

16th Century Flat Cap

Overview of project

The flat cap is the most preeminent head covering for both men and women from the reign of Henry VII to the end of Elizabeth I's reign. The hat could be made of many different fabrics and ornaments depending on station and wealth. It is worn by all classes though the inspiration for this cap was pulled from paintings of royalty like those of Prince Don Carlos of Austria (c. 1556, painted by Alonso Sanchez Coello), King Charles IX of France (c. 1561, painted by Francois Cloue) and King Phillip II of Spain (c. 1554, painted by Anthonis Mor Van Dashorst).



Prince Don Carlos
of Austria

c. 1556



King Charles IX of
France

c. 1561



Phillip II, King of
Spain

c. 1554

Woolen extant examples have survived and can be seen at German National Museum in Nierenberg, Germany. Examples examined by Jane Arnold proved to have no evidence of a stiffening layer in the middle but this could have disintegrated over time.

Tools and Materials:

To make this hat I used a heavy tapestry fabric (red patterned) for the shell of the crown and brim and lined the crown in a medium weight (5.3 oz) red linen. Red wool bias tape was used to cover the raw edges. Thick stiff interfacing and millinery wire were used to help the brim retain its shape. The materials chosen for my hat match the doublet armor that I made for the rapier list field. Traditional materials used would have been velvet and a lining in silk. In extant hats of the time there was no stiffening layer found but this could be due to disintegration of this material over time. Inspiration from the studied portraits showed jeweled hat bands and feathers. I used store bought peacock feathers and a jeweled pin in the shape of a golden squirrel holding a pearl.

Construction:

Guidance from different sources listed were used to make a pattern for the crown and the brim. I used the procedure and guidance from one particular source (Semptress) since I had no previous knowledge or experience in making a hat of this particular style. The crown was a mixture of hand and machine sewing while the brim was completely hand sewn. A whip stitch was used in the hand sewn parts. Traditional practice would have been to hand sew the entire hat but I used a mixture of machine and

hand sewing for time and skill constraints. Now that I have a little more experience I would consider completely hand sewing this hat instead of relying on the sewing machine

Sources:

<http://www.chesholme.com/wfiles/2-4-16th-Century-Knitted-Flat-Cap.pdf#:~:text=16th%20Century%20Knitted%20Flat%20Cap%20One%20of%20the,The%20caps%20were%20made%20from%20wool%20and%20velvet>. Inspiration, sources, and construction.

Heischberg, Melissa. The Flat Cap, from the blog Sempstress, Costume and Pattern Geekery. Patterning and assemblage procedure.

<http://genieve.net/sca/flatcap.html>. Inspiration and sources.

Arnold, Janet. Patterns of Fashion: The cut and construction of clothes for men and women c1560-1620. Macmillan. London. 1985. ISBN 0-333-38284-6. Inspiration and sources.