

Men's striped Tailcoat from 1790



Conservation report

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Dnr: VA 2017-00637

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Fotot visar sidenrock från 1790-talet, GM: 18048

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Item description

Striped men's jacket from the 1790's, GM: 18048

Technical description

A men's jacket from the 1790's. The fabric is woven from a thick brown cotton thread in the weft and dark brown silk in the warp. On each strand of brown cotton we can see a strand of light green silk wrapped around it. This creates a shiny effect on the overall surface of the fabric.

Supplementary warps create vertical stripes throughout the fabric in gradient colors of silk thread: white, yellow and light, medium and dark green. It has five large buttons on each breast flap (total of ten) that are each covered with the same fabric. The coat is lined only in the sleeves in natural linen.

Historic and cultural comments

The coat is said to have belonged to Jacob Gustaf de la Gardie, who was born 16 June 1768 in Stockholm, died April 26, 1842, he was a Count, Military man and Politician.

The fabric of the coat is probably of French origin and LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) has a coat from the 1790's sewn from the exact same fabric (LACMA, 2017a)



Fig. 1. Coat from the LACMA collection in the same fabric as Stadsmuseet's coat. Photo: LACMA

The cut and construction of the two coats are different but they are both from the 1790's and the fabric is of french origin according to the LACMA website. They have also done an amazing job by providing the pattern of the coat, available for download; as part of their " Costume and Textiles Pattern Project". (LACMA, 2017b)



Fig. 2. LACMA coat, the stripes are in far better condition. Photo: LACMA



Fig. 3. Stadsmuseet coat, the stripes are more worn. Photo: V. Jacob

Exsisting condition/ damage

The coat presents several severe degradations, in particular in the shoulder area where there was an important loss of warp threads. This is probably due to it's prolonged exhibition in bad conditions: when on display the shoulders are supporting the weight of the coat, making it more suceptible to damage; it was also exposed to unfiltered UV light during this time, thus weakening the fibers. Several other areas have also suffered from loss of warp, these are areas that withstand a lot of friction: the collar, the sleeves, arm-pits... This can also be explained by the fact that the warp is a thin silk thread, whereas the weft is a thick linen thread, the silk became weaker over time in fiction with the rough linen thread. Several repairs have been carried out over the years by conservators, as well as some repairs that might have been made while the coat was in use.

There is also a general discoloration of the fabric due to exposure to light, as well as several stains of unknown origin.

Treatment proposal

- Photos and documentation of coat were taken before and after conservation
- The coat was dry cleaned with a vacuum and brush
- Removal of the old conservation repairs that are no longer adapted to the damage
- Removal of old repairs that are not adapted
- Dyeing of a support fabric in preperation for sewing conservation (See [Annex 1](#))
- Sewing conservation in the areas with loss of warp and tears
- Making a pattern and a toile of the coat (See [Annex 2](#))
- Making an aproprate mannequin for exhibition
- Research and report about styling the coat for exhibition (See ["Styling References"](#))

Condition after conservation

Sewing conservation:

Several areas underwent substantial sewing conservation. The shoulders, sleeves and collar have couching stitches to secure the numerous holes that had developed.

Some of the area on the shoulders, sleeves and lower back had been previously conserved with light brown thread and light brown thick support fabric that was not adapted to the damage. These were taken away and redone with couching stitches.



Fig. 4. Couching stitches on left shoulder. Photo: V. Jacob



Fig. 5. Couching stitches on collar. Photo: V. Jacob

The collar: the area that was folded over had lost its warp completely. The collar is made with two pieces of fabric with a piece of stiff fabric sandwiched inside to enable it to stand up straight. The collar was tacked up with two stitches. In order to do the sewing conservation these were clipped and the collar layed flat on the table. Then support fabric had to be placed in between the two layers through the tear using tweezers.

It also had been previously repaired with darning stitches, these were removed and replaced with couching stitches.

The lower back: had also suffered an important tear probably due to the downward pull of the weight of the coat's pleated skirt. The fibers had to be reorganized and secured.

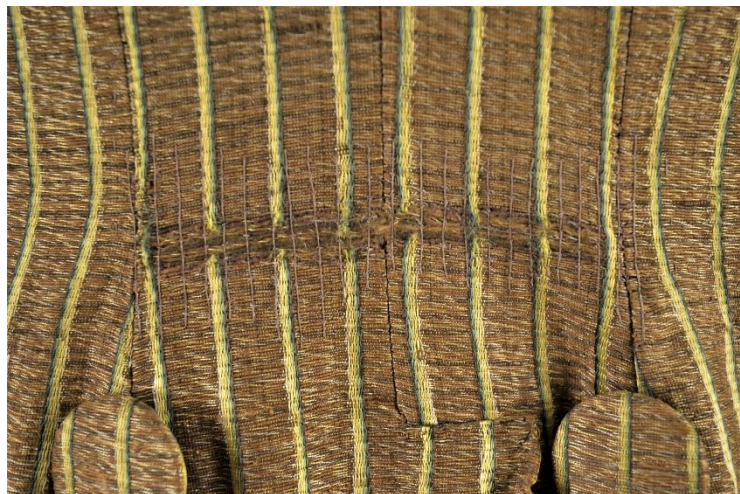


Fig. 5. Repair on lower back. Photo: V. Jacob



Fig. 6. Couching stitches under right arm.
Photo: V. Jacob

Underarm: Under the sleeve in the armpit area, both sides of the coat had suffered extensive damage and patches of fabric had been added to the area. These have been conserved with couching stitches and light tulle as support fabric. These were in relatively good condition so they were left in, and I added some couching stitches over them to further consolidate the areas.



Fig. 7. Two-way couching stitches under left arm. Photo:
V. Jacob

Buttons:

There are a total of 14 large wood buttons that are covered in the same fabric as the coat is made from. Some of them have lost fibers and developed holes due to friction. When the holes were too big I filled it with some support fabric. The buttons that presented signs of wear were covered in brown tulle.



Fig. 8. Button on the lower left was fixed with fabric and covered in tulle. Photo: V. Jacob

Materials used

Sewing conservation:

Thread: Güterman silk embroidery thread / Color 540.

Support fabric: Lightweight cotton plain weave, hand dyed with Levafix (See Annex 2/ color N°3)

Analysis

Analysis of the thick brown thread: observation under microscope revealed that it was cotton fiber.

Purpose/ Goal

The coat might be exhibited in an upcoming exhibition at Göteborg Stadsmuseum. So the garment must be sufficiently conserved to withstand exhibition for a prolonged time.

A custom made mannequin was created for it's exhibition.

A pattern of the coat was made as well as instructions for assembly. (Annex 2)

Propositions for styling of the mannequin, such as appropriate shirt, neckcloth and waistcoat were also researched and submitted to the museum. (See "Styling references")

Other instructions

The shoulders must be handled with care when placing on the mannequin one must try not to hold the coat only by the shoulders.

When in the box the shoulder area must be padded enough to have no folds, keeping a nice rounded shape.

Styling references



Fig 9: LACMA coat with a different styling. Photo: LACMA

On top of the styling suggested by LACMA of their similar coat in the same fabric, this part will include other usefull references and images to inspire the styling of this tailcoat. Our coat was probably worn like LACMA's, open, as the front is not designed to be button closed.

The years 1775 to 1795 was a real period of transition in clothing both for men and women, men continued to wear the coat, waistcoat and breeches; but the elaborately embroidered silks and velvets characteristic of "full dress" or formal attire earlier in the century gradually disappeared and gave way to more simple garments. (Ribeiro, 1995)

I found a coat description that matches very well our coat: "After 1780 the French fashions were inspired by the British riding coat. They were double breasted, with a high collar, it was also cut across the waist, and the narrow front skirts, with one pleat only, were caught to the center back panels. The cane replaced the sword. The center back was slit open with an overlap of about an inch in the waist. The narrow skirts lenghtened and became tails. This was the introduction of the "tail dress" coat for smart town wear."(Waugh, 1985)

1. The shirt: (See Fig. 11)

Shirt sleeves were full, gathered at the wrist and dropped shoulder. Full-dress shirts had ruffles of fine fabric or lace, while undress shirts ended in plain wrist bands. A small turnover collar returned to fashion, worn with the stock. In England, clean, white linen shirts were considered important in Men's attire. (Ribeiro, 1995) The cravat reappeared at the end of the period.

2. Waistcoat:

Were becoming shorter until they were waist-length and cut straight across as they followed the cut of the coats. They were always worn buttoned at the waist, often the top buttons left undone to display the lace at the neck of the shirt. From the 1780's they were often double breasted with revers. (Waugh, 1985) This means that part of a garment that is reversed to display the lining or facing outside in this case probably the lapels.



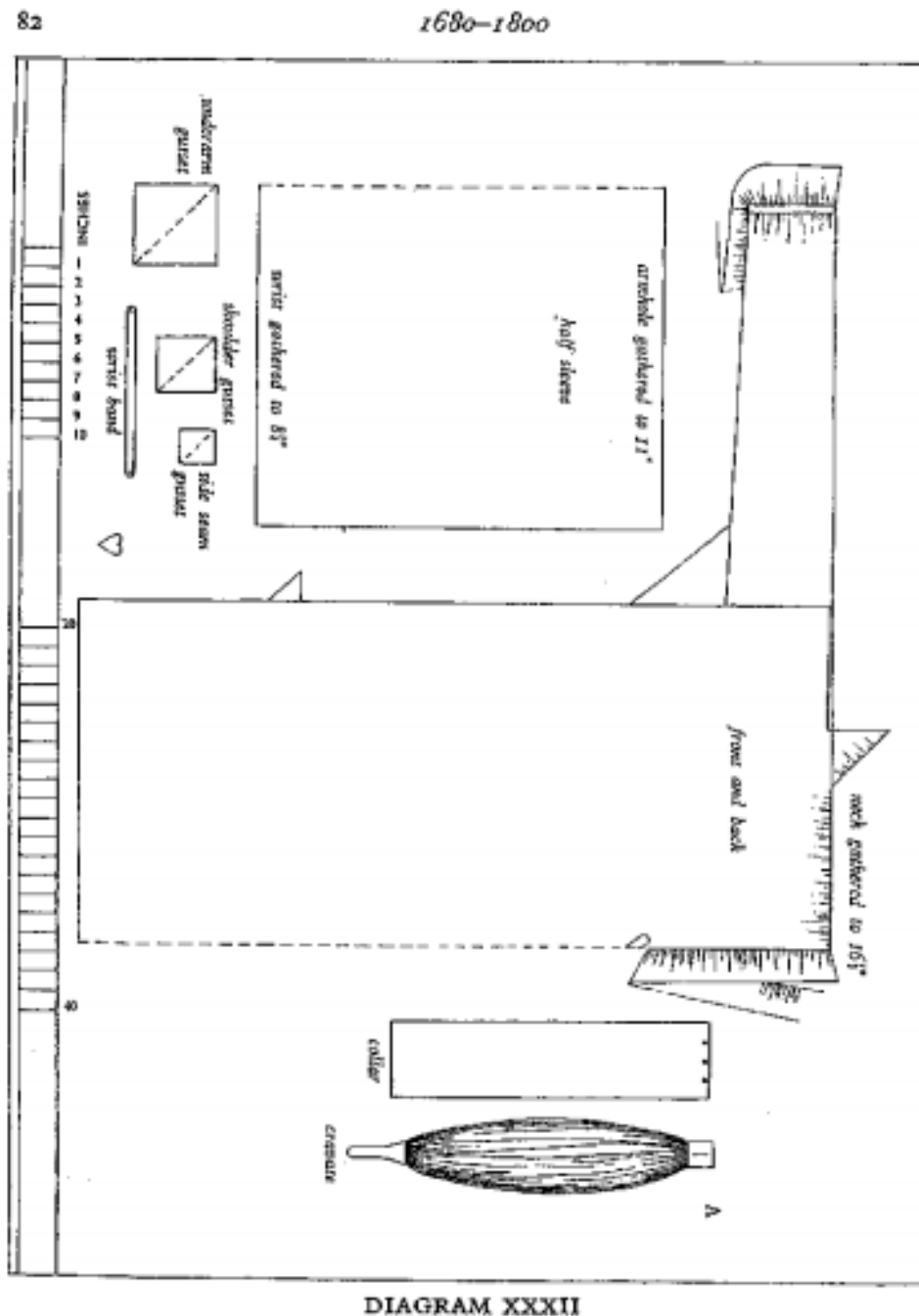
Fig. 10. Elijah Boardman wears a cutaway tailored coat over a waist-length satin waistcoat with revers and dark breeches. United States, 1789.

3. Breeches, shoes, and stockings:

As coats became cutaway, more attention was paid to the cut and fit of the breeches. Breeches fitted snugly and had a fall-front opening. (See Fig.12 and 13) They were made of buckskin or jersey weave materials.

Low-heeled leather shoes fastened with shoe buckles were worn with silk or woolen stockings. Boots were worn for riding. The buckles were either polished metal, usually in silver.

Fig. 11. Cut of an 18th century shirt. Image from (Waugh, 1985), P. 82.



SHIRT 1700-1810. The centre front opening is usually trimmed with a frill of lace or, at the end of the period, fine lawn. The wrist frill is often mounted separately but is rare after 1800. *Gallery of Costume, Manchester*

A. CRAVAT. From c. 1720 the cravat was shortened to fit round the neck where it was fastened by tapes, buttons or a buckle.

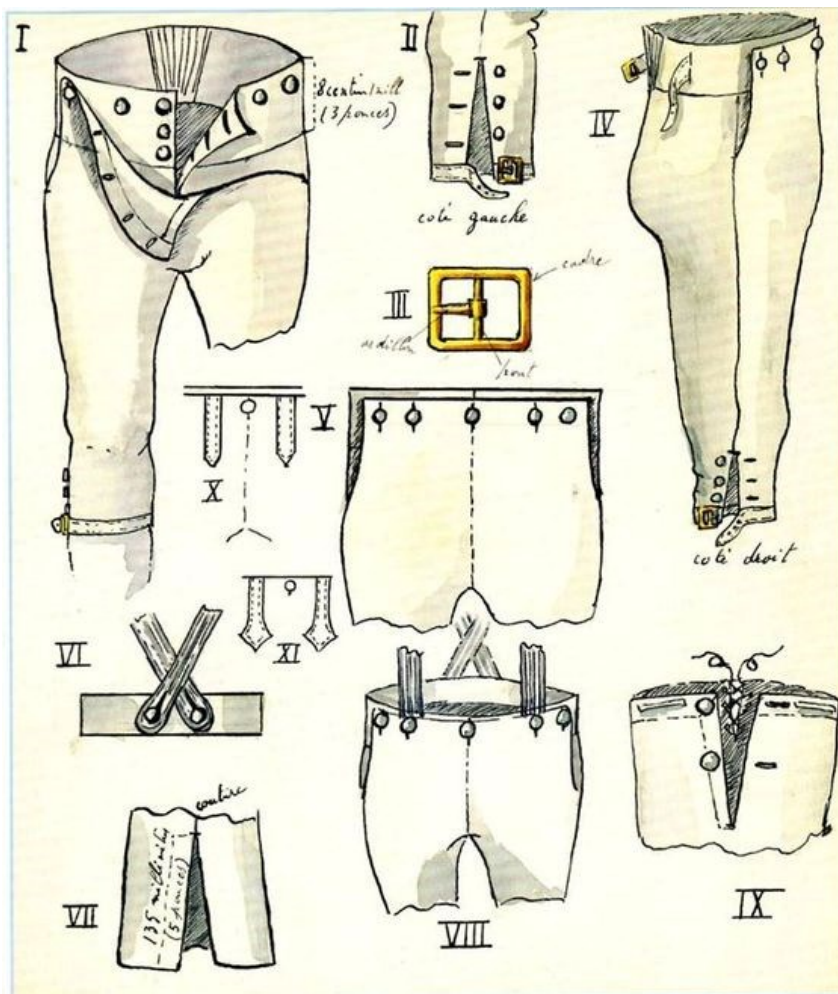


Fig. 12. Drawings of fall-front breeches. Image: W. Mowett

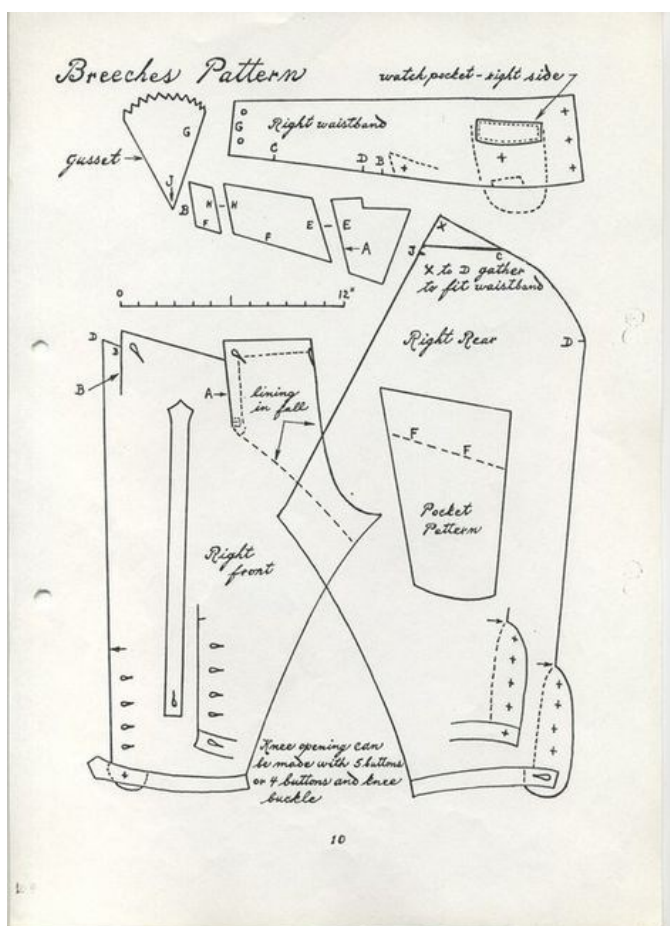


Fig. 13. Pattern of fall-front breeches. Image: Unknown

References

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- LACMA. 2017b. *Undertaking the Making: Costume & Textiles Pattern Project* [Online]. Los Angeles: LACMA. Available: <http://www.lacma.org/patternproject> [Accessed 06/02/2018].
- RIBEIRO, A. 1995. *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750-1820*, Yale, Yale University Press.
- WAUGH, N. 1985. *The cut of Men's Clothes; 1600-1900*, London, Faber and Faber.

Annexes

Annex 1: Dye chart

N°3 was chosen for the support fabric

FÄRBLANKETT

PROVFÄRGNING nr	1 A	2 B	3 C	4	5	6	7	8
FÄRGSTYRKA (%)	5 27	5 24	6 26					
FÄRGÄMNES- BETECKNING	Buyl gul E-GA							
Färgprop:	5 0,13	5 0,13	5 0,13					
Buyl grönn E-5BNA	40 1,08	39 1,01	40 1,08					
Buyn E-ZR	55 1,48	54 1,40	54 1,47					
Svart RL		2 0,05	0,5 0,03					
TILLSATSER	8 109,8	8 105,8	8 47,3					
Natriumsulfat/Natriumclorid								
Natriumcarbonat								
TOTAL MÄNGD FÄRGÄMNE & TILLSATSER (ml)								
MÄNGD VATTEN (ml)								
EFTERBEHANDLING								

* vid direkt blandning av färgämne och tillsats, anges i kommentarer:

Inv.nr _____
Bilaga _____

FÖREMÅL: _____

FÄRGÄMNE: _____
Levafix E

FABRIKAT &
BETECKNING: _____
Bayer (?)

FIBERMATERIAL: _____
unbleached cotton

MATERIALVIKT=B
(g): A: 54,3g B: 52,5g
C: 44,6g

BADFÖRHÅLLANDE:
A: 2136ml B: 2116ml C: 1784ml

TOTAL VÄTSKE-
MÄNGD (ml): _____

FÄRGNINGSTEMP: _____

FÄRGNINGSTID: _____

DATUM: _____

UNDERSKRIFT: _____

FIBERMATERIAL,
OFÄRGAT: _____

Annex 2: Pattern of Tailcoat (Valentine Jacob's interpretation of the coat)

