

WORLD CLOTHING AND FASHION

An Encyclopedia of History,
Culture, and Social Influence



Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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A-Z ENTRIES

African Clothing, Sub-Saharan

The history of sub-Saharan African dress reflects the struggle of tribal custom and self-awareness against change. After 180,000 B.C.E., early *Homo sapiens* in central Africa and present-day Ethiopia on Africa's horn turned natural materials into garments. From 42,000 B.C.E., bushmen, the hunter-gatherers of the areas now known as Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, protected the male groin with a thong breechcloth held in place by a cord or sinew waistband. Batwa herders indigenous to Rwanda turned goatskins and hammered barkcloth into rudimentary attire.

By 2000 B.C.E., African clothiers added woven yarns to workable materials that included feathers, fur, and young leaves of the tropical raffia (*Raphia vinifera*), which processors braided, twined, or knotted into apparel. In the Zambezi River valley after 1200 B.C.E., *conus* (sea snail) shell necklaces dotted with metal beads and imported glass ornaments and amulets adorned the San at the neck and waist. The blend of coastal and foreign elements established the reliance of natives on long-distance barter.

Emulating fabric artisans in Egypt's Lower Nile Valley, Nubian crafters after 800 B.C.E. plied sophisticated East African trades. Accessory makers turned ostrich feathers into fans and fashioned rings, armlets, pendants, and earrings out of faience (tin-glazed ceramic) beads. From the 590s B.C.E., Kushite men and women in the same region covered the lower body in knee-length linen or leather kilts and long wrap skirts, but left the chest bare.

Less easily dated, the fabric arts of sub-Saharan Africa rely on pictographs, oral history, and eyewitness accounts from outsiders. Dynastic dance wear in Equatorial Africa, Congo, and Sudan featured braid and patches sewn on hammered barkcloth, a flat fabric also tucked under the chin as a rain shield. Around Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro, upland Kenyan and Tanzanian farmers pressed into commercial centers to buy the leather

apparel marketed by plains cattlemen. During the voyage of Persian navigator Sataspes in 480 B.C.E. to reconnoiter West Africa, he reported on diminutive natives dressed in palm leaf garments.

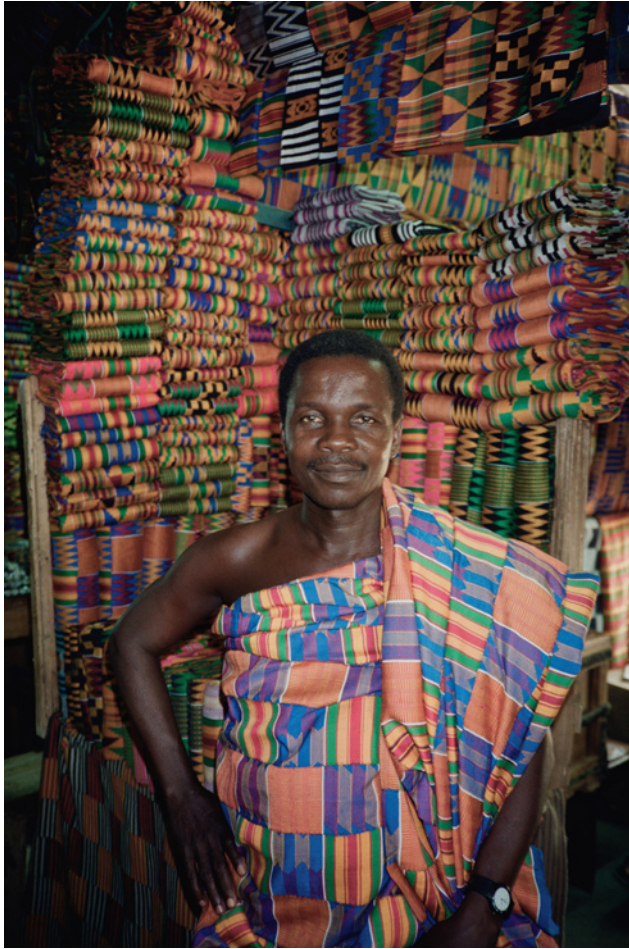
By the mid-400s B.C.E., weavers in Meroë, Nubia (Sudan), crafted gold jewelry from local ore and wove lengths of cotton for export. After 100 C.E., traders on the Red Sea coast at Axum imported refined fabrics and clothing from Asia that served as models for African entrepreneurs. Textile crafts advanced in Central Africa with the weaving of raffia palm fronds while clothiers in Madagascar loomed flax and jute into cloth. By 550, Nubian flax workers turned rough stalks into fine linen.

Historic Changes

In the seventh century, the spread of Islam by missionaries and traders introduced African males to standard Arab dress, the long collarless silk tunic. The Ashanti of Ghana followed Islamic injunctions against idolatry and stitched magic numbers and Koranic phrases on robes and warriors' shirts. Other peoples of Africa retained ancient practices. Ugandans fashioned their garments from the hammered bark of fig bushes. At Gabon, maskers donned animistic facial coverings and headgear dedicated to harmony and balance.

Nigerians introduced woven fibers in the 800s, three centuries before cotton processing began in Mali, and turned fabric rectangles into wrappers, a body drape passed over the shoulder and under the arm for fastening at the waist. In Ghana in the 1000s, the development of kente cloth by Akan, Ga, Ashanti, and Ewe of the Volta River basin applied basketry skills to hand looming. Based on spider webs, the bright geometrics, emblematic of peace and purity, took shape from woven strips whipstitched together in the Malian style pioneered by Tellem cliff dwellers.

By century's end, the Bonoman of Ghana and the Ivory Coast profited from trade in kente cloth, which they valued as currency. In Central Africa, Maasai runners sprinkled their feet with granulated bark and cut shoes from raw cowhide or sheepskin. With beads imported from India, they outlined leather capes in simple chevrons.



A kente cloth merchant displays his wares at a market in Accra, Ghana. Developed a thousand years ago from basket craft, the loomed geometric designs symbolize peace, purity, vitality, and other qualities in specific colors and patterns. (Jonathan C. Katzenellenbogen/Getty Images)

In the 1100s at San in southeastern Mali, Bamanan hunters evolved a camouflage tunic or shirt from *bògòlanfini* (mud cloth), a fabric hand-loomed by rural women in zigzags, boxes, and starbursts. Apprenticed girls hand-painted lengths in shades of brown with fermented pond sledge and the tannic acid from leaf tea. Dressing women in mud cloth protected them from harm before marriage, after childbirth, during female genital circumcision, and at interment.

Intercontinental commerce expanded the world's awareness of African fabric art. Malian clothiers sold cotton mud cloth garments on the global market. Cultural exchange across the Sahel during the thirteenth century introduced sub-Saharan Africa to iron daggers, woven wool and silk, and apparel from Tunisian ports. Within the

century, African cloth manufacturers emulated Arab and European techniques that sold well to Niger River societies.

In February 1353, on a caravan over the Sahara Desert to Mali, Moroccan travel writer Ibn Battuta reported that European and Indian fabrics and yarns had reached imperial Mansa warehouses at Timbuktu. Dealers even bartered goods woven with gold and silver thread, a product of the Byzantine Empire. Observing the Zagawa in the Islamic empire of Kanem-Bornu northeast of Lake Chad, Ibn Battuta found them prospering from the dyeing of cotton cloth with indigo and the export of fancy stitchery through the Sahara to Tripoli.

Fifteenth-century Congo River basin crafts featured Kasai embroiderers who produced Kasai velvet or Kuba cloth, cut-pile damask stitched with raffia. Local people turned the cloth into dance skirts and royal regalia encrusted with cowries, feathers, beads, and couching, and paired outfits with copper masks. Portuguese merchants imported more sophisticated Indian and European weaves that dealers sold in the African interior. Kenyan, Comoro Island, and Cameroon raffia workers supplied markets with tie-dyed garments.

By the mid-1400s along the Sahel, warriors of the Songhai Empire topped combat tunics with iron breastplates and carried leather or copper shields. Their dye masters excelled at processing indigo and the dun yellow of *Anogeissus leicarpus*, a tree rich in tannic acid. After 1463, under reformer king Muhammad Rumfa in Kano, Nigeria, Hausa dye works produced trade goods for sale at the Kurmi Market and on the Mediterranean coast. Reports from Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama on Christmas 1497 at Natal on Durban Bay, South Africa, noted that native women adorned their lower lips with labrets. On March 2, 1498, he admired the fine wardrobes of residents of Mozambique, who maintained intercontinental commerce with Arabs traversing the Indian Ocean.

In 1493, a royal wardrobe at Kukya, the capital of Gao on the Niger River, passed to the progressive Songhai king Askia Muhammad the Great 210 luxurious ensembles of wool and silk imported from North Africa and cottons woven and glazed

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at Tera. He promoted the marketing of local gold jewelry, leather goods, and cottons and linen.

After 1600, the Fon of Benin beaded crowns and appliquéd canvas and leather gowns, pants, and headgear with mythic nature shapes and embroidered names or magic charms. The Chokwe of Angola, Congo, and Zambia excelled at curved barkcloth head coverings and ancestral dance masks carved from wood that they believed protected observers from epidemics and other catastrophes. Among the Hausa of northern Nigeria, fabric art copied Arabic battle dress for both horsemen and their mounts.

In the 1700s, Benin warehouses distributed Indian calico and chintz, fine linen, silk kerchiefs, white muslin, and wool yard goods. In February 1772, Tegbessou, the king of Dahomey at Whydah, Benin, expected European ambassadors to bring gifts of silk damask from India for his interpreters and security guard. Among the coastal Swahili on Africa's southeastern shore, fashionable Muslims flaunted in public the finest quality silk turbans and sashes.

According to trader John Adams's *Sketches Taken During Ten Voyages to Africa Between the Years 1786 and 1800* (1822), Guineans north of Sierra Leone marketed bandannas and an unusual trade item, kidskin dyed in indigo in starburst patterns. By the late 1820s, the Yoruba at Abeokuta, Nigeria, produced their own gifts of indigo-dyed *adire* cloth, handspun shirting sewn into women's wrappers. The Hausa version, *adire alabere*, displayed the tie-dyeing of locally woven cotton or wild silk, a commodity shipped west to the Gold Coast and Senegal.

The Fate of Native Fabrics

Nineteenth-century missionaries, who equated Western fabrics and designs with evidence of Christian conversion, orchestrated Africa's reclothing and the initiation of capitalism, especially in the Congo and Nyasaland. Among indigenous art fabrics, the clergy denounced Liberian tie-dye and men's broadcloth suits, Bobo maskers in Burkina Faso, Ashanti cotton robes of *adinkra* stamped with bark dye, and the Oba coral bead netting in Benin. From outside Africa,

Christian instructors inveighed against Nigerian crinolines and high heels and the cotton sheeting imported from Mumbai (Bombay), India, to Africa's east coast.

Culture clash engendered a hodgepodge of customs blended from new and old. In female academies at Botswana, young Tswana girls learned to sew European fashions. In Zanzibar, slaves wrapped themselves in *merikani* (American cloth) and spent their lives with bare feet and shaved heads as marks of humility before masters.

In 1861, outside Lagos, Nigeria, British ambassador Richard Burton approved Nigerian men's styles consisting of loose cotton knee breeches and a cloth flung over one shoulder. The ensemble came to identify black ministers whom the Anglican hierarchy rejected for pulpit service. At Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1887, West Indian diplomat Edward Wilmot Blyden, the father of black repatriation and Pan-Africanism and author of *African Life and Customs* (1908), established the Dress Reform Society to promote dressing in tribal costumes rather than British suits, starched collars, vests, and neckties, all superfluous in an equatorial climate.

Into the 1890s, the disruption of indigenous fabric arts slowed production and customary barter with *adire eleko*, a Yoruba specialty dyed with a cassava starch-resist method at Lagos and Abeokuta. For the Egungun masquerade ritual, native consumers valued the cloth, which processors figured by scraping a comb over the surface. In Cameroon, King Ibrahim Njoya, a proponent of Bamum turbans, robes, and sandals, encouraged grasslands weavers to continue making *ndop* cloth, an indigo fabric woven on a treadle loom. Wearers folded *ndop* into body wrappers combined with leopard skins to assert royal status. On the Ivory Coast, a ceremonial mask knitted and braided with sisal captured the ivory, orange, and brown colors of Africa.

From 1900 until after World War I, the suppression of African textile arts coincided with the flaunting of European poplin suits, silk shirts, shoes, and panama hats by young Congolese in Brazzaville and Kinshasa as proof of status. Students in British West Africa attended class in

European school uniforms, socks, and shoes—cold weather outfits. In Zambia, the size of a man's wardrobe in imported or mail-order ready-to-wear determined his prestige and status.

The Great Depression of the 1930s in the South African Transkei ended reliance on imported cottons for braided skirts and white sheeting for cloaks and breast ties. Penury returned the humblest in Pondoland, South Africa, to animal pelts. Ignoring Christian proselytizers, pagans retreated to the loincloth with a wool blanket bunched over one shoulder.

The diminution of native crafts continued until the rise of anticolonialism and rebellion against white overlords in the 1940s and 1950s. During World War II, middle-class consumers in the Belgian Congo abandoned unrealistic hopes that salaried jobs and a cash economy would raise black Africans to equality with whites. Blacks in the African interior began wearing with pride the dashiki, boubou, sash, head wrap, and bags made from traditional mud cloth and kente cloth, or factory simulations. On the Gold Coast in 1953, women shielded their heads from the sun with bright scarves and turbans borne proudly.

Obligatory Western shirts and trousers failed to erase centuries of African attire. Into the 1970s, enforced dress codes caused riots in Uganda. Among the Maasai of Tanzania, the red tribal *lubega* (one-shoulder toga) and bare backsides maintained ancient traditions along with red ochre body paint to respect tradition and combat lice. From another perspective, women encountered violence in Ethiopia, Zambia, Zanzibar, and Malawi for flaunting miniskirts, wigs, painted nails, complexion lighteners, and lipstick, all symbols of Western decadence. In Ghana, leader Kwame Nkrumah set a flexible standard by varying his selection of native kente costumes and Western suits depending on the occasion and international expectation.

African apparel has remained much in evidence in the 2010s. West African festivals and weddings call for lavish dressing among women. Village and kinship groups in Gambia, Senegal, and Nigeria purchase print fabric from the same bolt, but design dresses, *bubas* (blouses), pants or

skirts, *boubous* (caftans), infant slings, and turbans to suit the individual. The system allies women by pattern and vivid colors while encouraging competition and flair in personal ensembles. Men complement bold female attire with the sedate navy or black dashiki, a collarless pullover shirt embroidered with gilt thread. Guineans have popularized polished cotton and brocade. Ghanaians have perpetuated a tradition of black prints on red or white backgrounds.

In modern-day Eritrea and Sudan along the Red Sea, Beja and Bedouin men retain the Arab *thobe*, a long-sleeved cotton, silk, or linen robe left unbelted for wearing over sandals. For monarchs or imams, the *bisht* (cloak) enhances dignity. In Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and the Comoros Islands, a similar ankle-length *kanzu* (tunic) topped with a sport coat or blazer adds gravitas to the appearance of men of all faiths. Ugandan clothiers at Mende adorn the sleeves and neckline with emblematic embroidery, a beautification captured in photographs of weddings and receptions.

Tanzanian designs display a collar tassel attached to a polyester tunic and a matching cylindrical *kofia* (cap) usually imported from China, Arabia, or the United Arab Emirates. For formal occasions, both Kenyan and Tanzanian men accessorize the *kanzu* with a jacket or cloak and cap. Christian men in Kenya and Nigeria prefer drawstring trousers and the dashiki featuring bright colors and elaborate needlework on neckline and sleeves and the matching cap.

See also: Beads and Beading; Breechcloths; Cotton and Cotton Products; Cotton Trade; Ethnic and National Dress; Ritual Garments; Textile Trade.

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Byzantine Clothing

Unlike the draped Greek and Roman silhouettes, Byzantine fashion introduced splendid costumes constructed along the body's natural lines as emblems of social, economic, religious, or political prominence. After the Council of Nicaea chose the cross as the emblem of Christianity in 325 C.E., Constantine I the Great, the first Christian emperor of Rome, used the shape on clothing as the official cypher of his rule. Crosses dominated apparel and jewelry for the next millennium. He began transferring power in 330 to Turkey and establishing a more Asian court at Constantinople (present-day Istanbul).

As in the last century of the Roman Empire, design followed the lead of the imperial court with gorgeous patterns and needlework that sometimes covered the foundation material. Linings and edges tended toward black-spotted white ermine or light gray miniver, a form of vair (squirrel) spotted with black lamb's wool.

Ready-to-wear goods and textiles formed the largest body of commodities of the Byzantine economy and drew tourists to artisans' stalls and shopping centers in Antioch and Constantinople to buy apparel and jewelry. Fabrics advanced from plain Egyptian linen and wool or wool blended with linen or cotton from Italy to cut velvet from Cairo, angora from Ankara, cashmere from Kashmir and Nepal, and jewel-toned, bordered, and embroidered Syrian silk, the patterned adornment of nobles and the upper class.

Although Byzantine clothing remained simple in shape, the exotic weaves, selvages, and patterns from Palestine to as far east as China initiated diverse choices in the look and feel of ensembles and accessories. As in the early Roman Empire, Byzantine law reserved for ambassadors and aristocrats the use of Tyrian purple, a deep, reddish plum color derived from the murex sea snail. The colors blue, green, red, and white symbolized horse-racing teams and, eventually, political parties. In the 1100s, Tabriz fabric with Kufic script from Persia offered variety as well as Arabic mystique.

Silver-gilt threads and brilliant hues—indigo (deep blue), kermes (red), madder (raspberry),

murex (plum), weld (yellow)—outlined detailed hearts and moons, stylized lotus leaves and palm fronds, medallions, and fantastic animals. The most elaborate patterns drew on chariot racing, hunting, military engagements, and religious scenes, for example, the Annunciation and Pentecost. To these elegant fabrics, wearers attached borders, cuffs, facings, and linings.

Because of the era's self-indulgence in rich dress, Bishop Asterius of Amasea on March 24, 399, condemned the narcissistic practice in his homily "The Rich Man and Lazarus." He proclaimed vain clothing a frivolous, effeminate practice, especially with garments depicting holy events. After the fall of Rome in 476, the Byzantines gravitated toward more Eastern unisex shapes and adornments from Syria, India, and China.



An engraving of eighth-century empress Irene the Athenian (right) and her attendant illustrates defining elements of Byzantine women's dress: a shapeless, ankle-length *stola* of elaborate fabric, often imported, topped with a cowl or headdress. (Dea Picture Library/De Agostini/Getty Images)

Byzantine women overlaid the linen *camisa* (chemise) and the round- or boat-neck tunic with a *stola* (overdress), over which they could layer a short shirt for warmth or display. The bell-sleeved stola flared at the hip for ease in walking and remained open at the neck for breastfeeding. In cool weather, prestigious women added the mantle, a shaped overgarment topped with a cowl or hood. Unlike immodest bare-armed Roman dress, Byzantine costumes took on headscarves, cloth belts or sashes, and wrist-length sleeves for propriety. Poorer women wore no jewelry and bought garments of undyed linen, cotton, or wool. For convenience during domestic labor, thrifty women tied up flowing sleeves.

The twelfth century saw major changes in the cut of garments for both men and women. The fitted silhouette of the laced *bliaut* (dress) added low-torso interest with a pleated skirt or slit riding habit bunched at the hip. A sheer train, short mantle, soft slippers, and narrow girdle of leather, silk cord, or metal disks emphasized the natural feminine shape that togas and tunics had concealed under surplus fabric.

By the 1400s, the dalmatic (robe) departed completely from the Roman toga and prefaced the front-opening Armenian, Georgian, and Ottoman or Seljuk Turk caftan. At the same time, *superhumeralis* (shoulder wraps) lengthened into the cope, a semicircular cape falling to elbow length and fastened with a buckle, filigree brooch, or clasp. Senior court officials wore blue shoes. Green shoes indicated the uniform of the imperial valet, a staff eunuch. Shoulder-length curls and red leather shoes or knee-high boots completed the imperial wardrobe.

See also: Medieval European Clothing; Roman Clothing, Ancient.

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Chanel, Coco (1883–1971)

A touchstone of elegant women's leisure wear and tailored office wear, the Parisian couturier Coco Chanel changed the female silhouette from fussy to relaxed and self-confident. Her simple but chic designs in the mid-twentieth century, including the "little black dress," reflected the new social freedom of women, and her branded accessories and perfumes—including the world-famous Chanel No. 5 scent—earned a reputation for chic luxury.

She was born Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel on August 19, 1883, to journeyman Albert Chanel and laundress Eugénie "Jeanne" Devolle at a convent hospital in Saumur, France. Jeanne's death from consumption in 1895 broke up the couple's six children. Abandoned with her two sisters, Chanel entered a Cistercian orphanage in Aubazine in south-central France and learned to sew.

Six years later, at a shelter for orphaned teens in Moulins, Chanel obtained work as a seamstress and

modiste (hat and dress designer), followed by stints as a hosiery shop clerk and cabaret singer in Moulins and Vichy. She picked up the nickname Coco for songs associated with her nightclub performances.

With the aid of model/actress Gabrielle Dorziat, Chanel began selling hats at her Paris millinery near the Tuileries Gardens. In 1913, a lover named Arthur Edward "Boy" Capel bankrolled Chanel's boutique at Deauville on the Normandy coast, where the designer's sister Antoinette and aunt, Adrienne Chanel, strolled through town modeling slim jackets, sailor blouses, crewneck sweaters, and espadrilles. The youth and vigor of her garments won notice in *Harper's Bazaar*.

In 1916, Chanel opened a business at Biarritz, a locale unaffected by World War I. She experimented with knit jersey, a comfortable fabric for women's travel suits, worn with low-heeled pumps. Two years later, she became one of the first designers featured in *Women's Wear Daily*. She invested in properties adjacent to her Paris



A pioneer of twentieth-century women's fashion, French designer Coco Chanel brought a relaxed elegance to leisure and business attire. Her "little black dress" reflected a new social freedom and confidence; her perfume line became a global leader. (*The Granger Collection, NYC—All rights reserved*)

boutique and merchandised jewelry, accessories, and hats to accompany her original garments.

After Capel died in a car crash in 1919, Chanel suffered depression, which she relieved in part by sun bathing. In December 1920, she assisted ballet promoter Sergei Diaghilev in costuming dancers for *Le sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*), beginning her career as a stage costumer. She admired the androgynous flapper chemise but became better known for Slavic beading, Russian tunic blouses, and the silk crepe “little black dress,” a staple sheath she created in 1926 to the delight of editors at *Vogue*. In 1929, she debuted the Chanel bag, a small purse of quilted jersey or leather with thin straps that freed the hands.

In 1931, Chanel accepted a contract with MGM to costume film stars Gloria Swanson and Ina Claire. She popularized stretchy knits and influenced singers Maria Callas and Edith Piaf and actors Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, and Clara Bow to base their wardrobes on black. Photographer Richard Avedon inserted dramatic elements in advertisements for Chanel, who marketed a one-of-a-kind collection of platinum and diamond jewelry. By 1935, Chanel employed 4,000 workers.

Disillusioned with Hollywood vulgarity, Chanel began designing for filmmaker Jean Renoir and playwright Jean Cocteau. During World War II, however, she put her career on hold and retreated to the Hotel Ritz in Paris, where she became the mistress of a German SS intelligence officer. Postwar proceeds from her perfumes made her phenomenally wealthy.

Following a nine-year retreat to Switzerland to escape blame for collaborating with the Nazis, Chanel returned to haute couture in 1954. Her suave women's wear contrasted Christian Dior's “New Look,” a return to fabric stiffening, bust padding, and midriff cinches. Her defiance of confining female attire produced modernist elements—the black and beige sling back, pearls and diamond cuff bracelet, soft tweed suits with handy pockets, collarless jackets, chain belts, white-collared black pullovers, pea coats, bell bottoms, and cashmere cardigans.

French patriots shunned Chanel for her war-time anti-Semitism and allegiance to Germany, but her clothes found buyers in the United Kingdom and United States. For the biographical musical *Coco* (1969), Cecil Beaton dressed Katharine Hepburn in Chanel's chic “new woman” suits. Still actively creating a spring line, Chanel died in her sleep on January 10, 1971.

In the 2000s, repro factories copied Chanel's ensembles, marked by the interlocking double C, her logo. A long list of empowered women from the twentieth century honor Chanel for streamlining female fashion.

See also: Fashion Design; French Clothing and Fashion.

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Dance Costumes

For dance performances, costumes have traditionally highlighted the energy, drama, and passion of choreography. According to evidence from 33,000 B.C.E., found in Canada, Turkey, Czech Republic, Siberia, and France, costuming set dancers apart from viewers by transforming them into divine beings or icons of nature. Individualized styles turned feathers into visual prayers among Australia's Aborigines, painted skulls into sacred props among the Aztec of Mesoamerica, and bone whistles, clappers, bells, and rattles into rhythmic instruments among the Pueblo tribes of the Great Basin.

After 1570 B.C.E., the Egyptian *bedleh*, or female belly dance costume, consisted of kilts and aprons that freed the midriff for undulation. As the dance formalized, the dancer coordinated a crop top with a translucent skirt or harem pants, which fastened around the ankles. Ponytails, layers of clinking coin necklaces, sheer hand and headscarves, finger cymbals, and wispy veils reflected light against whole body whirls. Egyptian men and women accessorized with armlets and collars of bright stones set in metal. The Turkish version of the belly dance decked the male partner in a plumed turban, skimpy vest or bare chest, and loose trousers.

In the Iron Age after 1200 B.C.E., the Celtic jig, ring sets, and sword and step dance developed in Ireland under the influence of Druidism and waves of migrants. For professional country dances in later eras, Highlanders paired short fitted dresses with headbands and shawls for women. The male contingent wore a plain kilt or tight pants, sash, and vest with a *brat* (cloak), which enhanced drama and sweep. Unique black footwear called gillies secured tongueless lace-up slippers at the ankle, over thin hose.

Traditional Dance

In the South Seas and Africa, dancing required no shoes. For Fijian story-dance, around 800 B.C.E., Lapitan seafarers from Indonesia redirected emphasis from the lower body to a seated narrative featuring flower collars and hand and shoulder gestures accentuated by shell bracelets. Tribal designations

took the form of body paint, tattoos, and piercings with thorns or animal fangs. After 200 B.C.E., Tahitian, Cook Island, and Hawaiian dancers stitched grass, ti leaves, and barkcloth into skirts worn below oiled chests. Dance troupes incorporated natural motifs with leaf belts, flower leis, and garlands of greenery for ankles, heads, and wrists.

For the Midimu ritual, aboriginal Makonde dancers of southern Tanzania and Mozambique filed their teeth and cloaked long pants and shirt with string netting, bells, and a cloth helmet reaching to the shoulders. From the 400s C.E., the Sotho of South Africa propitiated rain by gyrating and leaping in black ostrich plumes and a blanket cloak. After 700, Fono dancers from the Ivory Coast created costumes from raffia fringes and skirts, bead necklaces, whisks, and mud or wood masks detailed with horns, feathers, bones, teeth, and shells. Stilts covered in fabric elongated the legs into a fantasy beast. Similarly nature-based, a loose confederacy of north Nigerian troupes from 948 performed the Agaba (lion dance) in coarse suits stitched with rustling seeds and brass bells.

From 1250, religious dance emphasized song rather than costume, as with Balkan line dances, ring sets performed in Bologna, the *estampie* of Catalonia, and Danish chain dances. In contrast, Kathakali dance drama in Kerala, India, in the late 1500s showcased costumes and massive headdresses. Companies used makeup to highlight facial, hand, and body posturing set to percussive and vocal music.

In pantomimes of martial arts and Sanskrit scripture and ritual, Southwestern Indian theatricals perpetuated classic tales and myths and recounted cosmic and historical events. The dancer wore a short-sleeved bodice over an ankle-length flounced skirt. Character actors padded overcoats and wrappers into bulbous shapes and starched neck cloths and skirts to vivify impersonations. Alluring accessories—crowns, long wigs, tassels, forearm covers, beads from neck to hip, shawls, and Turkish slippers—emphasized the dynamics of story-dance.

In Malayan and Tibetan style, stark coloration identified Kathakali characters by social status, gender, and profession. For portrayal of Indian noblemen, actors colored their faces green. Demon



A Kathkali dancer from the southern Indian state of Kerala performs in the traditional medieval style. Kathkali dance drama marked a break in world religious dance with its emphasis on costume, headdress, and makeup rather than song. (AP Photo/Bikas Das)

portrayers added red streaks and beards to the green base. Gods displayed beards whitened with rice paste. Woodsmen and hermits appeared in black. Amazons wore yellow.

European Staged Dance

After Italian composer Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx outfitted French dancers for *Le Ballet-Comique* at the French court of Catherine de' Medici in 1581, dance companies created ballet skirts and low-heeled slippers that suited female needs. Male court performers typically topped stockings and shoes with brocade coats that flared into skirts, a stylized version of Roman armor. At London's Covent Garden during the late Renaissance, stage designer Inigo Jones stitched allegorical and mythic confections for performers in masques, intermezzi, and *tableaux vivants* (living pictures), as with the armbands and military kilt and boots in the 1609 performance of *Virtu, Bellerophon and the Chimaera*.

In the 1720s and 1730s, dance costumes became more spectacular and less restrictive as head, arm, leg, and torso movements acquired complexity and athleticism. Contributing to the separation between street clothes and stage costumes, principal ballerina Marie Camargo of Belgium

and French choreographer Marie Sallé introduced ethereal muslin dresses without the period corset and panniers. In the mid-1700s, Louis XV restored propriety by decreeing that dancers at the Paris Opéra wear the *maillot* (tights) with *caleçon* (underpants).

Late in the century, stretchy leg coverings promoted naturalistic stage techniques for story ballet that physicalized characters. The rise of *ballet d'action* altered the importance of costume from decoration to an element of impressionism. For Jean-Georges Noverre's opera *Diane et Endymion* in 1791, dancer Victoire Saulnier debuted the filmy tunic, a radical shift from full skirts to a columnar dress over maillot and caleçon that revealed her form in motion. In 1796, French prima ballerina Rose Parisot galvanized London viewers in a costume for *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* that revealed all of her legs in *jetés* (leaps) and *grands battements* (waist-high leg lifts).

Nineteenth-century dancewear continued to stray from everyday fashions to professional costumes. In 1832, choreographer Filippo Taglioni invented the mid-calf muslin skirt for his daughter, dancer Marie Taglioni, in the romantic title role of *La Sylphide*. Subsequent stage wardrobe added the spaghetti-strap or strapless bodice over tulle skirts that revealed female musculature.

Dance Shoes

In the American South at house parties at Oak Alley Plantation in New Orleans and Monmouth Plantation in Natchez, Mississippi, the kid dance slipper enabled women to glide over the floor in a sarabande or galop. Soft soles secured the feet in motion to balance layered crinolines and swaying hoop skirts.

Influenced by Marie Taglioni, the pointe shoe evolved from leather and wood to a satin cover over kidskin or cardboard arch and a layered toe box blocked from paper, canvas, or burlap and securely glued. An Italian cobbler, Salvatore Capezio of Lucano, worked near the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1887 and extended his business by repairing ballet slippers and toe shoes, the beginning of the Capezio dance shoe industry. His most famous patron, Russian star Anna Pavlova, ordered Capezio pointe shoes in 1910 for her repertory company.

America's premier stage couple, Vernon and Irene Castle, popularized modern face-to-face dance after their debut in 1911. Setting fashion trends with suave costuming, they performed social dance in fashionable tuxedos and elegant gowns worn with street shoes. With Vernon and as a solo performer, Irene modeled handkerchief hems and low-heeled pumps, a comfortable shoe that gained popularity during World War I.

During the Great Depression, movie star Ginger Rogers flashed high-heeled pumps and single-strap shoes in her performances with Fred Astaire in *Top Hat* (1935) and *Shall We Dance* (1937). Later in the decade, American women emulated her one-strap dancing slippers for evenings at supper clubs. From 1935 to 1940, Shirley Temple epitomized innocence and propriety in Mary Jane tap shoes with anklet and knee socks, a look carried over on costumed dolls. In *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Judy Garland wowed young girls with glittery red pumps. One of the film's most memorable props, the ruby slippers prefaced a trend in rhinestone evening shoes for adult women.

Modern Innovations

In 1950, Russian-born costumer Barbara Karinska solved a staging problem for the corps de ballet. In place of the flat, wired tutu, she devised a powder puff version of six or seven self-supporting net layers that remained fluffed, a contribution to George Balanchine's production of *Symphony in C*. Another design, the knee-length chiffon costume for Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante* (1956), set a standard for its ladylike grace.

Dance wear continued changing and developing into the late twentieth century with adoption of the unitard, sports bra, battery-powered, light-up leotards, and synthetic Spandex, invented in 1959. A tight fit improved the warm-up of muscles to prevent injury. Gel-toed pointe shoes prevented toe damage from long-term balance of body weight.

Costuming for the Ballet Folklórico de México turned jewel-toned bias gowns and black toreador pants into a signature look for extravagant corps de ballet production numbers. Alvin Ailey lead dancer Judith Jamison adopted the long, body-hugging bias dress for her solo "Cry" in May 1979. For *Grand*, performed by the Sydney Dance Company in 2011, Australian designer Akira Isogawa pioneered translucent stage garments made from Modal, pliant rayon extracted from beechwood.

See also: African Clothing, Sub-Saharan; Mardi Gras and Carnival Costumes; Pacific Island Clothing; Petticoats; Skirts; Slippers.

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Nylon

The first thermoplastic resin, nylon features a slick surface and silky sheen and boosts the elasticity and convenience of body-hugging garments and rainwear. Synthesized from coal in Wilmington, Delaware, on February 28, 1935, by DuPont chemist Wallace Hume Carothers, the polyamide fabric extended the life of apparel and hosiery by making them permanently creased, colorfast, and rip-proof. By 1938, rayon and nylon blends had made a huge impact on ready-to-wear by augmenting the flexibility and life of men's and women's socks, Hawaiian shirts, neckties, and woven and knitted brassieres, camiknickers (teddies), drawers, and slippers.

Polymer materials offered a high melting point, abrasion resistance, and protection of garments from chemicals, mold, vermin, and decay. In 1939, Japanese factory owners in Okayama abandoned rayon and began weaving nylon for durable swimsuits and knit trunks, girdles, infant shoes and padded shell suits, and toddler hats and rompers. Because of the rationing of silk during the fabric shortages of World War II, the British department store chain Marks & Spencer offered a small inventory of nylon hosiery in October 1938, which preceded the marketing of a British synthetic known as Bri-Lon.

Civilians grasped at wearable, long-lasting nylon hosiery in local "nylon riots," which began in October 1940 in Wilmington, Delaware. Both *Consumer Union* and *Consumer Reports* tested silk, cotton, and nylon stockings on human models and found synthetic hose sheer, yet likely to run, a fault women called "laddering." On May 15, 1940—designated N-Day in New York City—department stores offered the first snag-proof, non-sagging nylon stockings in the United States. On that first day alone, 5 million pairs sold for \$1.15 each, accommodating a rise in hemlines. Within months, Cannon Hosiery priced its stockings at \$1.35. Neiman Marcus offered nylon legwear for \$2.95.

Wartime and Postwar Uses

The British War Production Board chose nylon for the manufacture of shoelaces, duffel bags, socks, desert and jungle camouflage uniforms,

battle dress fatigues, and hammocks. Beginning on February 12, 1942, in the European and Pacific combat theaters, the Allied military supplied the infantry with nylon flak vests that resisted shrapnel and artillery shells. Similarly, German suppliers at I.G. Farben ramped up production of Perlon, the equivalent of Swiss Grilon.

U.S. military suppliers commandeered DuPont nylon to sew into backpack-style parachutes for dropping soldiers and cargo from airplanes, a strategy that prefaced the landing at Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. At the height of World War II, catalogs encouraged respect for the diversion of rubber, leather, metal, wool, cotton, and nylon to military needs. The demand reached 13,000 tons of nylon per year.

By 1945, cotton had lost status to nylon, which U.S. factories used in one-quarter of manufactured apparel as well as in ripstop materials for watchbands, equipment belts, spelunking packs, frameless rucksacks, cravat sling bandages, and sutures. The shift to polymers deflated cotton growing in Tanzania and Uganda. Synthetic garments flourished in postwar Russia, where female Muscovites lined up at department stores to buy nylon blouses and stockings, symbols of Western capitalism and technological superiority.

In Great Britain, within two years of the abolition of strictures on nylon in 1947, production reached 25,000 tons annually. Entrepreneur Noel Bibby of Peter Storm Ltd. in Nottingham, England, introduced packable nylon raincoats that folded into a pouch. English blanket weaver Joseph Kagan of Elland fused wool with nylon for the Gannex mackintosh and topcoat. Weatherproof and stain-resistant, Gannex garments served British and Canadian police and firefighters, mountain climbers, Arctic explorers, and soldiers as well as world leaders Mao Zedong, Elizabeth II, Harold Wilson, and Nikita Khrushchev.

Nylon in Style

Apparel makers found myriad uses for nylon. In the mid-1900s, U.S. teens started a fad for white bobby sox, anklet socks blended with cotton and nylon for stretch. Women abandoned cotton corsets and chose from a variety of brassieres in washable nylon and Lycra power net in a selection of



Work on polymer synthesis led chemist Wallace Carothers and his team at the DuPont Company to invent the synthetic “miracle” fiber nylon in 1935. Use in socks, hosiery, underwear, and sports attire revolutionized the ready-to-wear industry. (*Hulton Archive/Getty Images*)

colors. Department stores advertised nylon in fake fur coats, petticoats, and drip-dry suits for men.

By the early 1950s, nylon negligees, seamless hose, and baby-doll pajamas dominated women’s intimate wear in the United States and Canada. A South African stocking factory opened in Cape Town in 1951. Swimmer-actor Esther Williams heightened the appeal of the nylon and Lastex swimsuit. The beat generation disdained high fashion by claiming the black nylon turtleneck and leotards as alternatives to the gray flannel suit.

With the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the U.S. Army replaced previous flak jackets with nylon duck and laminated Doron (fiberglass) bulletproof vests to deflect shrapnel and 45-caliber bullets. To disassociate the industry from the war market, DuPont management teamed with haute couture for free publicity for nylon attire designed by Coco Chanel, Emanuel Ungaro, and Jean Patou. Manufacturer David Crystal advertised his nylon

voile dress as feather-light and packable, a near-utopian garment for a new age.

In 1958, Christian Dior purchased nylon tulle for sparkling dresses. The following year, sales of shape-retaining nylon sweaters doubled as children and adults added synthetic garments to their wardrobes. The Sears, Roebuck catalog promoted nylon tricot slips, sheer pettipants and blouses, vested suits of quilted nylon, and skirts of nylon taffeta, chiffon, and organdy.

In the next decade, designers André Courrèges and Pierre Cardin declared nylon a suitable fashion material for Space Age apparel and linings. Rudi Gernreich complemented jersey column dresses with printed nylon hose. Mary Quant paired miniskirts with nylon tights. In Milan, Miuccia Prada unveiled the black nylon backpack as a female fashion essential. Hong Kong innovators flooded the market with cheap nylon wigs and hairpieces, which wearers dropped off at hair salons for washing and styling.

A Versatile and Pragmatic Material

Nylon raincoats and outdoor outfits matched colorful rip-proof umbrellas at the same time that Hawaiian swimmers introduced nylon slaps (toe-strap sandals). On the beach in Australia, New Zealand, French Polynesia, and the Maldives, surfers modeled nylon jackets and slim snap-fly trunks that functioned like a second skin in water. In contrast, the disposable nylon-reinforced paper dress of the late 1960s served the consumer for only a few wearings. The military applied nylon to Cordura, a windproof, water-repellant fabric for denim pants, hoodies, buckle straps, boot tops, sleeping bags, and backpacks.

Nylon attire also dressed the first spacemen. On April 12, 1961, an orange nylon jumpsuit protected Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin during his one-day Earth orbit on *Vostok 1*. On March 3, 1969, the U.S. astronauts entered the *Apollo 9* spacecraft in cotton and nylon long underwear, which protected the skin while cushioning it in comfort. Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon on July 29, 1969, wearing nylon boots.

In countries where winter sports were popular, quilted nylon stretch overalls fit the torsos of top athletes. Silicone nylon parkas warmed Icelandic skiers with a reversible fabric backed with high-sheen cotton. Norwegian skiers popularized thermal terry socks of wool and nylon yarn for cushioning cold toes. Globally in the 1970s, exercise shorts and racing unitards made of two-way stretch nylon decreased drag from wind friction and heat and vented sweat from runners and bicyclists. For the Sony factory, Japanese fabric engineer Issey Miyake created nylon uniforms with zip-off sleeves, the forerunner of his cylindrical dresses cut from a roll of tubular nylon.

Into the late twentieth century, boys popularized nylon-topped zip-up boots. Young children fastened their own nylon sneakers with Velcro® straps. For outdoor play, they got extra wear from Sears Toughskins jeans with cotton, nylon, and polyester reinforced knees, which emulated work pants and denim jackets for adults.

Innovations in nylon windbreakers produced

team names and emblems and underarm vents. In Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, designers marketed the wash-and-dry nylon sari, a modification of centuries-old silk attire for women. East Asian factories turned satiny nylon knockoffs into a windfall for the intimate apparel market.

In Great Britain, early synthetics—Crimplene, Mar spun, Terylene, and Tricel—lost out to versatile, easy-care nylon, which shed perspiration and moisture in anoraks and rain pants. In 1985, Japanese factories profited from the sale of drip-dry, no-iron polyester and nylon leisure wear. The media advertised down-insulated nylon parkas that remained water repellant through 50 launderings.

The weaving of laminated nylon with polyester yielded iridescent Lurex, a metallic yarn that added sparkle to athletic and dance wear. Distributed from Paris and London in skeins, Lurex posed new dimensions to crochet, embroidery, and lace. Emerging markets in Russia fed the desire of elementary school girls for mini-dresses with nylon pantyhose and teenage boys for nylon Adidas and Nike tracksuits.

In the 2010s, nylon reinforced 12 percent of all synthetic materials, including slash-proof urban wear, metal-coated Levi's nylon jackets, oil-proof nylon mesh Dynafil cycling gear, aluminum laminated suits for space travel, and high-performance techno fashions that relied on nylon to stabilize shape. The military issued knee-length nylon ponchos with snap closures that produced emergency rain shields and also served as a tent or ground cloth. Hanes, Playtex, Maidenform, Warner's, Fruit of the Loom, and Jockey sponsored a resurgence of practical cotton and nylon blends for briefs and men's hosiery. Women snapped up retro knickers, playsuits, accessories, and utilitarian underwear. Unisex cycling pants relied on nylon and spandex for a tight, stretchy fit that held its shape.

See also: Fibers, Synthetic; Hosiery, Women's; Rationing; Undergarments.

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Wedding Dress

The apparel of bridal parties in cultures throughout the world follows traditions representing a joyful new life for the bride and groom. As early as 7000 B.C.E., from present-day North Africa east across what is now Arabia, Yemen, India, and Pakistan, *mehndi*, the tinting of the nuptial couple with turmeric and henna (*Lawsonia inermis*) contrasted natural colorants with choice fabrics, gold bangles, and flowers. By 2000 B.C.E., Mesopotamian weavers loomed blankets and robes especially for weddings.

In many locations, the quality of materials placed altar apparel above other celebrations in cost and beauty. Around 1500 B.C.E., Maya couples graced their wedding costumes with caterpillar filament, hummingbird feathers, and the soft belly fur of rabbits. Southwest of Athens, wealthy Mycenaeans preserved bridal fillets and dresses as women's burial attire.

In ancient Greek marriage ceremonies, costumed followers followed the style of tightly girdled layers, a motif set by the myth of Pandora, the first woman. Eros, the god of passion, fashioned Pandora's nuptial sandals. Beneath the *stephane* (crown), bridesmaids wove the bride's hair into a Gordian knot, a mythic cypher of union garnished with ribbons that remained in use in Ethiopia for centuries. The groom presented a serious image in refined chiton and himation.

According to a visual image in Homer's *Odyssey* (ca. 800 B.C.E.), the maiden, veiled in yellow and cloaked in a blanket shawl, walked by torchlight to her new home to greet the groom, who decked himself in a pallium (blanket cloak). Spartans emphasized the tone of bride capture by shaving her head as an emblem of total submission to dominance. The day after the wedding, the newlywed wife received a basket of apparel, sandals, soap, emollients, and fragrance. The Greek poet Hesiod warned that devious women, such as Pandora with her knotted belt and layered tunics, become mantraps with their overdressing in jewelry, veils, and garlands.

To the northeast in Scythia (modern Ukraine) from 500 B.C.E., the Greco-Scythian king Scyles aroused hostility by trying to force nomadic

Scythians into Hellenic customs. In the distinct Scythian wedding tradition, stitchers linked red embroidery to domesticity by outlining hemp or linen toweling for use as ritual wedding garments or handkerchiefs. Brides wore the regional wreath of flowers until taking altar vows, when a circular cap replaced the corona, a practice unknown in Hellenic weddings. Because Scyles tried to maintain two wives in contrasting styles, a usurper beheaded the king and restored order to the nomadic lifestyle. The conflict of matrimonial customs returned in 329 B.C.E. to plague Alexander the Great, a Macedonian who once again rejected Scythian lifestyle and dress.

Greek and Roman nuptial traditions spread across Mediterranean shores. After the Roman triumph over Carthage in 146 B.C.E., Tunisian women adopted their conquerors' wedding tunics. Roman wedding standards maintained immaculate white for the groom's toga and a leafy garland similar to a victory crown. The bride-to-be dressed in a yellow tunic and shoes. Handmaidens cloaked the bride and the matronly six-fold *crines* (braids) of a vestal virgin in an enveloping *flammeum* (red veil) capped with a circlet of marjoram, myrtle, verbena, and blossoms. The bridal ring graced the third finger of the left hand in token of a wifely vein flowing straight to the heart. For the procession to her new home, the new bride wore a white robe cinched under the breasts with the Gordian knot.

Global Diversity

The expectations for Asian weddings placed hardships on the bride's family, providers of the dowry, and on the fiancée, who received negligible trinkets—fans, makeup, mirrors, hairpins—as nuptial gifts. Korean couples displayed elegant robes, jackets, and skirts similar to those worn by nobles. Headdress marked the groom with a stiff winged cap and the bride with a wide tie down the back.

By the dictates of the wedding vows, the Chinese bride presented new relatives with satin shoes and pillows and agreed to spin, weave, sew, and embroider commercial-quality garments for her in-laws. Following the ritual, the bride veiled her face and withdrew into solitude while the husband

preened for guests in his wedding ensemble, usually all white or all black. Singing girls performed by displaying colorful costumes and warbling risqué lines from drinking songs.

Wedding wardrobes everywhere became vehicles for displaying local crafts. After 100 C.E., Balinese, Javanese, and Sumatran color masters applied to bridal sashes and folk trousseaus diamonds and webbing in *teritik*, an Indonesian color-resist technique. The bride and groom displayed *teritik* in her chest-belted tunic and his long shirt and pants. Patterns represented wisdom in flower shapes and long life symbolized by a curling liana. The Japanese groom attended Buddhist nuptials in the white ankle-length *bhaku* (robe), the color of matchmaking. Accessories included a brocade vest, sash, and cap.

In the 500s, dye artists in Gujarat and Rajasthan, India, dip-dyed minuscule knots in nuptial shawls, bodices, and skirts. In the 680s, Islamic brides in the Middle East received lavish attention from the wedding party, especially the gift of a brooch to secure the scarf and hennaed swirls on the hands and feet to ensure good fortune and blessings. Ceremonial recognition of grooms included henna-painted hands and feed and beards dyed with henna and turmeric, a custom adopted by the Prophet Muhammad at his marriage to Khadijah in 595.

In the High Middle Ages throughout Great Britain, engaged girls stripped themselves of every garment. Before the wedding ceremony, they dressed clean bodies in unused bridal apparel, even new pins. The blue overgown or the light *bliaut* (lace-up dress) trimmed in blue braid dominated bridal apparel. Its color symbolized loyalty and trust, a sign of good fortune and commitment found in the Old English superstition ending “something blue.” Wide sleeves edged in Flemish or French bobbin lace complemented female hands, making them appear fragile and feminine. Evening entertainment in Wexford and at Achill Island in northwest Ireland included a party of *clagheras* (strawboys) decked in tiered straw skirts and masks for mumming and dancing jigs with the bridal party. Rather than donning sleepwear, the couple retired to bed nude.

Thirteenth-century Russian brides-to-be stored a matrilineal heritage consisting of a *cote-hardie* (fitted jacket) lined in fur. Dangling tippets garnished the bridal gown below the immense crown-like *kokoshnik* (headdress) graced with gold stitchery and pearls draping the forehead. Bridal parties spread fur cloaks in the church aisles to symbolize comfort in the couple’s life together. At court ceremonies and wedding feasts, Russian noblewomen chose Persian velvet for a wrap skirt, shift, and half-boots, a figure-molding outfit suited to regional low temperatures.

For Timurid brides in the fourteenth-century court of Tamerlane at Samarkand (modern Uzbekistan), needleworkers outlined garments with lozenges, lianas, greenery, pomegranates, birds, fish, and constellations. On beaded and sequined panels for wedding gowns, the embroiderer pierced heavy textiles with a tambour hook to pull threads to the surface. Similarly eager for colorful weddings, German, Italian, and Scandinavian families carved or painted coats of arms on hope chests, which held antique petticoats, bridal veils, pearls, and slippers for use by the next generation of newlyweds. Moroccan maidens acquired a national costume consisting of an embroidered stomacher with corselet to layer over the blouse and skirt.

In Renaissance Europe, bobbin lace and yarn pompons, tassels, fringe, and braided coats of arms set upscale nuptial garments apart from everyday dress. Men favored single earrings and the broad nuptial cloak slit at back to reveal fur or linen linings, a sober outfit worn by William V, duke of Bavaria, at his marriage to Renata of Lorraine on February 22, 1568. Prominent English bridal parties displayed wedding bands or thumb rings and bride lace, clusters of rosemary tied in blue ribbon to ushers’ sleeves and bridesmaids’ hats. The mother of the bride removed her wedding band in widowhood and displayed jet beads and a mourning ring containing a cameo, portrait, or lock of hair of the deceased father of the bride.

Peasant grooms wore a natural-hued or bleached linen work shirt smocked at the neck and sleeves. For his fiancée, the groom invested in wood or bone beads or a carved cross as a bridal gift. He presented a nosegay of roses combined with

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rosemary, an evergreen symbol of a long union, and tucked a sprig of rosemary into his lapel. For standard altar attire in the Punjab and Iran, scarves and shoulder wraps of hand-spun *khaddar* cloth displayed red *phulkari* embroidery. In Mughal India, *zardosi* (ribbon embroidery) garnished the bride's costume and groom's waistcoat.

New World altar attire reflected utilitarian concerns, such as the low-topped straw *bergère* (shepherdess) or milkmaid hat for the Canadian bride, which she could redecorate for other occasions. Grooms in colonial Massachusetts received a brocade nightshirt, an acknowledgment of the importance of bedding and impregnating the bride. Among Amerindians after 1670, the debut of the trading blanket supplied young couples with utilitarian wedding attire. The Pawnee, Crow, Hopi, Cree, and Lakota began adorning buckskin moccasins as a way to bead and quill the bride or groom's shoes without wasting materials on a garment worn only once.

Eighteenth-century expense for coming-out wardrobes frequently involved dual planning to turn a white, blue, or lilac ball gown into wedding apparel. In England, both bride and groom sometimes trimmed their outfits in silver. In the plantation South, debutantes chose styles that they could garnish with a colored sash and slippers for a postmarriage cotillion. Slave girls treasured the lace, ribbon, handkerchiefs, hats, and lingerie discarded by the seamstress to add to their trousseaus.

In Europe, royal princesses packed their hope chests with boudoir ensembles, lacy gloves, dancing slippers, and silk bustiers. The eighteenth-century trousseau featured expanses of Valenciennes lace, a netted style sewed on a pillow. In Finland, Austria, and Germany, adornment of the wedding crown produced a pinnacle of creativity in collecting garnishes for the tall cylinder. A relic of the Middle Ages, the bridal crown remained in place until dancers replaced it with a matron's garland.

In France, King Louis XV paid £25,000 for the outfitting of his daughter, Louise Élisabeth, in a lace bridal gown on October 25, 1739. On August 21, 1745, Catherine the Great of Russia went to

the altar at St. Petersburg in brocade stitched in gold and silver thread. Queen Sophia Magdalena of Sweden featured a horizontal crinoline under the dress she wore for her marriage to King Gustav III on October 1, 1766.

The French Revolution of 1789 curtailed female extravagance, limiting lavish trains and width of skirts. Restrained silhouettes replaced male dandyism, beginning with the groom's silk or wool double-breasted frock coat in a dark color rather than the bright hues of prewar styles. During the ritual taking of vows, attendants held a *carré* (silk square) over the heads of the couple to shield them from harm and envy until the concluding blessing.

In the early 1830s, Irish needleworkers developed Carrickmacross, a whitework appliqué of stylized flowers and ribbons on organdy handkerchiefs and bridal headdress. Russian kerchiefs worked in colorful embroidery and metallic stitchery served as altar veils. Tulle veils displayed whitework in floral patterns and gold galloons.

Wed in White

The marriage of Queen Victoria at St. James's Palace in London on February 10, 1840, introduced white as the symbol of purity, a color honored worldwide, and a silhouette masking female curves. Under the influence of Prince Albert, the groom's coat acquired a notched collar and buttonhole to display a boutonniere, which matched the blossoms and flowers in the bridal bouquet. Trailing ribbons ended in lover's knots, a replication in trim of the untouched maidenhead.

Mid-century stylists restored the illusion head-dress by obscuring the bride from head to toe in silk tulle. The shorter mantilla, focus of the first cover of *Harper's Bazaar* on November 2, 1867, depicted alternate views of the demure altar gown with translucent drape over head and shoulders. Toronto women began distancing themselves from British customs by emulating wedding styles from Boston and New York.

In the 1870s, *Godey's Lady's Book* promoted the Victorian notion of a submissive, domestic female wed in white or ivory amid a cluster of bridesmaids in neutral colors. The detailing of the white veil



A Chinese bride and groom are wed in traditional red gowns. Whereas white became the standard color for Western wedding dresses with Queen Victoria's marriage in 1840, red—symbolizing good luck and prosperity—is customary in many parts of Asia. (TPG/Getty Images)

with black stitches indicated recent bereavement. In *Appletons' Journal* in January 1872, Lord & Taylor advertised a demure 53-piece trousseau consisting of linen and muslin bodices and pantallets, embroidered corset covers, nightdresses, and boudoir sacks and dressing gowns with elaborate ruching.

The Edwardian era (1901–1910) preserved the romanticism of previous decades. Detailed newspaper reports identified styles and fabrics, such as orange blossom garlands, officers' uniforms with gold epaulets, kid gloves, and silk Juliet caps. Civilian grooms dressed in long-tailed cutaway coats in black or dove gray, lustrous vests, and striped pants. For nightwear, the new husband maintained the nightshirt with ruffled placket, a forerunner of twentieth-century pajamas and robe. Brides-to-be

collected frilly pantaloons and nighties of cotton or silk laden with lace and blue and pink ribbon.

In the decades that followed, seamstresses appliquéd velvet leaves and blossoms to the tulle veil and stitched tiny spherical buttons in close order down the back of the bride's gown. For nightwear, the bride covered her long gown with a muslin, batiste, or crêpe de chine peignoir, a twentieth-century version of female seduction. The bridal silhouette shifted in the 1930s to a bias-cut art deco dress and veil molded to the head and body with a touch of Hollywood glamour. In the next decade, brides used a tiara to anchor multiple layers of net or organza. On the Greek islands, maidens expressed their anticipation of marriage by embroidering vests for their grooms-to-be.

The 1950s introduced an era of short flounced organdy skirts with scalloped borders for bridal gowns. Canadian jewelers sculpted opals or iridescent labradorite (feldspar) for use in wedding rings. Norwegian women reclaimed the traditional wedding crown, a peasant custom that added wildflowers and fruit to bridal headdress. In Russia, after the demise of dictator Josef Stalin on March 1, 1953, brides accepted white British-style wedding attire as a symbol of new beginnings.

After a period of country weddings with barefoot hippie ensembles featuring prairie skirts, from the late 1970s, *Town & Country*, *Vogue*, *Jet*, and *Elle* magazines invigorated the wedding fashion industry with more allure. Modeling and photo sequences of creative apparel focused on bridal elegance with organza and chiffon. In Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, the Hanfu movement of the early 2000s returned wedding guests to the wearing of folk robes and skirts, the national Chinese costume.

In the 2010s, imagination ruled wedding couture, which embraced a broad view of propriety with short, high-low, mermaid style, strapless, and one-strap dresses. Groups of women in Gambia, Senegal, and Nigeria attended weddings in *bubas* (blouses), pants or skirts, *boubous* (caftans), and head wraps made from the same bolt of cloth. The Mende of Uganda embroidered bridal apparel at the neckline and sleeves. And in Great Britain after April 29, 2011, eagerness for knock-off

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altar ensembles sped copies of Kate Middleton's traditional lace-bodice gown and veil around the globe.

The white altar dress of the West continues to be the most popular choice of brides around the world, at least for the religious part of the service. Maghreb brides paint their hands with henna but gravitate toward the creamy Western gown and veil detailed with North African accessories and needlework. For postnuptial receptions and dancing, Libyan, Moroccan, and Tunisian women revert to native skirt and jacket. Iranian women depilate the face, underarms, and bikini line by guiding a

twisted string over unwanted hair. Tunisians defy the evil eye with the good luck *bakhnuq* (shawl), woven of cotton and wool and graced with coins and sequins.

See also: Crowns and Tiaras; Formal Attire, Male; Formal Attire, Female; Ritual Garments; Wang, Vera.

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Chronology

B.C.E.

100,000 The need for warmth and protection from harsh weather increases after the first *Homo sapiens* migrate from Africa to Europe and Asia.

98,000 Natufian artisans begin beadwork at Skhul Cave, in present-day Israel.

38,000 Humankind develops needle-and-thread technology.

Australian aborigines piece skins into cloaks, the first use of patchwork for clothing.

36,000 Linen weaving becomes the world's oldest form of manufacture.

Flax workers east of the Black Sea add tints to fibers.

28,000 In the Caucasus Mountains, the hand-spinning method turns flax into a soft, supple linen thread.

12,000 At what is now Al-Fayyum, Egypt, spinners turn cotton fiber into filament.

10,000 In the Zagros Mountains, Anatolian herders weave goat fleece into capes and cloaks.

8000 Andean clothiers twine cotton into unloomed fabrics.

7500 Evidence of the use of red ochre and indigo at Catal Höyük, Turkey, indicates stylistic concern for color contrasts.

6000 The felting process develops across Asia and Europe.

Paleo-Indians in what is now Florida weave palm and palmetto leaves into burial shrouds.

5500 Japanese weavers use bark and hemp for making cloth.

5000 One-piece shoes require the piercing of soles and uppers with an awl to insert lacings.

Alpine flax harvesters twist fibers into linen thread.

Nile Valley inhabitants use the bast fiber from ramie to make antimicrobial mummy shrouds.

4700 Cotton comes into use in China for apparel.

4000 Dyeing with henna and sumac yields a reddish-brown colorant for hair, wool, and leather.

Egyptian clothiers rely on linen fabric for everyday dress; in what is now Sudan and subtropical Africa, hemp from kenaf serves as material for coarse bags and tunics.

People in Europe develop an economic foundation from the initial weaving of woolens.

3500 The people of the Valdivia culture of Ecuador weave cotton for apparel.

Andeans and the Mexica spin alpaca and llama fleece into strong wool thread.

3300 Ötzi the Iceman, wearing a grass cloak, skin coat and leggings, loincloth, belt, and shoes, is buried high in the Alps on the Austro-Italian border. He is Europe's oldest known human mummy.

2600 The Chinese begin spinning silk under the rule of Emperor Shi Huangdi.

2500 Sumerians introduce neck and body armor and helmets at Ur.

2133 Egyptians at Thebes wear bag tunics made from coarse hempen fabric.

1800 Devout Jews begin wearing the tallit, or prayer shawl, at morning prayers, on the Sabbath, and during Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) as a gesture of reverence.

1500 Minoans exploit Tyrian purple-red dye from the murex sea snail.

1300 Assyrian sumptuary laws obligate royal wives and noblewomen to conceal their heads and veil their faces.

1000 The first boots join shoes and leggings into single high-top footwear. . . .

22 Chronology

C.E.

- ... 1804 Weaver and inventor Joseph Marie Jacquard variegates silk with a programmable loom.
- 1810 American footwear manufacturers design shoes to fit right and left feet.
- 1823 Scots inventor Charles Macintosh introduces India rubber cloth for making waterproof rainwear.
- 1824 Crocheting and knitting patterns first reach print in the Dutch magazine *Pénelopé*.
- 1830 Louis Antoine Godey begins issuing *Godey's Lady's Book*, the arbiter of female fashion in the United States.
- 1844 In Nottingham, England, John Fisher devises a lace-making machine.
- 1848 Táhirih, a martyred poet and human rights advocate, shocks Iranian males by ripping off her veil in front of a group of men at a religious conference.
- 1851 Elizabeth Smith Miller designs bloomers (Turkish trousers) to wear under a short dress or belted tunic.
- 1852 Paris designer Charles Frederick Worth turns dressmaking into the profession of *haute couture*.
- 1854 Florence Nightingale introduces sanitized laundry in hospitals.
- 1856 English chemist William Henry Perkin introduces synthetic dyes.
- 1860 A midnight blue evening jacket for Bertie, the Prince of Wales, earns the name "tuxedo."
William Jennings Demorest and his wife, milliner Ellen Louise Curtis Demorest, invent sewing patterns made of tissue.
- 1861 Queen Victoria's desolation at the death of Prince Albert on December 14 triggers an era of elaborate mourning dress and funereal jewelry.
- 1862 The London International Exhibition launches a demand for paisleys and Asian exotica in shawls and dresses.
- 1869 Charles Frederick Worth dispenses with crinolines and caged hoop skirts and devises the bustle.
- 1879 English clothier Thomas Burberry develops waterproof worsted wool yarn into gabardine, a tightly woven twill.
- 1880s Depletion of buffalo herds in North America ends the hide trade.
- 1889 French industrialist Hilaire de Chardonnet earns the title "Father of the Rayon Industry" with his display of artificial silk at the Exposition Universelle in Paris.
- 1899 Egyptian nationalist Qasim Amin declares the veiling of women a gross misinterpretation of Koranic scripture for the sake of male ego.
- 1901 England's King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra set the model for a sumptuous display in dress and manners.
- 1907 Police at Revere Beach, Massachusetts, arrest swimmer-diver Annette Marie Kellerman for exposure of neck and limbs while wearing a one-piece stretchy bathing suit.
- 1909 Pendleton Woolen Mills in Oregon supply the U.S. Army and local tribes with blankets, robes, and shawls.
Paris designer Jeanne Lanvin invents children's haute couture.
- 1912 Samuel Courtauld & Company knits the first rayon stockings at its London factory.
- 1914 The DuPont company launches research into organic dyes for rayon and cellulose.
- 1916 U.S. Rubber in Naugatuck, Connecticut, invents Keds, a popular and inexpensive brand of canvas sneakers.
- 1921 Sanitariums wrap tubercular patients in "heated quilts," the first electric blankets.
- 1924 American tailor Jesse Langsdorf stitches the necktie from three bias-cut pieces.
- 1926 French fashion designer Coco Chanel introduces the "little black dress."
- 1932 The American Council on Education standardizes academic regalia.
- 1933 At the World's Fair in Chicago, the Singer Corporation introduces its famous portable lightweight sewing machine.
- 1934 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey's first president, secularizes the dress code.
- 1935 Elsa Schiaparelli debuts the zipper in haute couture.
- 1936 Reza Shah of Iran sanctions modern Western dress and denounces traditional national attire for epitomizing ignorance.

Glossary

- aglet** the covering of the end of a shoelace or ribbon, as with the silver finials on Spanish drawstrings during the seventeenth century.
- aigret** an ornamental feathered tuft that Etruscans and Romans used to garnish helmets and that Turkish emperors added to silk turbans.
- babiche** a spiral of rabbit fur sliced from whole pelts that Salish tribes of the Pacific Coast wove into blankets and European pioneers in North America cut for lacing.
- bias** a line that crosses woven material on the diagonal; dancers in the Roaring Twenties wore stretchy, bias-cut garments.
- blackwork** counted-thread black silk embroidery patterned in geometric designs on linen, a monochromatic style common to Renaissance Italian lace.
- bon ton** sophisticates in fashionable society, such as readers of fashion magazines.
- broderie perse** (Persian embroidery) the sewing of patterns cut from chintz onto a plain fabric background, a common garnish on North American baby clothes.
- burnout** a fabric that contrasts dark shapes with a semitransparent background, achieved by dissolving fibers with chemicals; the process detailed velvet dresses during the 1920s.
- candlewicking** tufting, the embroidery of a stitch over a bar or twig with soft cotton thread, an artisanal embellishment emulated in the 1900s by automated needlework.
- capote** a fringed wrap coat with a hood introduced by seventeenth-century French *coureurs de bois* (woodsmen) to Great Lakes Indians.
- chatelaine** a medieval key ring worn by European matrons that came to symbolize household responsibilities.
- chevron** a V-shaped symbol on insignias and in heraldry, such as that of the Minoans of Crete from 2000 B.C.E.
- cloisonné** vitreous enamel applied to metal to create beads and jewelry in the ninth century B.C.E. to honor the corpse of the Mesopotamian warrior-king Ashurnasirpal II.
- collective costume** the ensemble of multiple characters in coordinated groupings, such as the film costuming strategy that Erté applied in *My Fair Lady* (1964).
- color blocking** the juxtaposition of contrasting solid hues on parts of ensembles, such as the dark sleeves and patch pockets on light-toned dresses in U.S. fashions of 1942.
- couching** decorative stitching that covers and encloses yarn or rope, a feature of *bokhara* embroidery from medieval Sogdiana (Iran). *See also* laidwork.
- crewel** embroidery with worsted wool yarn, a feature of Anglo-Saxon needlework.
- deconstruction** reduced tailoring to produce a smoother, more relaxed silhouette, a styling method of Italian designer Giorgio Armani.
- diamante** spangled or sequined, a surface detail of art nouveau couture.
- draper** a seller of fine fabrics, the original skill of nineteenth-century couturier Charles Frederick Worth.
- drill** a stout cotton or linen fabric featuring a diagonal weave and used for British military uniforms in the 1840s as well as summer suits, pockets, chef's aprons, and interfacing.
- Empire dress** a columnar dress or gown consisting of a short bodice and a skirt joined to the top under the breasts, the hallmark of Napoleonic era couture.
- extrusion** a method of turning synthetic liquids into fiber by forcing it through spinnerets that shape thread to exact circumference for acetate, acrylic, modacrylic, nylon, polyester, rayon, and spandex.

24 Glossary

- faggoting** the removal of horizontal threads and bundling of vertical threads to produce a geometric pattern, a feature of Victorian bodices and sleepwear. *See also* sprang.
- faience** tin-glazed ceramics used in Egyptian beadwork from 600 B.C.E.
- fibula** a forerunner of the safety pin that fastened the chitons, tunics, and mantles in classical Greece and Rome.
- fillet** ribbon or cord tie used as a hairband, an element of unisex Egyptian hairstyles.
- foulard** a pocket square or handkerchief that Victorian-era Anglo-Irish writer and stylist Oscar Wilde recommended for the frock coat pocket.
- frog** a fastener shaped from braided loop and toggle, common to Napoleonic fashion and Victorian orientalism.
- gimp** cotton, silk, or wool thread stiffened with cording or metallic wire in late sixteenth-century Italian embroidery.
- gusset** a triangular fabric insert that adds space to a garment, as with the codpiece of Tudor English menswear.
- hairwork** a form of mourning jewelry made of hair of the deceased, such as the bracelets shaped from plaited human hair described in the late 1800s in *Godey's Lady's Book*.
- hand** the feel of fabric to the fingers and palm, a basic descriptor of woven and napped silk and glazed cotton.
- haute couture** one-of-a-kind designs made to order, a system introduced in 1852 by Paris couturier Charles Frederick Worth.
- Hays code** a motion picture dress and conduct code that governed films from 1930 to 1968. Compiled by William Harrison Hays, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, the standards barred cursing, topless costumes, adult nudity, and sexually suggestive or perverse dialogue and actions.
- ikat** a resist dyeing technique involving the bunching of silk threads on velvet.
- intaglio** concave carving in gemstones for rings and jewelry, a style developed in the Indus Valley in the 1300s B.C.E.
- intarsia** in knitting, the inlay of a new shade of yarn to create a pattern, such as argyle. An Arab craft after 1000, intarsia spread by sea to knitters in Italy and Iberia.
- kente cloth** a traditional form of hand looming that imitated basketry, begun by Akan, Ga, Ashanti, and Ewe in Ghana in the 1000s.
- laidwork** yarn held in place by tiny stitches at right angles, a traditional garnish on wedding blouses and vests in Pakistan. *See also* couching.
- lamellar armor** a boiled leather body covering sewn from small hide scales for flexibility and ventilation, a military advancement introduced in Assyria, India, Byzantium, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Persia, and Tibet around 800 B.C.E.
- locknit** a cohesive warp-knitted fabric that resists splits and snags, a common choice for socks and underwear.
- macaroni** a fop or dandy in England or colonial North America around 1750.
- millefiori** an Italian glassworking technique, dating to the eighth century C.E., that employs mosaic beads to produce the look of multicolored flowers.
- needlepoint** embroidery of counted threads on coarse canvas, a type of decorative stitchery applied to bags, belts, and slippers. *See also* *petit-point*.
- ombré** on fabric, gradual changes of tinted filament from light to dark that produces a deeper shade at the bottom of a textile, such as the silk chiffon evening gowns designed by Geoffrey Beene.
- opus anglicanum** (English work) expensive embroidery decorating linen with silk thread, an Anglo-Saxon method of garnishing church and monastic vestments.
- pannier** a basket-shaped hip covering that enhances the horizontal shape of the female lower torso, a skirt style of early eighteenth-century England and France.
- parure** from the 1600s, a set of matching jewelry—bandeau, belt clasp, bracelet, brooch, collar, comb, diadem, earrings, necklace, pins, rings, tiara—defining dynastic status and power, notably, the jewelry collection of Czarina Alexandra during the last Romanov rule of Russia.
- pavé** a clustering of small and large gemstones within a geometric framework, a retro style reclaimed by twenty-first-century designer Vera Wang.
- petit-point** embroidery or stitched worked at right angles over the intersection of a warp and weft thread, a method of outlining badges and coats of arms in Tudor England. *See also* needlepoint.