

# Man's Cloak, Circa 1340

The cloak is an over-garment worn throughout the medieval period in Europe and elsewhere. It can be worn for display, warmth, but especially for keeping precipitation at bay.

## Historical Evidence

Cloaks in period seem to come in two varieties, formal/stylish and foul weather accessory. Generally speaking when looking at illuminations cloaks aren't seen with great frequency. They are bulky garments, so it seems reasonable to assume that the foul weather accessory cloak would be infrequently worn and thus depicted. Scenes of unhappy people in the rain just don't seem to be a staple of the medieval artist...

As a large piece of cloth, the cloak allows for displays of affluence through it's material, lining, fastening, and edging. Similarly it is also capable on blocking and shedding precipitation. In terms of warmth, it is certainly helpful, but less so than a tighter fitting garment like a cotte which is less likely to allow warmed air to escape. The loss of warmed air is especially noticeable when the wearer has to free their arms to accomplish a task.

Men's cloaks in the mid to late fourteenth century (the period which I want to recreate) in the examples I was able to find, tend to be of a style that opens along the right side of the wearer.

Figures 1 through 4 show the cloaks of English royalty, the sons of Edward III. All use buttons to fasten the cloak over the right shoulder, but each has different edging. William of Hatfield and Lionel Duke of Clarence have elaborate cutting on the edges of their cloaks; both Lionel and his brother Edmund Duke of York have cloaks which employ decorative trim. Ironically it is Edward who's cloak is the least decorated, but that was undoubtedly the style of the time.

None of the effigies in figures 1 to 4 give any indication of lining. It is conceivable that they are



Figure 1. William of Hatfield d. 1348 <sup>1</sup>

<http://www.gothiceye.com/>



Figure 2. Lionel Duke of Clarence d. 1364

<http://www.gothiceye.com/>



Figure 3. Edward Prince of Wales d 1376

<http://www.gothiceye.com/>



Figure 4. Edmund Duke of York d 1402

<http://www.gothiceye.com/>

either unlined, or the lining is of cloth rather than fur (which would be textured).

Figure 5 shows Edward III with his captive David II of Scotland. Edward's cloak is of the same style as the cloaks worn by his sons. The cloak is lined

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<sup>1</sup>Either the name or the date is in error according to my research. Most likely this is William of Windsor d. 1348 rather than William of Hatfield d. 1337

with fur, and has an added mantle of fur worn over it. The fastening at the shoulder is not visible.

Two cases of cloaks of more lowly individuals are shown in figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 clearly shows buttons on the right shoulder as well as a liner in a contrasting colour, it is otherwise without further decoration. The cloak in figure 7 is that of one of the bog people excavated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in this case near Bocksten Sweden. The extant garment is unlined and the right shoulder is sewn together rather than buttoned. Figure 8 shows the pattern of the wool cloak. The sides and hem were finished,<sup>2</sup> and the back is longer than the front since the neck is set forward in the body.



Figure 5. Edward III (right)

Cotton Nero D IV f.61v; p 14 “Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages”, Michael Prestwich



Figure 6. Detail of the Altichieros painting from St. George's Chapel in Padua, Italy

Scala Firenze; p 131, Fig. 92 “Woven into the Earth”, Else Østerård



Figure 7. The Bocksten Bog Man's clothes with and without his cloak c. 1350

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~vanrcwisner/histglob.html>

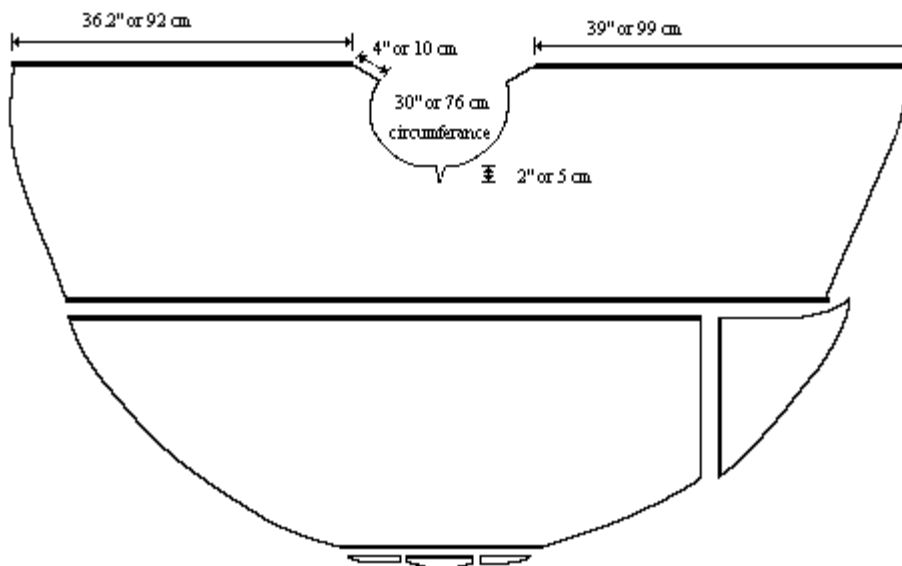


Figure 8 Line drawing of the cloak by I. Marc Carlson, based on one by E. Lundwall, bold lines indicate selvedge edges; measurements added by Eric Mason

<http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~marc-carlson/cloth/bockclok.html>

Nockert, Margareta. *Bockstenmannen, Och Hans Dräkt*. Halmstad och Varberg: Stiftelsen Hallands läns museer, 1985

## My Attempt

I chose to make a simple cloak like the Bocksten bog man's. This cloak is intended to be a temporary garment in the sense that I hope to eventually pass it along to a gentle in need when I have made a nicer one. With this in mind I made the cloak slightly longer than I need (see figure 9) and also used larger seam allowances for the neck and shoulder seams. It is my hope that this will allow me to “size up” the cloak fairly easily as the next person will almost undoubtedly be larger than I am.

The Bocksten bog man's cloak was pieced together because the fabric used wasn't wide enough. I was able to get 154 cm wide wool, so the pattern could be cut out in a single piece (see figure 10). The thread I used was linen. The edges were finished simply by tacking down the edges because the wool is already very dense and resistant to fraying.

In order to draw a half circle, I tacked the edge of the wool to a piece of wood, and anchored a wire to a nail. The end of the wire was bent, and a piece of chalk was taped to it. This formed a primitive compass, allowing for a smooth curve rather than some freehand abomination. Wire was used because I didn't want any stretch in my compass, nor did I want to have to maintain a certain tension.



Figure 9. Me in my cloak, photo by Preston Macintosh

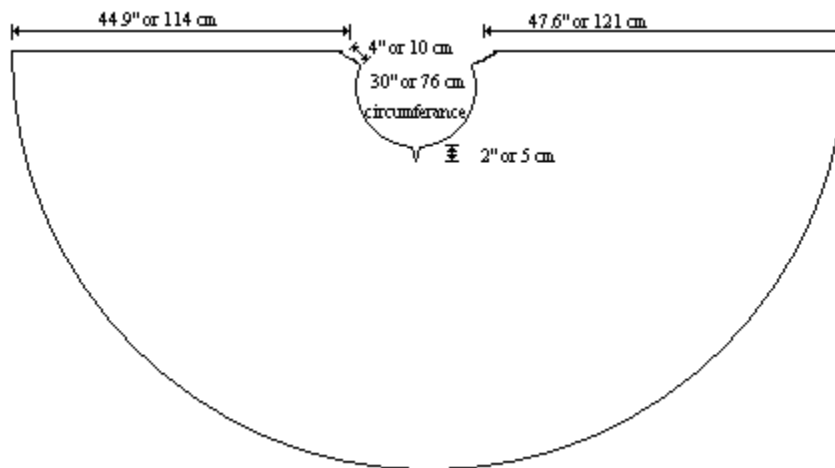


Figure 10. My pattern based off the Bocksten pattern, drawn by me

All in all I am reasonably happy with the way the cloak has turned out. When I make the next cloak I will be making it slightly shorter as it is easy to tread on, but the length was a necessary evil to ensure I could pass this cloak along when the time comes.

## References

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