the sun. With the long tunic was worn the poullaine, the exaggerated toe corresponded to the age's liking of elongated forms (Hansen, 17). Binder (4) states that the idea for the poullains was taken from the turned-up toes on the Saracenic and Turkish shoes and was brought back by the Crusaders.

Under the long tunic men wore hose fastened to a belt around the waist. By the 13th century, the breeches became under-drawers and were worn with a shirt under the tunic (Hansen, 17).

Over this costume, men wore hooded overcoats, fur-lined pelissons, or poncho and gaucho-like capes. Capes with hoods were also used. The lengthening of the tail or liripipe on the hood conformed to the elongation of the Gothic ideal (Davenport, 12, Hansen, 17). Head coverings continued to be berets and high crowned, brimmed hats of the sugar-loaf type that turned up in the back. The coif fitted the head closely, came down at the back and was tied under the chin with strings (Davenport, 12, Truman, 31). The Lateran Council of 1215 compelled the Jews to identify themselves by wearing a round hat surmounted by a long, erect point (Hansen, 17).

The women's tunic or cotte flared from the hips emphasizing the belly. The garment was skimpy around the chest and bloused at the low waistline which was sometimes girdled. The sleeve tapered from the waist to the wrist and the neckline was lower. Decoration was in the form of horizontal orphreys. The cloak, often fur-lined, was semi-circular with a front fastening (Davenport, 12).

The wimple, a headdress for women that appeared early in this century, was a square of white material which would around the head and throat. Truman (31), among other writers of historic costume, maintains that it originated in England in the 12th century. Davenport (12) points out that the wimple, enclosing the face of its wearer, was analogous to that of the coif-de-mailles of the knight. The wimple and chinband were combined in a headdress that consisted of a strip of linen that would around the forehead and was secured by another strip that went under the chin; the two strips were pinned together at the top. Types of wimple have continued through the ages in the form of headdresses for nuns, their religious orders having been established in the Middle Ages (Truman, 31). A straight strip of linen worn from under the chin around the top of the head, leaving the neck bare, was called a chinband or barrette. The chinband was sometimes worn with a pillbox type of crown. Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II, is said to have introduced it into England (Allen, 1). The braided hair was also gathered into net orispines. Women of rank wore orispines of gold thread encircled by a band of jewels of gold

PLATE I

1. A noblewoman wearing the wimple, surcoat over the cotte; taken from Westley Waterless Church, Cambridgeshire (Davenport, 12, p. 199).
2. A knight wearing the coif-de-mailles as part of his chainmail armor, the surcoat over the armor; taken from Westley Waterless Church, Cambridgeshire (Davenport, 12, p. 199).

PLATE I



1.



2.

(Lester, 21). Headdresses were beginning to widen. Young girls wore their hair loose (Davenport, 12).

Fitchets, vertical slits in outer garments, allowed access to pouches, called aumonieres, worn by both men and women (Davenport, 12). These pouches or almsbags were Saracenic in origin, being introduced to the West by the Crusaders (Lester, 21). Persons of rank wore gloves that were jewelled or embroidered. Bishops have retained this jewelled or embroidered glove into the present day (Truman, 31).

With the Church backing nobility, sumptuary laws were passed limiting extravagance and finery according to rank. Only virtuous women were allowed to wear hooded mantles on the street (Burriss-Meyer, 8, Challamel, 10). In France, veils of ladies of rank reached to their feet. Ladies of lesser rank wore shorter veils as regulated by law (Binder, 4, Burriss-Meyer, 8). Wives of French barons were forbidden to wear gowns of higher value than twenty-five sous by the yard. Lord's wives were not to wear gowns of more than eighteen sous and middle class ladies no more than sixteen sous and nine deniers (Lester, 21).

Philippe le Bel, ruler of France in the late 13th century, pressed by the Church, regulated the number of dresses for each social class. Neither men nor women of the rising bourgeoisie were to wear vair, gris, or ermine, or gold, precious stones, or crowns of gold or silver. Dukes and barons, of six thousand livres of land or more, and their ladies might have four robes a year and no more. Knights and their ladies were allowed two

robes a year (Laver, 19). A bourgeoisie lady was fined for dressing like a noblewoman (Davenport, 12). The Elector of Saxony issued similar decrees (Boehn, 5).

Louis IX (1126-1270) admonished his courtiers: "You should dress yourselves well and neatly in order that . . . your people will . . . esteem you the higher for it" (Lester, 21, p. 96)."

Fourteenth Century

Boehn states, "Armour provides the external impetus to the great changes in masculine civilian costume . . . (5, p. 216)." In this century there was a shift from chainmail armor to plate armor. Plate armor followed the line of the body, necessitating an alteration in form of the undergarments. The confining of the upper part of the body was preceded by a similar encasing of the lower legs in iron, which gradually spread to the thighs. This enabled the surcoat to be shortened. The knight necessarily had to appear in different garb when he took off his armor. Everything had to be narrow and tight. The fitted coat, the pourpoint which was quilted, and waisted-length hose served as a protection under the armor (Boehn, 5).

The pourpoint, a low-necked garment, was more waisted and padded out at the breast by the middle of the century. As it became progressively shorter, the hose were laced to its eyeleted hem. The sleeves were long and tight. Over the pourpoint, was worn the cottehardie, a low-necked garment that laced or buttoned down the center front by the middle of the century. Tippets, or orpherys, hanging from the elbow of the sleeves,

were fur-lined. The cotehardie also became progressively shorter, reaching from below the knees in the early part of the century to just above the crotch by the end of the century. The hem was often dagged in lobes. By the end of the century, the cotehardie had appropriated the collar, sleeves, and pleats of the houppelande which came in at the end of the century (Davenport, 12).

The long fitted stockings that laced to the pourpoint often parti-colored, that is, each stocking was a different color (Davenport, 12). The brilliant coloring of the hose or hosa was inspired by the colors of the stained-glass windows of Gothic cathedrals (Binder, 4). These hosa were very noticeable due to the shortness of the pourpoint and cotehardie. Men were chided for wearing too little, but to no avail. The Church thus ordained that improper dress be limited to the nobility (Binder, 4, Lester, 21).

Men's capes were short, shoulder length and fashioned of fur. Longer capes with dagged edges were fastened on one shoulder. Long capes were worn only for travel, or by members of knightly orders. Edges of hoods were also dagged and the liripipe became so long that it became the subject of magisterial censorship (Boehn, 5). Hats too became taller with sugar-loaf crowns. The brim was turned up at the back and in front projected in a peak over the forehead (Hansen, 17).

Hair, by mid century, was parted, exposing the forehead and was rolled at the nape. The bowl-drop, hair radiating from a spot on the crown and cropped from the bangs in a continuous

line around the head, made its appearance in the latter part of the century. In most cases the neck and head were shaved to a point above the ears.

Poulaines or crackows, the latter term said to have originated in Crackow, Poland, reached their glory in this century. The toes became so long that they had to be chained to the knee of the wearer, a fashion originated by King James I of Scotland (Boehn, 5, Davenport, 12). Length of toes designated the dignity of the wearer. As early as the late 13th century, a decree was issued limiting the length of points on poulaines. The nobility was allowed to wear points of two feet in length. One foot points were allowed for the bourgeoisie, and one-half foot lengths for common people (Evans, 14). The Church had always opposed long pointed shoes since they make it difficult or impossible for the wearer to kneel at prayer. In 1422, Charles VI forbade the wearing of poulaines. They did not completely disappear until the 16th century. The poulaines even passed into armor (Boehn, 5, Davenport, 12). In England, 1463, an ordinance stated that persons of rank could not wear poulaines with toes more than two inches in length (Wilcox, 33).

As the belts of the armed knight lowered so did the belts of men out of armor. The pouch continued to be carried on the belt by both men and women (Davenport, 12).

As well as a tendency to lengthen vertical lines, Gothic style emphasized structure. In dress this took the form of revealing the shape of the body as we have seen in men's clothing. In women's clothing, likewise, the body was distinguishable.

The cotte, essentially the 12th century bliaud, worn under the surcoat was form-fitting with long buttoned sleeves. The armholes of the sleeveless surcoat were enlarged and revealed the girdled feminine figure beneath it. The armholes were trimmed with fur and were termed "windows of hell" by the clergy, ". . . which suggests the ascetic attitude of the Middle Age to the temptations of the female body (Hansen, 17, p. 123)." Copying her lord's garment, the lady often wore false sleeves which were attached to the surcoat and bestowed them as love-tokens to her knight (Boehn, 5). Eventually the surcoat or sleeveless gown became so long that one side of the skirt was held up by a jewelled clasp, *tussoire*, which revealed the contrasting color and fabric of the cotte. Pope Nicholas instructed women to wear dresses only to the ground or barely a handbreadth longer (Parsons, 26).

About the middle of the 14th century, Jeanne of Bourbon, wife of Charles V of France, encouraged the wearing of a very modish bodice which fitted the figure closely, stopped just above the hips and was sleeveless. It formed part of the wardrobe of ladies of rank and was made of costly material and equally costly trimming (Boehn, 5).

Women wore cloaks only for ceremonial occasions. The hoods were worn only by the bourgeoisie (Davenport, 12).

During the first half of the century, wimples, and wimple and chinbands continued to be worn. The hair was sometimes set in wide V-arrangements caught in crespine nets. Worn in spirals over the ears, the hair was covered with coils of gold braid or

wire set with jewels held in place by a low metal band or jewelled crown. This was the reticulated headdress. Long hair was worn by brides, young girls, and queens at coronation (Davenport, 12). For church wear, women were instructed to wear veils of linen and silk shot with gold thread (Parsons, 26).

Heraldry affected both male and female costume (Davenport, 12). Parti-color used on garments evolved from the emblazoning of arms. The devices used on the knights' surcoats were worn "parted" by the ladies. They wore their husbands' coat of arms emblazoned on the right side and that of their family coat emblazoned on the left side of the gown. The coat of arms worn by both sexes echoed the bright colors of stained-glass windows and tapestries of the Church (Lester, 21, Wilcox, 33). Emblems were embroidered with jewels on coats and gowns (Boehn, 5).

Fabrics became more and more luxurious and ornamented with jewels. Gold and silver cloth and large patterned brocades were popular. Punishment in life hereafter was threatened by clergymen for such extravagance (Lester, 21). Pope Gregory bade women to give up pearls, ornaments of feathers, and gold and silver fringes during Lent. Church regulations were proclaimed to all the people. Refusal to comply could bring refusal of absolution by the priests (Lester, 21). Dowlas, monk of Glas-tonbury, writing against the extravagances of changing fashion so often said:

PLATE II

1. Bliand of the 12th century, mantle, plaited hair (Wilcox, 33, p. 53).
2. Surcoat or sideless gown of the 14th century worn over the cotte, science of heraldry on the skirt of the gown, reticulated headdress (Wilcox, 33, p. 53).



1.



2.

The English haunted so much into the folly of strangers, that every year they changed them in diverse shapes and disguisings of clothing, now long, now large, now wide, now strait, and every day clothingee, new and dsetitude, and devest from all honesty to old arraye or good usage; and another time in short clothes, and so strait waisted, with full sleeves and tapetes of surcoate and hodes, over long and large, all so ragged and knie on every side, and all so shattered, and also buttoned, that I with truth ehll say, they seem more like to tormentors or devils in their clothing, and also in their shoyng and other arraye than they seemed to be like men (Rheed, 28, p. 38).

Fifteenth Century

Gothic costume reached its culmination during this century (Hansen, 17). Men's pourpoint became the doublet. The padded, close-fitting garment was now not only padded in the upper chest but also in the shoulders and upper sleeve, accenting a tiny waist. By the end of this century it assumed the high collar of the houppelande, the typical outer garment of the 15th century. Hosa were laced to the shorter doublet. The cotehardie became the jerkin which attained the collar, sleeve, and pleats of the houppelande. Necklines of the jerkin were bateau or a deep V filled in with a breast cloth and laced up the middle. Men's cloaks had become so short that they barely covered the buttocks (Davenport, 12). Edward IV of England decreed that no man below the rank of yeoman should wear the padding in the doublet, only lining. Men of lower rank than lords were forbidden to wear the very short doublets and cloaks. Tailors were forbidden to make these garments (Allen, 1).

The houppelande which made its appearance in the late 14th century from the Low Countries, was worn by both men and women.

PLATE III

1. Houppelands with dagging, chaperon, and poulaines (Wilcox, 33, p. 52).
2. Jerkin worn over doublet, hose, poulaines, and chaperon (Wilcox, 33, p. 52).



1.



Usually made of brocade, lined with fur, and the edges dagged, the men's houppelande hung in folds, tucked into place under the belt. The trailing sleeves progressed from bag-shaped to hanging. Frequently opened down the front, the houppelande had a high shaped collar. The length varied from below the knee to a dragging train for great occasions (Davenport, 12).

On their heads, men continued to wear the sugar-loaf hat which was a brimless oval cap. The lengthening liripipe of the dagged hoods were wrapped around the head to form the turbaned chaperon (Davenport, 12). Dashing young men slung the liripipe of the hood over their shoulders (Wilcox, 33). The roundlet was padded into a spreading brim with a scarf bound around it and the chin. Lester (21) maintains that the roundlet was a turban that was borrowed from the East by the Crusaders. Plumes, pins, and ornaments were worn on hats by the end of the century (Davenport, 12). As footwear poulaines, each one of a different color in parti-color fashion, were worn (Truman, 31).

The very-short waisted bodice of the women's houppelande had a wide, low, V-neckline outlined in fur. The V deepened until the cotte worn underneath was exposed. By the end of the century, necklaces and scarves filled in the neckline. A wide belt was placed just under the arms and bust. The gored skirt bordered with fur was so long that it had to be held or tucked up revealing the undergarment or cotte. The wide band of luxurious material on the skirt of the cotte matched the tight sleeves also of the cotte which were seen from under the sleeves

of the houppelande (Davenport, 12). Sometimes the excess skirt was carried by an attendant, a fashion set by Isabelle of Bavaria, wife of Charles VI (1380-1422). The trailing long sleeves and train followed the long vertical lines of Gothic architecture (Lester, 21). The cloaks worn by ladies of rank on great occasions were said to have trailed on the ground for five yards (Boehn, 5). "The Prior of Vigecis raised his voice against the long-tailed gowns. 'The tail,' he said, 'gives a woman the look of a serpent' (Challamel, 10, p. 34)."

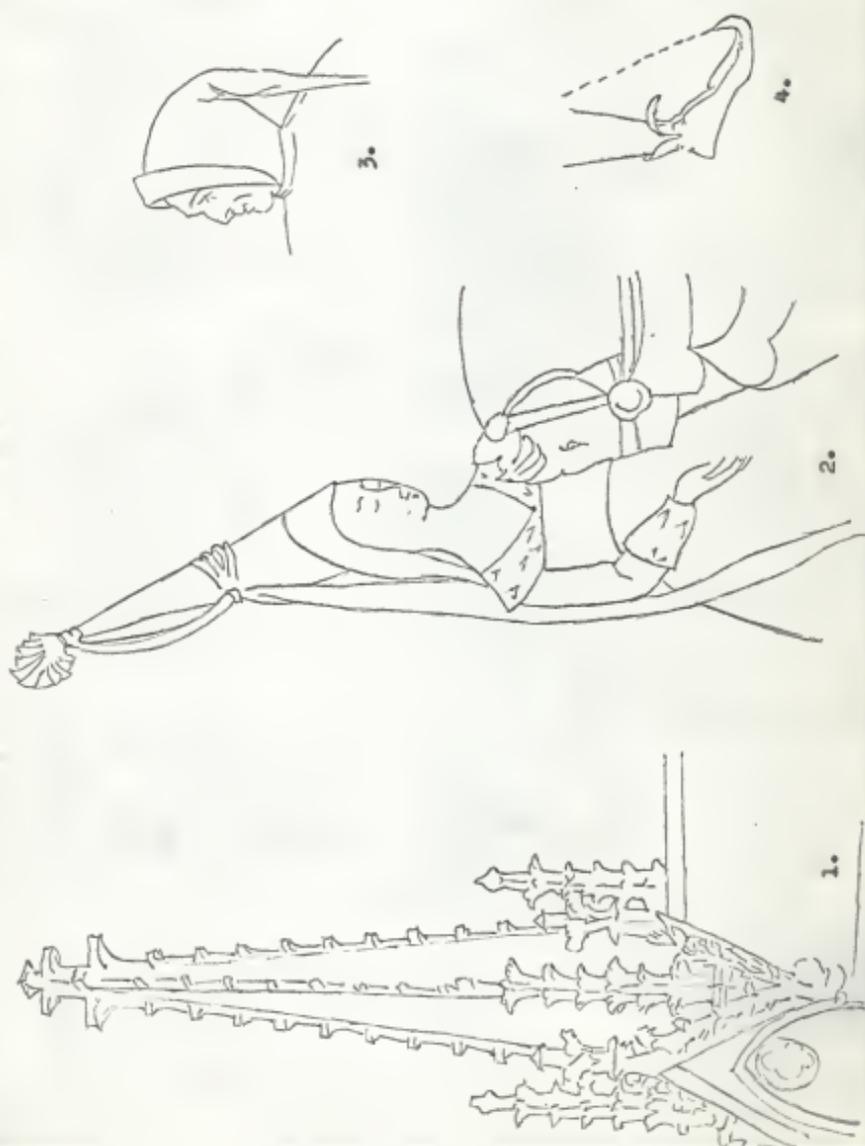
To top the Gothic silhouette, women wore vertical head-dresses. The hennin, a conical cap about a yard high, fitted close to the head. From the peak of the cone fell a veil of finest texture that reached the shoulder (Lester, 21). Burris-Meyer (8) said that the hennin was borrowed by the Crusaders from the headdress of certain sects of Jewish women in Jerusalem. Hansen (17) said that it resembled the conical metal *tan-tura* worn by the women of Syria. Both writers agree that the idea, like so many other ideas, was brought home by the Crusaders from the East.

The nobility was not limited to the height of hennin they could wear. In France, middle class women were limited to two feet for hennin height. Sumptuary laws limited the longest veils to the noble ladies (Binder, 4, Wilcox, 33). The preaching of the monk, Conecte, against hennins, to a crowd of 20,000 women in 1428, led women to burn their hennins in public. Later Conecte was burned for heresy, "the women that like snails in a fright had drawn in their horns, shot them out

PLATE IV

1. Gothic cathedral spire (Laver, 20, p. 10).
2. Steeple-headress or hennin and houpplande reflecting Gothic spire (Laver, 20, p. 9).
3. Hood with liripipe echoing Gothic architecture (Wilcox, 33, p. 45).
4. Foulaine, the toe of which is chained to the knee of the wearer, echoing Gothic architecture (Wilcox, 33, p. 45).

PLATE IV



again as soon as the danger was over' (Spectator ii, p. 98), (Davenport, 12, p. 314)." Women who wore hennine and escoffions were compared to horned beasts and were pictured as Satan. The escoffion, introduced by Isabelle of Bavaria, was a two-horned arrangement, a yard high made of fine lawn, stiffly starched and wired to keep the horns in place. From the tip of the horns, flags, fringes, and other materials fell to the shoulders (Lester, 21).

Other variations of the high headdresses were the butterfly headdress and the heart-shaped hat. The former headdresses consisted of a floating gauze veil stretched over wires which were tilted at the back of the head and attached to a net cap that enclosed the hair. For the latter headdress, the hair was padded and stuffed until it attained a considerable height and was placed in nets. The curved part of the heart shape was covered with a veil (Truman, 31).

The hair was usually stuffed under the headdress. "The fact that Isabelle of Bavaria was completely bald and without eyebrows is supposed to have led, out of court snobbery, to plucking of eyebrows and forehead, to give an exaggeratedly bald look . . . (Davenport, 12, p. 292)."

Women emulated men in wearing little bells on the hems of their garments, hoods, girdles, and on the tips of their shoes. A German innovation, the council of Nuremberg, in 1343, decreed that no one should wear bells or such baubles of silver attached to his girdle, but to no avail. This fashion lasted until the late 15th century (Boehn, 5).

PLATE V

1. Houppelands and steeple hennin (Wilcox, 33, p. 53).
2. Sideless gown or surcoat over the cotte, mantle, butterfly headdress; taken from Hertfordshire, Brocbourne Church (Davenport, 12, p. 355).
3. Houppelands, heart-shaped headdress; taken from Hertfordshire, Brocbourne Church (Davenport, 12, p. 355).
4. Escoffion headdress (Brooke and Laver, 7, p. 53).



1.



2.



3.

Fabrics were woolens, silks, patterned velvets and brocades of deep blues, maroon, greens, purples, and browns. These colors, used in two or three combinations, carried out very bold designs (Grimball, 16, Lester, 21).

During the Gothic period, France came to be the originator of fashions. Here the rich ruling court circles set the tone for the entire elegantly dressed world of the time. Each land had its own individual note which varied at different times. "In those days, fashion and costume was more or less a common affair for the whole of western and central Europe (Wagner, 32, p. 11)."

SUMMARY

Fashion psychologists state that the costume of any age reflects the conditions of that period. Hurlock (18) says that fashions are closely related to the social conditions of the nation.

The purpose of this report was to study some of the social conditions of the Middle Ages and to point out their influence on medieval dress. Two important social aspects of European Middle Ages, feudalism and the Church, were considered in this study.

Feudalism, the type of government that existed in the Middle Ages, was built upon a class system. Costume reflected that division of classes, the higher the rank of the wearer, the more elaborate was his attire. As the middle classes gained in social standing and wealth, sumptuary laws were passed in an attempt to limit extravagant dress to the noble class, often to no avail. A social aspect of feudalism was chivalry and knight-hood. The attire of the knights definitely influenced civil costume. The wimple worn by women was adapted from the coiffe-mailles of the knights' chainmail armor. The doublet and hose worn under plate armor was incorporated into civil costume by men. Both men and women adopted items of knightly attire. The surcoat, worn over armor for protection against the glare of the sun, was taken into both men's and women's costumes.

The Church was the dominant unifying force of the Middle Ages. Art was a communal expression to the glory of God. The highest expression was found in the Gothic churches, whose vertical lines were predominant in architecture and sculpture. Stained-glass windows, wall-paintings, illuminated manuscripts, and tapestry vibrated with color. Costume of the day was represented in these art forms. Costume reflected the vertical lines of Gothic architecture as is seen, for example, in the trailing houppelande of the 15th century and the accompanying steeple headdress, the hennin. The jewel-tones of the stained-glass windows, wall paintings, illuminated manuscripts, and tapestry were reflected in the colorful costume. Symbols used in the design of tapestry were also used in fabrics for costumes. The Church held that anyone who lived in a manner in keeping with her teachings would attain eternal happiness in the world hereafter. One of its teachings stressed the fact that the body was a continual temptation to sin. Costume of the early Middle Ages reflected this philosophy by concealing the form of the human figure. The Crusades, a series of holy wars initiated by the Pope, undertaken to recover the Holy Places from the Mohammedans, brought an interchange of new ideas between the East and the West and stimulated a desire for such items as gorgeous fabrics, jewels, and perfumes. Returning home to all parts of Europe, the Crusaders were an incentive for women to assert themselves. As seen through costume, for example, the loose fittingbliaud of the 11th century became a form fitting gown in the 12th century.

With the breakdown of feudal society which was one of the results of the Crusades, and the emerging of a middle class, the nobility lost its prestige and wealth. They attempted to maintain their position by flaunting their rank through ostentatious costume.

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INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS ON COSTUME
IN
MEDIEVAL EUROPE

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Fashion psychologists state that the costume of any age reflects the conditions of that period. Parsons says, "The results in costume, as in other mediums, are but a material record of the great ideals that swayed nations at the time of their creation (26, p. XXIV)."

The purpose of this report was to study some of the social conditions of the Middle Ages and to point out their influence on medieval dress. Two important social aspects of European Middle Ages, feudalism and the Church, were considered. Feudalism, the type of government that existed in the Middle Ages, brought with it class divisions. These divisions were reflected in costume, the higher the rank of the wearer the more lavish and magnificent was the attire. As the middle class gained in wealth and social standing, many sumptuary laws were passed in an attempt to limit luxurious dress to the nobility, often to no avail. A social aspect of feudalism was chivalry and knighthood. The costume of the knights definitely influenced civil costume. Both men and women adopted items of knightly attire. For example, the surcoat, worn by the knight over armor to prevent glare from the sun, was incorporated into costume of both men and women.

The Church was the dominant unifying force of the Middle Ages. Art was a communal expression to the glory of God. The

highest expression was in the Gothic churches, whose vertical lines were predominant in architecture and sculpture. Stained-glass windows, wall-paintings, illuminated manuscripts, and tapestry were all done in vibrant colors. Costume reflected the vertical lines of Gothic architecture as is seen in the trailing houppelande of the 15th century and the accompanying steeple-headress, the hennin. The jewel-tones of stained-glass windows, illuminated manuscripts, and wall-paintings were reflected in the colorful costume. The Church taught that anyone who lived in the prescribed manner would attain eternal happiness in the life hereafter. One of its teachings stressed the fact that the body was a continual temptation to sin. This teaching was reflected in the costume of the early Middle Ages which de-emphasized the human form. The Crusades, a series of holy wars initiated by the Pope, undertaken to recover the Holy Places from the Moslems, brought an interchange of ideas between the East and West and heightened the desire for luxurious stuffs, such as gorgeous fabrics, jewels, perfumes, etc. The Crusaders, who returned to their homes in all parts of Europe, proved to be an incentive for women to assert themselves. An example as seen in costume was thebliaud of the 12th century which by the 14th century became the fitted dress which revealed the feminine figure.

The Crusades and the rise of the middle class helped to break down feudal society. The nobility was losing its social standing and wealth. Ostentatious costume was one means by which the nobles tried to retain their coveted rank.