

# HOODS: An overview in images

*Mistress Sancha Lestrangle*

---

**Medieval hoods came in many forms, but for this introductory 'make-and-take' sewing class, we will focus on what I call the 'Generic Gothic' hood. This is a simple style from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century when hoods were at their height of popularity, but which can be adapted to many variations, as shown in this handout. (A color version will be posted on the Three Rivers website, under the Arts and Sciences tab.)**

---

Early styles were worn mainly by working people and tend to be cut loosely, square or pointy at the back of the head and usually with an elbow-length cape, though there are substantial variations in cape length and contour. These simple hoods continue unchanged among common folk right through the Renaissance, but by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> c, hoods became fashionable among all ranks of society, and are even seen on royalty. These upper-class hoods are more form-fitting than earlier or lower-class styles, usually contoured at the neck (often fitting closely enough to require buttons) and frequently curved at the back of the head. Alternatively, the top/back point is often extended into a tail called a 'liripipe', which becomes very popular in the 14<sup>th</sup> c. Hats were often worn over hoods, for protection among peasants and for style among the rich.

Contrast linings are common for all, with fur becoming popular for the 15<sup>th</sup>c nobility. Patterned fabrics are sometimes seen, but plain fabrics are more typical. However, by the latter 14<sup>th</sup> c, these were often parti-colored (half-and-half), and for the aristocracy, embroidered in scalloped or linear bands near the cape edge, and/or 'dagged' (cut into shapes along the edge), and by the 15<sup>th</sup> c, dagging becomes more common than not, extending onto the liripipe as well.

Sometime in the early 15<sup>th</sup> c, some stylish French dandy put his hood on the top of his head, with the face hole as a hatband, and the shoulder cape and liripipe hanging off the sides. This style caught on, and resulted in 50 years of hoods being first wrapped like turbans with the liripipe twisted around and the dags sticking out the top, then being sewn into that shape from the outset, with a padded donut replacing the tied-around liripipe. This did not spell the end of the hood, however, as loose hoods gradually lost their head-tailored shape, and were draped over the shoulder by their liripipe as a fashion accessory. While hoods remained commonplace for the lower classes (and for monks or academics), by the 16<sup>th</sup> c hoods had fallen out of fashion for upper class men .

Women wore hoods rather infrequently until the latter 14<sup>th</sup> c. Veils and headwraps were more typical, but at this point a distinctive womens' hood style develops, closely fitted, sometimes with buttons but normally worn open, and with the face opening cut into a deep fold worn turned back and often stiffened. In the mid-15<sup>th</sup> c, this develops into a style with a long black velvet turnback, closely fitted to the head, eventually becoming the so-called 'French hood' and the 'English gable' hood of the 16<sup>th</sup> c.

## Extant Examples:

We have several extant examples ranging from the 11<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> c, showing several methods of construction. The first two shown here use separate pieces for the head and cape. The Skjoldehamn example uses four square pieces, while much later square style uses two panels (front and back). The most typical Gothic styles are made of two continuous flat pieces of cloth with front and back seams, with a top fold or seam. The Herjofnes example uses a wide angle for the shoulder cape, while the Sunnfjord type uses fabric efficiently and fits more smoothly, but requires more construction, inserting triangles into side cuts to widen the cape.



11<sup>th</sup> c: Skjoldehamn hood



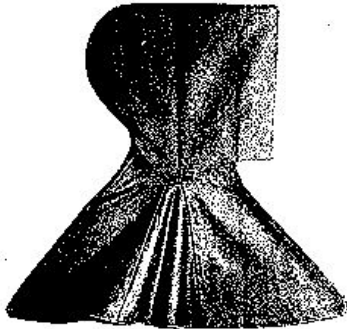
13<sup>th</sup> c square hood



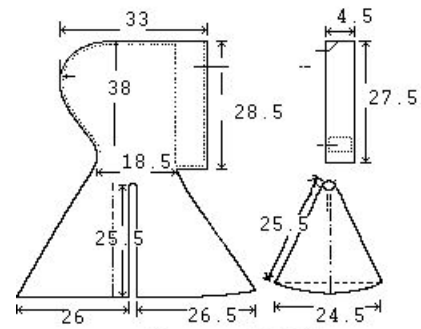
14<sup>th</sup> c Herjofnes hood



14<sup>th</sup> c:



Sunnfjord hood



(w/ measurements in centimeters)



Some 14<sup>th</sup> c. hoods, showing flat shape

# The 13<sup>th</sup> Century:



Short shoulder capes



Long shoulder capes

with hats



Square capes



Fur???



Note matching hoods and tunics: almost unique to latter 13<sup>th</sup> c.

## The 14<sup>th</sup> century:

Note dagging, parti-color, and embroidery. No color-matching at all.





Fulled wool: raw edges do not ravel.



Italians: you can tell by the gold trim.



## The 15<sup>th</sup> century:

Hoods as hoods; hoods as hats; hoods with hats; hoods as accessories:



Italian



## Ladies' Hoods:

### The 13<sup>th</sup> century:



### The 14<sup>th</sup> century:



Men and women, with several unusual styles:  
(Women identified by braids or veils)



Hoods with buttons





Draped hoods, as accessories and hats

## The 15<sup>th</sup> century



The open 'winged' women's hood, with and without buttons



Wide liripipe



'winged' hoods, buttoned closed



Widow's hood



Two fabrics?



Hood as accessory.



Hood as hat: padded roll

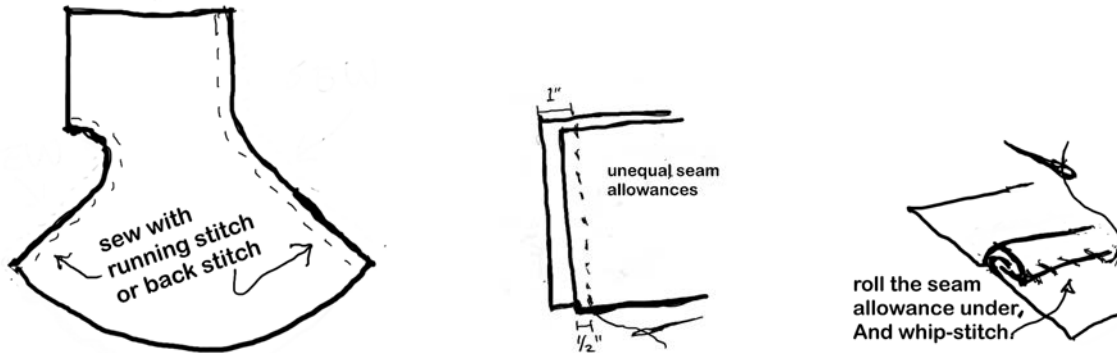


Open hood with straight lappets.



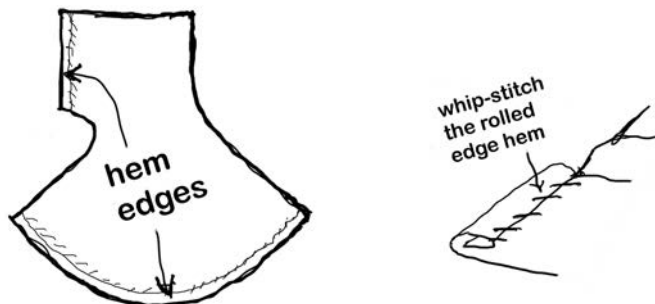
The evolving women's hood: late-15<sup>th</sup> c and early 16<sup>th</sup> c style

## CONSTRUCTING THE BASIC HOOD:



1: Pin the pieces together, 'good' sides facing each other. Sew the front and back seams. Use a running stitch, or a backstitch, or a sewing machine. If it will be unlined, make one seam allowance 1", and the other 1/2". (If it will have a lining, make both seam allowances 1/2".) If you want a liripipe, cut a strip twice the width of the liripipe, as long as you like, plus another inch for seam allowance, and stitch it to the top-back edge before sewing up the back seam. (Tip: off-white thread (unbleached linen) was the norm in period, regardless of the color of the cloth.)

2: If it is not lined, fell the seam allowances. Fold the wide allowance over the narrow one, then tuck it under to protect the raw edges, then whip-stitch it down. Felled (felted) wool cloth may not ravel, and so can be folded but not tucked under. Very thick cloth may be difficult to fell, so a thinner cloth can be used to bind the seams (sew it over the raw edge). No need to fell the liripipe seams.



3: Hem the bottom edge by folding the edge under 1/2", then under again, to protect the raw edge. Then, whip stitch the fold in place. If it will be lined, sew the lining to the outer cloth, good sides together with a 1/2" seam allowance, instead of hemming.

4: Hem the face hole the same way as the bottom edge. If it is lined, fold 1/2" of the lining and outer fabrics inward, and whip-stitch them together.