

An Overview of Men's Clothing in Northern Italy c. 1420 - 1480

as reconstructed by Master Lorenzo Petrucci

Italian men's clothing of the mid-15th century has a distinctive style that involves many different layers. From the skin out, these are:

- Camicia (shirt) and mutande/brache (underpants)
- Farsetto (doublet) and calze (hose)
- Giornea, cioppa, or gonella (coat)
- Mantello (cloak) [optional]
- Hats are often (but not always) worn. A full survey of these caps, hats, chaperones, and turbans is outside the scope of this class. Much of the variety can be seen in the included images, however.
- Belts or sashes are worn over the giornea/cioppa/gonella, but are generally undecorated.
- Shoes are low and fitted, with slightly pointed toes.

The images in this handout are from the northern part of Italy: Florence, Ferrara, Siena, Venice, and other nearby regions. The relative scarcity of images from southern Italy makes it difficult to say how far south the style extended.



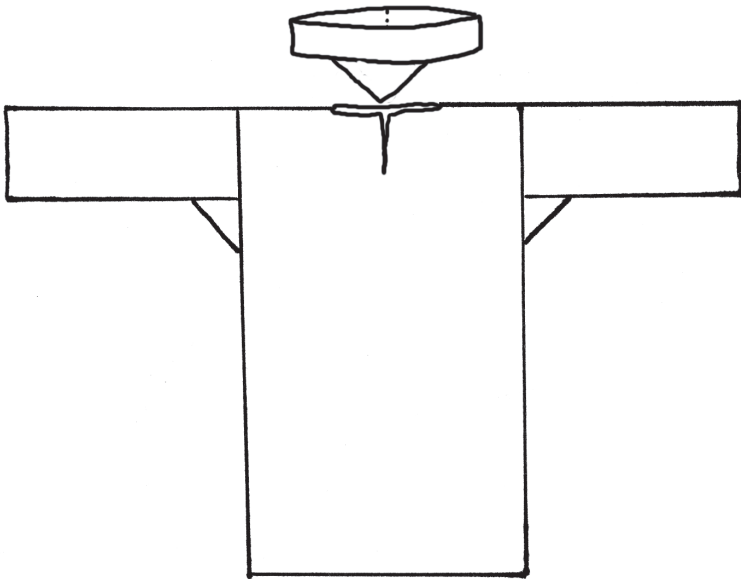
Domenico di Bartolo, *Pope Celestinus III Grants Privilege of Independence to the Spedale*, Siena, 1443

Camicia [kah-mee-cha]

The camicia is a thigh-length undershirt made of linen, with relatively narrow sleeves.

A distinctive feature of the camicia is the collar. There are different theories on how to pattern this; My current construction method uses a T-shaped slit at the neck opening, into which is set a collar band with a triangular gusset. When the doublet is closed, the extra fabric is taken up in a large fold at the front.

The edges of the camicia are seen at the collar and cuffs of the doublet, as well as at the center front opening and/or lower sleeves on doublets where those areas are closed by points rather than buttons.



Conjectural reconstruction of the camicia



Piero della Francesca, *Discovery of the True Cross*, c. 1460 - Here you can see the slits at the sides and the high collar.



Antonello da Messina, *Portrait of a Man*, c. 1475 - This portrait shows how the collar is folded over in front.

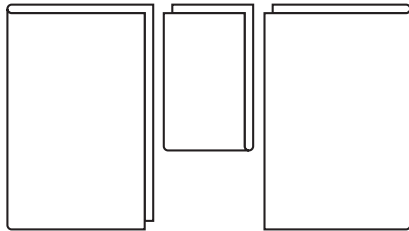
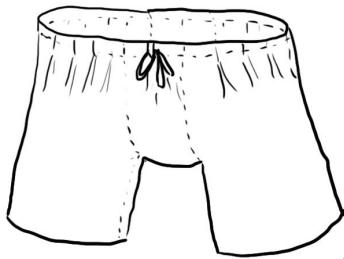
Mutande / Brache [moo-tahn-day]/[brah-kay]

There are two styles of drawers seen in this style, both made of linen. Mutande are very short and fitted, much like modern briefs. I have not yet developed a good pattern for them.

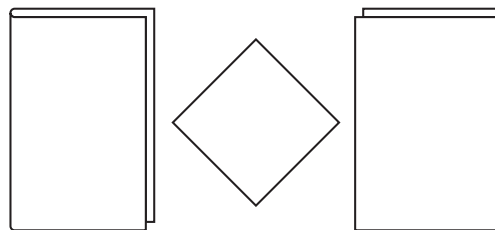
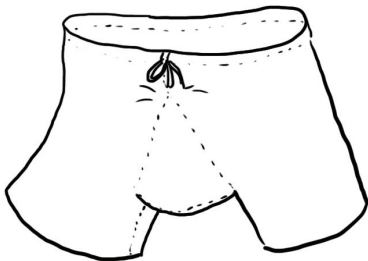
Brache are longer and looser, though they still fit fairly closely to the leg. These are very similar to modern boxer shorts. I construct them with two rectangular legs and either a center panel through the crotch from front to back or a square gusset. The former is roomier, while the latter is more fitted through the seat. I find brache more to my taste than mutande, as they eliminate gapping between the drawers and the top of the calze.



Francesco Cossa, *Allegory of April*, 1476-84 - These men are wearing mutande and brache of different lengths.



Cosme Tura, *Allegory of September: Triumph of Vulcan*, 1476-84 - These brache are relatively loose.



Two conjectural reconstructions of brache.



Domenico di Bartolo, *Enlargement of the Hospital*, 1440-1444 - A short pair of mutande.

Farsetto [far-set-toh]

The farsetto (one of many terms used for the Italian doublet of this period) is closely fitted to the body, and slightly padded to give a rounded profile. There may also be some padding at the shoulder. The standing collar is cut as a separate piece and set into a deep curve at the back of the neck. The skirt is usually attached to the bottom edge of the farsetto body as a separate piece, creating a very distinct waistline. Eyelets are worked around the bottom edge to attach the calze. Upper sleeves are very full with a fitted lower sleeve that comes up above the elbow. This sleeve is a very distinctive feature of the Italian style. Sometimes there may be points at the shoulder for attaching armor, though they are also seen in civilian settings where they are probably only ornamental. The collar, lower sleeves, or skirt may sometimes be quilted in narrow horizontal rows. The front opening and lower sleeves may be closed either with points or buttons.

Workers, soldiers, and others engaged in strenuous activity are often shown without anything worn over the farsetto.



Paolo Uccello, *Miracle of the Desecrated Host*, 1465-69 - Note the rounded silhouette.



Piero della Francesca, *Battle between Heraclius and Chosroes*, c. 1460 - This collar is cut in two pieces, with a seam in the back. Also points at the shoulder.



Piero della Francesca, *Burial of the Wood*, c1455 - A good detail of the sleeve closure and front buttonholes. Also note the large armscye.

Calze [kalt-zay]

Calze (hose) of this period are full length, but still separate. They do not become joined until the very end of the century, when the outer garment disappears. They are cut on the bias for greater stretch around the leg. The top portion of the calza is lined with linen for strength, with eyelets worked along the top edge to attach to the bottom of the doublet with points. They are usually both the same color, though they are sometimes of different colors or even decorated with complex divisions and designs. Calze decorated in this manner are usually heraldic in nature, either as a lord's livery or signifying membership in an organization.

Domenico di Bartolo, *Pope Celestinus III Grants Privilege of Independence to the Spedale*, Siena, 1443 - An example of patterned calze. These also presumably have a leather sole, allowing them to be worn indoors without shoes.



Carlo Crivelli, *St. Roche*, second half of 15th c. - Here the linen lining of the calze is visible, as well as the points used to attach it to the farsetto.



Giovanni di Ser Giovanni, *Boys Playing Civettino*, 1430



Piero della Francesca, *Burial of the Wood*, c1455 - The linen lining here only covers the top edge.

Giornea/Cioppa/Gonnella [jor-nee-yah] / [chohp-pah] / [goh-nel-lah]

The outermost required layer is either a giornea (pleated tabard with open sides), cioppa (pleated coat, often with hanging sleeves), or gonella (unpleated coat, with straight sleeves). Necklines are high in front, with a low curve or V in the back to match the collar seam of the farsetto. Hems are anywhere from mid-thigh to just below the knee.

The giornea and cioppa are most often depicted with closely set rounded pleats that are distinctive of this style. They are also usually trimmed or lined with fur. There are several theories on how to achieve this look. I have chosen to cut the yoke as a separate piece and create the pleats with a combination of organ pleats and stay tapes on the inside of the garment. There are many variations on these outer garments, including a number of types of cioppa sleeves.

Sometimes the giornea is shown with unstructured pleats, particularly toward the latter end of the century. Structured and unstructured pleats are seen together in the same paintings, so the two styles of pleats are not simply a case of artistic interpretation.

The unstructured pleats can be created by simply cutting each half of the giornea as a semicircle (with some shaping at the shoulder). Unstructured giorneas are more likely to be seen unbelted.



Francesco Cossa, *Allegory of April: Triumph of Venus*, 1470 - A giornea on the left, and a gonella on the right



Francesco Cossa, *Allegory of April: Triumph of Venus*, 1470 - This image shows a variety of giornea and cioppa styles.



Piero della Francesca, *Torture of the Jew*, c. 1455 - A relatively long giornea



Andrea del Castagno, *Famous Persons: Farinata degli Uberti*, c. 1450 - This detail shows the U-shaped pleats of the structured giornea.



Baldassare Estense, *Horseman (detail)*, 1476-84 - A giornea with structured pleats on the left, and one with unstructured pleats on the right.



Sandro Botticelli, *The Story of Nastagio degli Onesti (third episode)*, c. 1483 - Another example of structured and unstructured giorneas shown together.



Benozzo Gozzoli, *The School of Tagaste (scene 1, north wall)*, 1464-65 - Several different giornea and cioppa styles worn by men and boys of various ages.

Mantello [man-tel-loh]

The mantello is a long cloak with a small standing collar. It is almost always red or black. There is usually no visible clasp (presumably the mantello is held closed by a hook and eye), though sometimes there is a single point visible. There may be slits at the sides for the hands, or it may even have sleeves, becoming more of a robe. In portraits, the mantello is often shown unfastened and sitting on the shoulders. It is probably made of wool or silk, and may be lined with fur. The mantello is worn by wealthy adult men. While it is often impossible to tell what is being worn underneath it, sometimes it is seen over a giornea or cioppa, and occasionally over just a farsetto. I finally made one of these after many years, and it quickly became one of my favorite garments.



Antonello da Messina, *Portrait of a Man*, 1475 - This mantello is closed with a point.



Francesco Cossa, *Portrait of a Man*, 1472-77 - With no visible closure, this mantello may close with a hook and eye.



Masaccio, *Profile Portrait of a Young Man*, 1425 - A mantello worn open to display the garments beneath

Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Calling of the Apostles*, 1481 - The mantello is often seen in scenes showing upper class citizens of Florence.



What Came Before

The clothing of Italy in the 14th century was similar to that of other parts of Europe. Loose tunics evolved into fitted garments fastened with buttons. Gowns were long and voluminous, but unstructured. As hemlines shortened, chausses evolved into hose. The distinctive pleats and sleeve shapes are absent, and the rounded silhouette found in the 15th century doublet is just emerging.

Andrea da Firenze, *Way of Salvation (detail)*, 1365-68



Donatello, *Allegoric Figure of a Boy (Atys)*, 1430s



Gaddi, Agnolo, *Preparation of the Cross (detail)*, 1380s



Altichiero da Zevio, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1380s



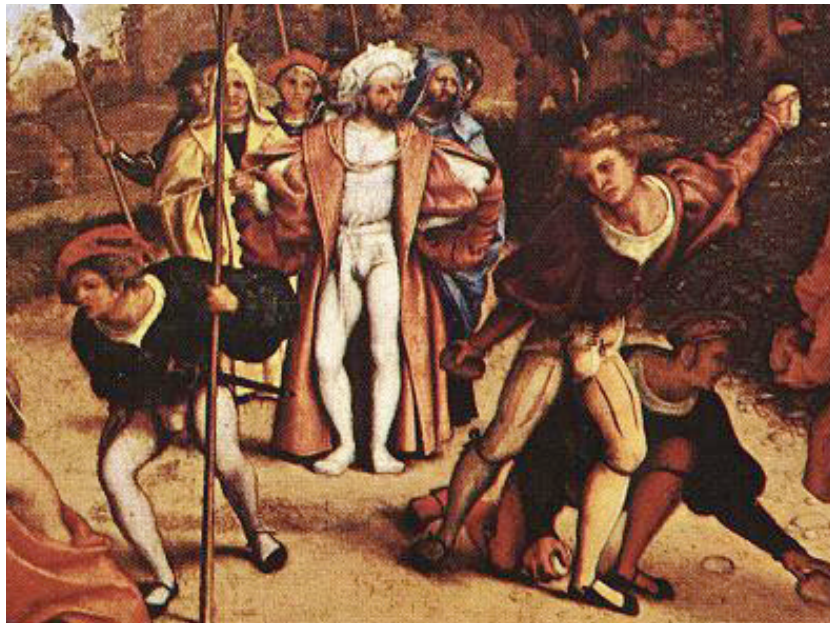
Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Marriage at Cana*, 1376-78

What Came After

In the last decades of the 15th century, men's clothing in Italy (and elsewhere) evolved toward new extremes. Doublet sleeves became so narrow that they seemed to burst at the seams, revealing the shirts beneath. Overgarments became long, wide, and nearly shapeless, and they became an optional layer. With nothing to cover the gap between the hose, they became joined at the back and the codpiece emerged to cover the front. The high doublet collars became lower and more open.

During the first quarter of the 16th century, the narrow sleeves rebounded, ballooning out larger than before. Necklines became large and square, mirroring contemporary women's clothes.

Both of these trends would reverse again as the 16th century progressed, even as the now-exposed hose began their transformation through slashing and padding into the trunk hose and nether stockings of the mid-16th century.



Lorenzo Lotto, *The Martyrdom of St Stephen*, 1516



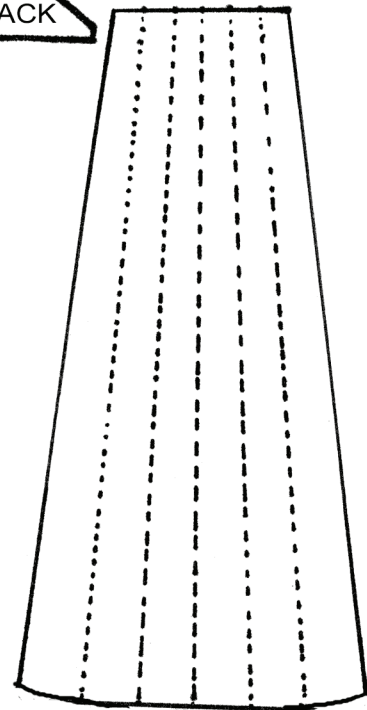
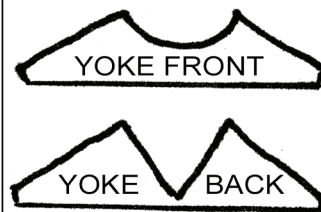
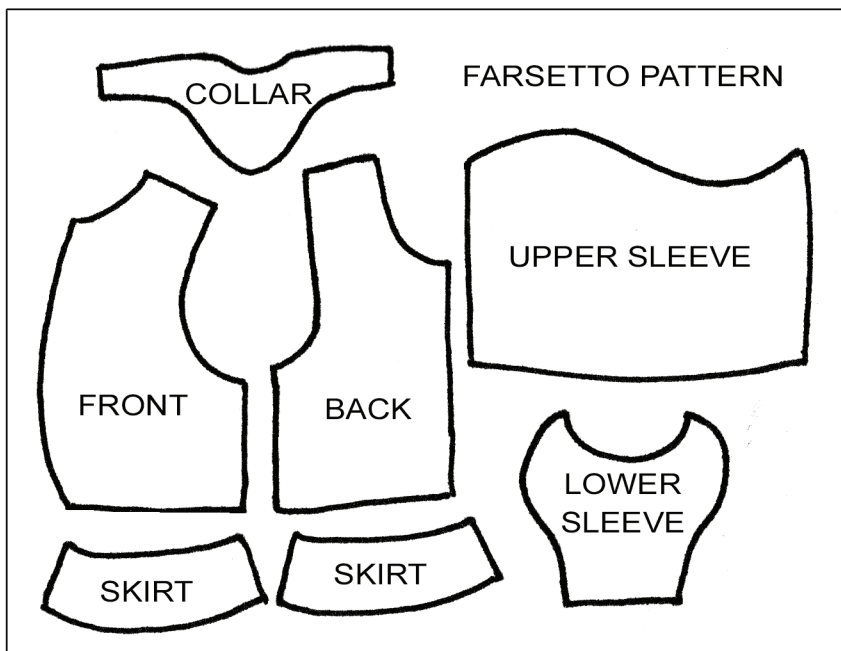
Vittore Carpaccio, *Arrival of the English Ambassadors (detail)*, Venice, 1495-1500



Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple (detail)*, Florence, 1486-90

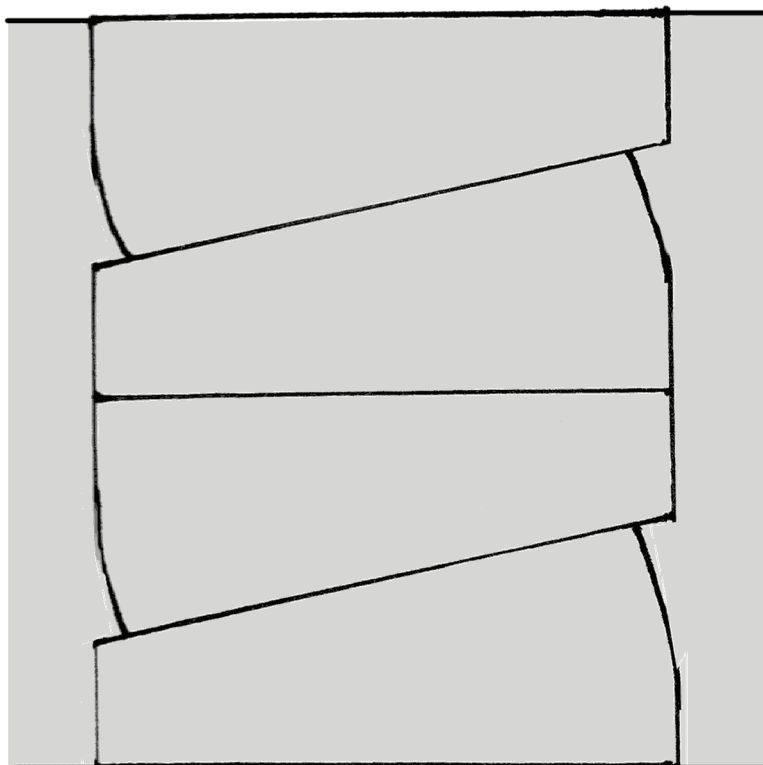
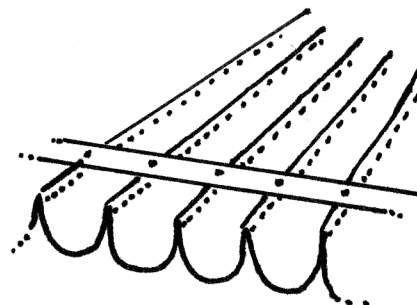


Lorenzo Lotto, *Susanna and the Elders*, 1517



CUTTING THE GIORNEA AND CIOPPA

Cut the pleated sections as shown below from outer fabric, lining, and a stiff interlining. The interlining is necessary to keep the pleats smooth and rounded. Each section should be twice as wide at the bottom as it is at the top, and four times as long as it is wide at the top. A giornea will require four sections each for the front and back. A cioppa will require two extra sections for the sides, which will be cut down at the top to form armholes. If the fabric has a pattern, put the upside-down sections in the back. You will also need to cut two of each yoke section from the same fabrics. The yoke pattern can be derived from the top sections of the farsetto body pattern.



PLEATING THE GIORNEA AND CIOPPA

Divide each section into six parts, and mark them on the outer fabric. Baste the interlining and lining together, then sew the outer fabric on top along the marked lines. If you will be binding the lower edge with fabric, do so now. Sew a tuck along each marked line on the inside, turning the top edge over. Sew the sections together along the edges, right sides together. Construct the yoke and cartridge pleat the front and back sections to the bottom edge of the yoke. Bind the side edges and neck opening. If trimming with fur, the bottom edges can be bound now. Attach stay tapes to the tucks at regular intervals to keep pleats arranged neatly.

Resources & Acknowledgements

I have used the following books while researching this style:

Birbari, Elizabeth, *Dress in Italian Painting*, 1460-1500. London: John Murray, 1975

Davenport, Milia. *The Book of Costume*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1976.

Herald, Jacqueline. *Renaissance Dress in Italy 1400-1500*. London: Bell & Hyman, 1981.

Levi-Pisetzky, Rosita. *Storia del Costume in Italia Vols. II*. Milano: Istituto Editoriale Italiano, 1964-69.

There is a very good farsetto reconstruction resource by Maestra Damiana Illiara d'Onde that I have used extensively, and which can be found at:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~lizjones429/farsetto.html>

Most of the images in this handout were taken from the Web Gallery of Art:

<http://www.wga.hu>

I must also give credit to my Laurel, Master Orlando Cavalcanti, who first introduced me to this style and gave me his patterns to work from.