

Women's Dress in Florence

1525-1535

Problem of evidence

- No extant examples!!
- Also very few recreated examples online.
- Most evidence therefore comes from portraits including those by Andrea del Sarto, Domenico Puglio, Bacchiacca, Ridolfo Ghirlandaio. Bronzino useful for later examples of style

Evidence on either side of period

- Minabetti Trouseax in *Dressing Renaissance Florence* give some good ideas of fabrics used and different types of gowns. Date from 1506 and 1511
- The records of Eleanor of Toledo wardrobes go from 1544 and 1562 in *Moda a Firenze*
- Eleanor of Toledo's burial gown in *Patterns of Fashion*

Major features of style

- Round necked chemise sitting on the collarbone
- High-waisted bodice with a square neckline
- Puffy sleeve top
- Tighter lower sleeve

Chemise

- Chemises were made from linen – later examples in *Patterns of Fashion* 4
- The majority in the surviving images had a circular neckline gathered to a band at the level of the collarbone
 - There are some examples of square neckline – some up towards the neck and some at the level of the bodice
- The most common decoration was whitework but blackwork started to appear towards the end of this period
- Towards the end of the period collars became more common and these could be blackworked
- Split down the front of the chemise
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Bodice

- There was probably an undergown, which acted as a support layer but no evidence!!
- This was interlined with a firm, strong fabric (like a canvas) which helped to support but not compress the bust.
 - Eleanor of Toledo's wardrobe record
 - mention *doppia* made from felt and stiffened cloth

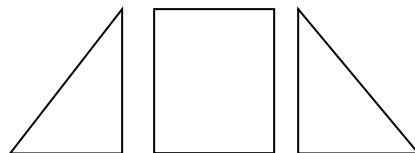
- The shape of the bodice is that it finishes under the bust but the level of the neckline can vary in height.
- Bodices had a wide square neckline
- Bodices could be decorated with bands of contrasting fabric – often black.
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- The bodice closed at the centre or centre back with spiral lacing
- -Little evidence here as no back views of portraits however this is how the Eleanor of Toledo gown is closed and seems the most obvious option. I tend to close the dress at the centre back as I find it easier with set in sleeves.

Sleeves

- Always in two parts with a puffy upper and tight lower
- The upper is always in the same fabric as the body of the dress and is usually cartridge pleated (or gathered) to the bodice and lower sleeve
- The lower sleeve follows the line of the arm to narrow at the wrist
- Half the examples the lower sleeve is the same fabric as the rest of the dress and untrimmed
- In another eight cases the lower sleeve varies in colour and/or fabric from the rest of the dress
- The lower sleeve could be trimmed with braid or fur or could be slashed

Skirts

- Skirts could either be box or cartridge pleated
- Cartridge pleating is most popular in the later versions of the style
 - Skirts may have been gored creating a A-shape which complimented the shape of the sleeves.



- The front section of Eleanor of Toledo's skirt from her burial gown very much resembles this shape

Fabric

- Most likely wool or silk
- Minerbetti Trousseau of 1511 make mention of
 - “A day dress of watered blue silk damask”
 - “A dress of green woollen cloth”
- Eleanor of Toledo's wardrobe of 1544 mentions ‘raso’ – silk satin and ‘taffetta’. Another fabric is ‘rascia’ – wool twill.

Colours

From 14 colour examples in portfolio - 5 are green, 5 are variants on pink or orange-pink, 2 yellow, 2 red.

Only ONE example of brocade used

Headgear and Hairstyles

- Balzos! Made of fur or brocade and oval in shape.
- Hair is always centre-parted
- Use of *mazzocchio* – crown of false hair
- Hair taping or covering

Accessories

Belts - Fabric scarf-like belts worn

Aprons - White aprons seen in some paintings

Jewellery - Long gold chain, Pearl Strand, Rings very popular and worn around middle of finger as well as base