

Modern name: Ulla-Mari Uusitalo

SCA name: THL Uta Boucht

NAME of the item: Pourpoint

Country of origin: France

Period of origin: End of the 14th century

(Unfortunately, the texts under the pictures are in Finnish, since I've used the same pages to one of my lectures a year ago.)

Characteristics of style for that period:

During the 14th century, it became fashionable for noble men to wear tight, fitted jackets called *pourpoints* (sometimes also called *côtehardie* / *cotess*, or *jagues* / *jacks*, but they are not precisely the same outfit.) They developed from the "doubled", "gamboised" or "quilted" *gambesons*, *jupons* (= *gipons*, *gippons*) or *hacketons* (= *aketons*, *hauketons*), worn under the armor. (Pic. 2) The civilians adopted the fashion from soldiers.

The *pourpoints* were buttoned down front and sometimes the chest was heavily padded – the padding accentuated the narrow waist. (Pic. 4) The sleeves, which were usually tight, were also buttoned all the way up to and above the elbow. Other types of sleeves existed, too, though they were more rare and only appeared towards the end of the century, when the *houppelandes* started to effect the fashion: baggy sleeves, bombarded sleeves, wide sleeves etc. (Pic. 3,5) By the end of the century the neckline changed, too, from a collarless neck (usually a small v-neck) to a small "standing" collar – by 15th century the collar or *carcaille* already reached the ears.

Pourpoints were worn alone or under a *jack* or a *houppelande*. They could have been padded like their "ancestors", the *gambesons*, or just lined with another fabric, often silk, or fur. The materials used for the outer layer were silk, linen, wool and brocades, depending on the persons status and

wealth, and the usage of the pourpoint. The buttons were metal, wooden covered with cloth, or even pearls. The buttons were an important part of the decoration

The grey woollen pourpoint:

... has its origins in the pourpoint of Charles de Blois (died 1364), which is a very well preserved example of a pourpoint. (Pic. 7) It was made of silkbrocade, the material of lining and padding being unknown. The pattern for that pourpoint has been studied by Naomi Tarrant (1994). (Pic. 9) A few years ago I modified "my own" pourpoint patterns with the help of Tarrant's presentation, to fit the person I'm usually making these pourpoints for. I've used those "self-made" patterns with slight modifications for this grey pourpoint, too. (Luckily they still fit perfectly.)

I chose wool and linen (partly cotton) as materials, because the pourpoint was meant to be used outdoors also. The torso follows the patterns presented by Tarrant, except for the small sidepieces I've noticed in my earlier projects that they do not effect the fitting of the coat, and thus I did not cut them. (Tarrant claims that the numerous small pieces are due to the fact that there wasn't enough fabric. She is partly wrong: the narrow sleeves, for instance, do NOT fit, if the pieces are combined.) I also didn't cut the arm openings, done in the manner of "*plates*" or "*grandes assiettes*", as wide as the original had them the original had a heavily padded chest, which made it necessary to have wider "*plates*". The padding in Blois' pourpoint had also made it necessary to curve the pieces a lot more than I did for this grey pourpoint.

The sleeves are of an end of the century baggy style, and therefore they only follow the original pattern from around the shoulders so that they fit the chest. The final shape of the sleeve was a result of "try and try again" method, with a clear goal in my head (like Pic. 5). The collar is also of an end of the 14th century fashion.

The buttons have a split wooden ball inside a round piece of wool. The pourpoint is not buttoned all the way down to the front, to allow

movement. (Blois' pourpoint had openings at the sides for the same reason. Several paintings show, though, that the side openings were optional.) Also, I didn't vary the shape of the buttons – Blois' pourpoint had 15 round buttons and 17 flat ones (one flat by the neck and 16 under and above the waist, probably because of the heavy metal hipbelts they wore). My reason for sticking with round buttons was purely aesthetic – the round buttons looked better with this particular fabric.

I used a sewing machine, and to my greater shame, also for the buttonholes. (O why do I like 14th century and the million and one buttonholes...) Otherwise I've handsewn everything that can be seen. The pourpoint has been used a lot, as can be seen from the lining. But the stains are period, aren't they?