

High Crowned Pleated Hat

Definition:

This is a high crowned pleated hat. This type of hat can be seen in a variety of portraits from Poland, Germany, Sweden, Spain, England, and the Low Countries. This hat has a flat tip over a tall stock and a flat brim. This type of hat has a solid structure under cover fabric.

Origins and spread of the style:

During the late 14th and 15th centuries hats played an important role in men's clothing and were considered an important fashion item as well as a status symbol.

As hats gradually grew in popularity during the 15th Century, increasingly diverse ranges of materials were used for their production. Silk, velvet, taffeta, leathers, and wools were used on the outside of hats and a variety of stout structural materials were used under the over fabric. Some of the most popular structural materials included: hairy paper, thick paper/cardboard, heavy glue sizing over burlap or paper-mache and other materials with sizing.

As this period was drawing to a close, we see religious fervor showing itself in dress and style. Some tended towards more flamboyant styles whereas others were all about "plain" clothes and personal repression. One could easily identify one's political, religious, and financial status simply by how one dressed and the accessories used. This type of hat is still used for Ph.D. recipients in Sweden.



Philip the Second of Spain

Janet Arnold in her book *Patterns of Fashions*, offer some insights into the materials and construction of this type of hat. She indicates that the hat she looked at was made of silk velvet with tall sides and a slightly curved edge at the top of the stock, leading to a flat tip. I had the opportunity to visit this hat and can add a little more information.

The stock is made of hairy-felt with a silk wrapped wire around the stock at the head plate and another around the outside of the brim.



Picture of original hat from Janet Arnold's book "Patterns of Fashion"



My version of the Pleated Tall Hat based on research from Janet Arnold's book "Patterns of Fashion"

An SCA interpretation:

The following table compares some of the differences between how the Tall Crowned Pleated hat found in Janet Arnold's Patterns of Fashion was constructed in period and how I construct my hat.

	Period materials/Techniques	My Variations
Cover Fabric	Silk velvet	Silk/rayon velvet
Thread	Silk	same
Foundation materials	Hairy Felt	same
Backing	Linen	same
Lining of hat	Silk	same
Interior of hat	Hairy wadding	same
Finishing touches	none	Gold, pearls, and garnets

Tools and Materials

1. Fabric: 1 yard of 45-inch silk velvet
2. Silk thread.
3. Millinery needles #14 #16
5. Millinery wire #8 or #9
5. Cotton wadding or French fleece
6. Chalk or tracing paper
7. Manila paper for pattern
8. Hairy felt
9. Hat block

Making the Tall Stock Pleated Hat

With this particular hat, the stock and tip are formed together using hairy felt over a hat block.

When forming felt, one simply needs to heat the felt with a little soapy water, agitate by hand and then squish excess water from felt. While the felt is still very warm, place over the hat block and form. I added some glue sizing to the felt while the felt was still warm and wet so that the glue sizing would absorb fully into the felt. See appendix A for complete instructions on making a felt tip.

The Brim

- cut the brim from glue-sized linen
- added lightweight silk whipped wire to the edge
- cut out the brim fabric using the brim pattern I had made and added 1/4 inch for seam allowance around the outer edge
- sewed the fabric edges together to create a hidden edge seam using an #16 hand needle



Pleating the cover fabric.

The cover fabric is of silk/rayon velvet, this fabric actually has a silk ground with a rayon pile as finding 100% silk velvet is very difficult and quite expensive.

- cut out a circle
- added guidelines
- added a running stitch for pleating
- pleated the fabric over the felt stock



Putting it together:

Once the brim and stock were completed, they were ready to be attached to one another. I proceeded to:

- cut the center oval in the brim leaving 1/2 inch seam allowance
- grade the seam allowance and cut down to the seam allowance.
- fold the tabs up which will hold the stock to the brim.
- place the stock on the brim and sew it together using a stab stitch.

Adding a lining

In Janet Arnold's book the directions call for a bright pink silk lining. I used a silk taffeta and the pattern for the linen lining from Arnold's book and cut and sewed the lining adding a flat tip. I sewed it down around the headplate and then added a sweatband using petersham.

Construction Tips:

- Use a heavy thread for the guide threads as lightweight threads are likely to break and the pleats will fall out.
- Be patient when pleating, they have to be small pleats or it won't work
- I like to use a steamer when steaming pleats rather than an iron that can flatten your pleats and silk pile.

Appendix 1: Making a felt hat tip

When creating a 16th C. piece, I like to use rabbit skin glue as it is easy to work with, has very little smell, and doesn't leave much residue.

Creating a felt hat tip form for a 16th C hat:

Shear a sheep

Make medium weight felt using only sheep's wool

Or

Pluck an angora rabbit

Make rabbit fur felt

Or

Shear a goat

Make goat hair felt

Hat felt was rarely mixed medium and when the felt was to be covered with fabric, felt was most frequently made of wool felt.

You will need:

1. 100% wool or bunny felt – you could purchase felt as a flat piece, make your own felt, purchase hat blanks or recycle 100% wool hats from the thrift store.
 2. A hat block with the correct shape – you can rent one at Lacin in Berkeley for \$7/week
 3. Liquid starch or glue
 4. Orvus or any non-surfactant soap
 5. Hot water
 6. String
 7. Large pot
 8. Rubber gloves
- Soak the wool felt in hot water. Gently massage the felt until it is completely soaked. Squishing the fabric is OK, but do not wring it.
 - Tip - I find it useful to wear rubber gloves for this process as it allows me to work in hotter water.
 - Once the felt is well soaked, remove it from the water and add 2 cups liquid starch or glue to your water. Put the felt back into the hot water and continue to massage it until starch/glue seems worked through the felt.
 - Squish excess water from felt and place over hat block, press into shape.
 - Use a string or large rubber band to secure the felt at the bottom of the hat block
 - Put about 1 cup of undiluted liquid starch or glue into a spray bottle. Once you have your felt stretched and secured onto the hat block, spray liberally with starch or glue.
 - Tip - I find it useful to gently massage the starch/glue into the fibers. Begin at the tip and work you way down.
 - Let dry completely. Usually a day will do it.



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