

Replica-making and informed compromise: the case of a seventeenth century man's coat

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What key factors influenced the decision making process when making a replica for presentation in a museum?

Which stage of the garments 'life' was selected for replication and why?

What were the challenges and solutions found in selecting materials and techniques for the reconstruction?



Fig. 1 Original coat, after conservation

The coat has a long history: Production, Use, Alteration, Disposal, Discovery.

The earliest components could date from c. 1650.

A panel has been added to the surviving sleeve; the cuff is a later addition; some linings have been replaced.

Insect damage is responsible for large areas of loss.



Fig. 2 Pattern and toile

The original coat is too fragmentary and fragile to be displayed in any way other than unbuttoned and flat.

The aim of replication was to make a copy of the coat in the configuration most likely when last worn, rather than when first made.

The cotton toile provided the first opportunity to see the cut of the coat in three dimensions.

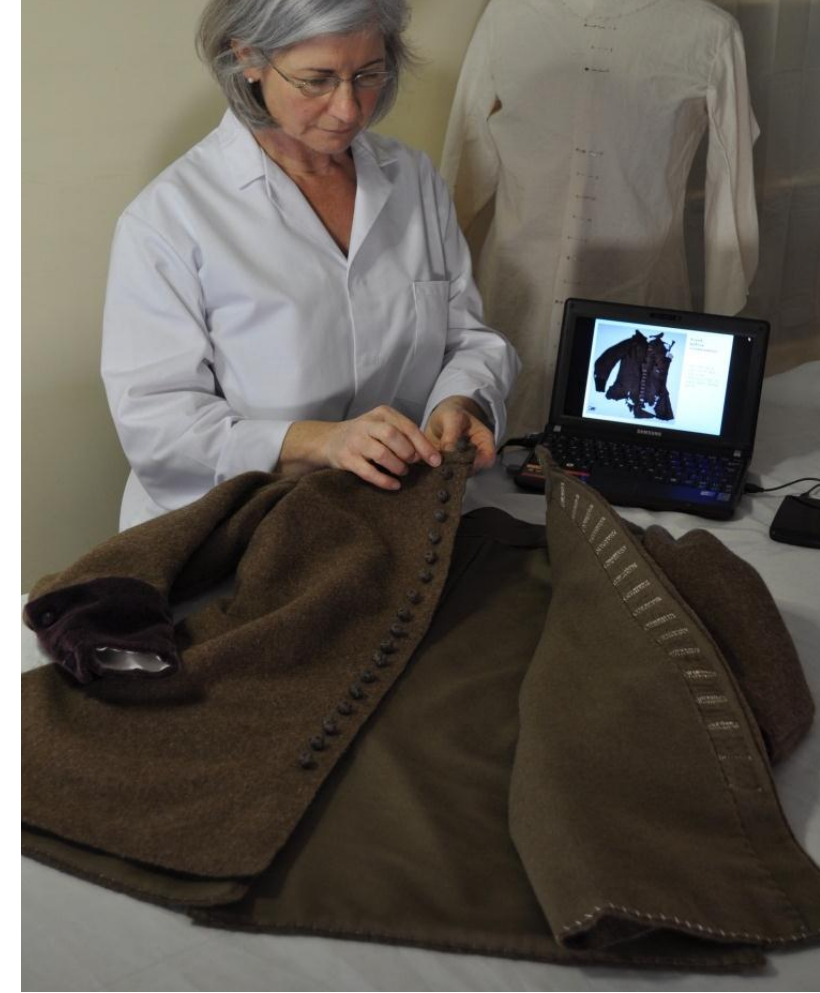


Fig. 3 Construction in progress

The replication comprised back and front panels, fully lined with two different cloths and a complete collar.

It also included a full set of buttons and button holes; both sleeves with gusset panels and fully lined; two plush cuffs with four buttons and button holes.

Repair patching, areas of wear and insect damage were not replicated



Fig. 4 Replica coat

The replica provides a means of gaining a better understanding of the cut and construction of the original coat.

The replica can be viewed from all angles on the mannequin, buttoned or unbuttoned.

The replica can be displayed alongside the original coat.



Fig. 5 Original button



Fig. 6 Annotated image



Fig. 7 Replica - wood core



Fig. 8 Replica - wrapping



Fig. 9 Replica - wrapping

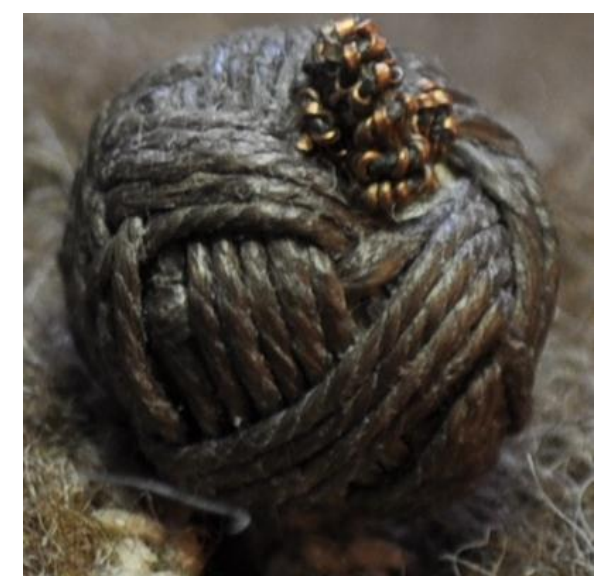


Fig. 10 Replica button

The replica coat was made of machine-made, non-customised cloths and yarns but was hand-stitched throughout with flax threads.

To match the original more closely, the new linings were dyed; the brown Shetland wool cloth was felted; the coat was interlined to replicate its handle and drape.



Fig. 11 Original, detail of front collar



Fig. 12 Replica, detail of front collar



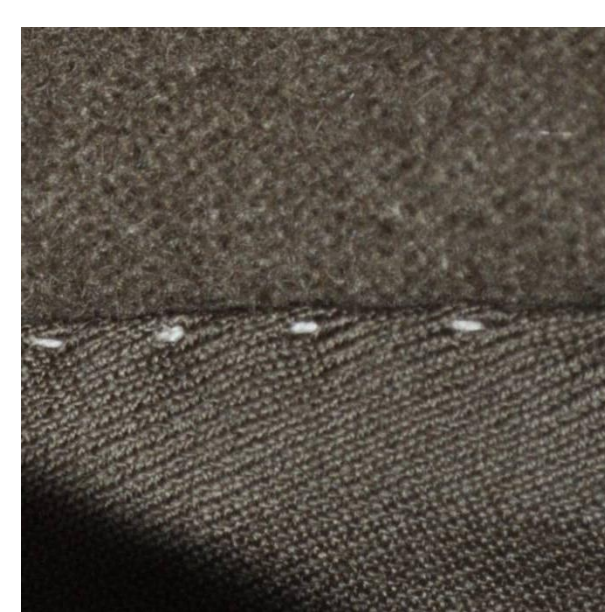
Figs 13 & 14 Original & replica, detail of button hole facing



Figs 15 & 16 Original & replica, detail of vent bar



Figs 17 & 18 Original & replica, detail of coat linings



Figs 19 & 20 Original & replica, detail of coat vent



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