

Hair, Headdresses, Headwear of Early and Late Renaissance

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ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss the differing styles of women and men's hair, headdress, headwear in the Early Renaissance and Late Renaissance. There is a more prominent difference of women's hair, headdresses/ headwear in Northern and Southern Europe during this time. In the first part, we will be observing these differences in Early Renaissance, and in the second section of this paper, we will looking at the drastic transition from Early to Late Renaissance and see how it has influenced styles of hair and headwear of women and men.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Chapter	
1. Introduction	1
Purpose	1
II. Early Renaissance (1425-1550)	2
Women of Italy	2
Hair	2
Headdresses/Headwear	2
Women of Northern Europe	3
Hair	3
Headdresses/Headwear	3
Men	4
Hair	4
Hats/Headwear	4
III. Late Renaissance	6
Women of Italy	6
Hair	6
Headdresses/Headwear	7
Women of Northern Europe	7
Hair	7
Headdresses/Headwear	8
Men	9
Hair	9
Hats/Headwear	10
IV. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS	12
REFERENCES	13

Chapter I

Introduction

There was a distinct difference between the Renaissance experience in Northern Europe and in Southern Europe, mainly Italy. While the rebirth of art and culture gave way to new ideas in Italy, they found round shapes much more appealing than the angular shapes of dress in northern Europe. The styles of hair, hats, and headwear of men did not differ in the North and South as much as women's styles. I chose to just compare men's styles from Early Renaissance and its transition into the High and Late Renaissance. It is interesting to see how different the styles are even though these countries were within the same continent, their style varied from their connections and influence from other cultures through trade, marriage, and war.

Purpose

The purpose of the paper is to show how the Renaissance influenced styles in Northern and Southern countries in Europe, and what traditional styles stayed the same. Also to observe how some trends slowly faded out of style while others were abruptly tossed.

Chapter II

Early Renaissance (1425-1550)

Women of Italy

Hair

In the Early Renaissance, Italian Women's hair was often "uncovered and either flowing onto the shoulders or was braided in interesting ways about the head (Russell, 1983, p.163). Italian women elaborately arranged their hair with a "token" head cover in a form of a small jeweled net set at the back of head or sheer, small veil (Tortura, 2010, p.192)." Young girls simply curled their hair and women had curled tresses framing their face on both sides with the rest of the hair pulled back into a bun, braid, or something more elaborate (Tortura, 2010, P.192).

Headdresses/Headwear

Women in Italy did not wear headdresses as much as the women in Northern Europe, but sometimes wore rounded escoffions (a padded horn shape rising from the head) or even some exotic looking turban-type hats (*See Figure 1*) (Russell, 1983, p.163).

In the Early Italian Renaissance, women wore towering, pointed hennins with trailing veils on their heads. These hennins have complex variations, some that have three horns instead of one, some with starched and wired veils in a butterfly formation, and some with high, rich, padded escoffions, especially the padded sugar-loaf style, (Russell, 1983, p.168), pinned over the hair (Russell, 1983, p.164).



Figure 1: Women's Escoffion (1525)

In the second quarter of the fifteenth century, women were mostly seen in a flowing version of the northern houppelande worn with a decorated, donut-shaped turban as headgear

Hair, Headdresses, Headwear of Early and Late Renaissance

that remained in style until 1460 in northern Italy (Russell,1983, p.168). The style of Turban-like headwear was influenced by Turkish headdress and it reflected Italy's trade with the Turks of the Ottoman Empire (*See Figure 2*) (Tortora, 2010, p.195). There is a solid, dignified, undecorated balance and mass to this grouping that typifies the Italian move away from the exaggeration, decoration, and flamboyance of the northern Gothic international style. It was this quality, rather than the actual garments, that made the Italian outlook on people and fashion so different from that found in the northern courts of Europe at this same time (Russell,1983, p.169).



Figure 2: Women's Turban Hat

Women of Northern Europe

Hair

In Northern Europe, a very high brow line was desired and the hairline was often plucked to create the high brow effect (Russell,1983, p.163). Charles VII's mistress, Agnes Sorel loved her temples plucked and shaven and she also supported the idea of wearing fake hair and wigs, which eventually launched one of France's biggest industries, wigmaking, where it's raw materials are given by peasants, nuns, and hair auctions (Batterberry, 1987, p. 107).

Headdresses/Headwear

The style of hair coverings changed from the high and unnatural headdresses of the northern Gothic style to natural hair, veils, bands and nets (Russell,1983, p.168). There was a wide array of headdresses from the simple veil to the simple braiding and coiling with nets and fabric (Russell,1983, p.169-170).

The styles of headgear fluctuated from the caps from the earlier Renaissance to some with turned up brims like a sailor hat, and wide-brimmed hats turned on the side and decorated with plumes, the latter frequently worn over a coif (Russell, 1983, p. 182).

Older women, servants, and ladies-in-waiting frequently still wore kerchiefs, but younger women had their hair unadorned except for jewels set into the complex knots and braids of their hair (Russell, 1983, p. 185). It was still a custom for married and older women to cover their hair, usually with a coif with extensions that would cover their ears. There many varieties of the coif: round, heart-shape, and gabled, which was a pointed arch, mostly popular in England. Women would pin a band over the coif and the ends of the band would hang over the side of the face or arranged into decorative folds, or the bands would have hoods attached to the back. Over time, the coif would be set back to reveal more hair (Tortura, 2010, p. 222).

Men

Hair

Men were generally clean-shaven (Tortora & Eubank, 2010, p. 189) until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when men had their beards rounded and more prominent and berets were rounded and full. Young men in the early Renaissance wore their hair quite long and older men cut their hair shorter (Russell, 1983, p. 185). Men's hair was full of body and of moderate length, which was usually to the base of the neck (Russell, 1983, p. 164).

Hats/Headwear

Men's heads were usually covered with soft caps, large fur hats, or a simple version of northern roundlet and their hair was full to the base of the neck (Russell, 1983, p. 163).

Men's hats came in wide varieties from turbans to moderately broad-brimmed hats with brims turned on one side for variations of the coif (Russell, 1983, p. 164). Wear full bag caps with or

without a turned-up brim (Russell, 1983, p. 167). Near the close of the fifteenth century, hats were usually of the soft-cap variety with an occasional turban or roundlet.

Chapter III Late Renaissance

The biggest change in Italian fashion from the 1470s and the 1490s was altering dress to accentuate the natural beauty of the body with less details that create illusion and idealism.

(Russell,1983, p.186) Dress became more casual that fully showcased the sensuous areas of the body. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the arrival of the High Renaissance in art influenced change in clothing styles. (Russell,1983, p.185)

Women of Italy

Hair

Italian women had their hair parted in the middle and had coils of hair frame their face to accentuate the soft curvatures of the face and a soft veil covers the head and flows down the back and over the body (Russell,1983, p.192). Women's hair was worn unadorned but kept their hair in coils and braids to create interest in their hairdressing (See Figure 3) (Russell,1983, p.189).

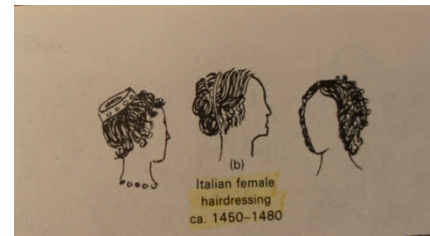


Figure 3: Variety of women's hairstyles (1450-1480)

Blonds were admired by Italians, and to achieve the desired effect of blond hair, it was subjected to doses of henna, animal innards, long sunbaths, and sever bleaching liquids (Batterberry, 1987, p.102).

Thin silks, chiffons, crepes, and guazes were used for veils and scarves whereas silk and metallic nets were used for hair (Russell,1983, p.193). The Italians never adopted the enveloping headdresses popularly worn in Northern countries, they actually wore their hair exposed which were elaborately arranged in coils and braids. However, some women did wear a large round

turban-like headdress, which was ruffled, netted and knotted, and was worn set back on the head to reveal the front hair parted in the center (Nunn, 1984, p. 43).

Headdresses/Headwear

Headdresses and hairstyles varied from the North and South, and Italian women wore their hair in braids or coiled coiffures or turbans based on the circle, whereas women from the north preferred to wear the French hood, which was a crescent shaped tiara over a linen cap with a velvet veil/fall at the back (Russell, 1983, p. 192). These headdresses highlighted the difference of Italy's rounded shapes compared to the North's more angular shapes seen in the French hood, square necklines, and bell-shaped sleeves. Women's entire ensemble was full, rounded, soft, sensuous, feminine, and appealing which was the style representative of the High Renaissance, where their focus was on rounded forms in all aspects of art. (Russell, 1983, p. 192)

Women of Northern Europe

Hair

In the early decades of the High Renaissance, women wore their hair parted in the center and the hair that framed their face was waved or curled out from the temples. Two features of women's hair that remained constant was the front hair is dressed off the forehead and temples and the back hair is braided into a thick plait and then wound around to create a bun or chignon (Kelly, 1938, p. 55).

A popular hairstyle in France was the raquette or ratepenade, which was when the hair above the brows was strained back over a wire frame rising in a tall hoop on either side of the forehead and sinking to a rounded point in the centre.

Near the end of the sixteenth century, more hair was shown and hair was brushed back from the temple, puffed up around the face and then pulled back into a coil. The French combed

the hair up, over small pads on both sides of the face to form a heart shape. The English women also dyed their hair red because Queen Elizabeth's hair was red. With the introduction of the exaggerated wheel farthingale of the silhouette, women began to dress their hair higher and decorating it with jewels (Tortura, 2010, p. 222). Pads and switches of fake hair were arranged over wire frames around the face add more volume of hair to the style and wigs were gaining more popularity (Brooke, 1972, p.55).

Headdresses/ Headgear

The English during this time favored hennins, which, continued to be in fashion until the late fifteenth century. In France, women wore hennins but were more steeple-shaped and in England, they wore fez-like and small hennins, which were worn far back on the head, with a wire frame supporting a gauze veil, similar to a butterfly headdress. The folds of fabric over the front of the butterfly headdress influenced the shape of the English hood or gable. (Nunn, 1984, p.44)

As mentioned before, the French hood, described as “a stiffened-out caul-like covering for the back of the head and shot forward to cover the ears from which depends a broad, folded tail, capable of being turned up and brought forward over the crown (Kelly, 1938, p. 53)” was a popular headdress in the North. This is a distinctive feature of the French hood, as well as the upper and lower borders, which were often jeweled. An English alternative of the French hood was flattened across the head, opened wide at the temples, then turned to cover the ears, popularly worn by Mary Tudor (*See Figure 4*).



Figure 4: English variety of French hood c. 1545 Princess Mary Tudor (Kelly, 1938, p.41)

Later in the 1580s, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, wore a similar style that influenced eighteenth century indoor caps, which were called Mary or Marie Stuart caps (Nunn, 1984, p. 44). French hood was popular well into the 1680s, but eventually lost appeal in the seventeenth century.

In 1527, informal coif-like caps were sometimes worn under a hat and was made out of fur and also known as lettice (fur similar to ermine) caps or bonnets or miniver caps (Nunn, 1984, p. 44).

From the 1560s, both Northern and Southern countries, women had their hair uncovered, even outdoors. The parting of the hair in the center lost attention, and was instead brushed straight back into a high coiffure with a small caul or cap holding the back hair. They also used padding and false hair to gain this high coiffure effect and from the 1570s, the hair was adorned with jewels or pearls (Nunn, 1984, p. 44). With the new favor for uncovered tresses, women began to wear hats and caps of masculine styles for hunting or traveling. Lower-middle, working-class or country women wore simple linen caps well into the nineteenth century (Nunn, 1984, p. 44).

Men

Hair

Younger men allowed their hair to grow long with full loose curls that usually fell on their shoulders and was usually worn with loose caps of small berets or large brimmed hats with plumes and was pinned to a tight cap or coif (Russell, 1983, p. 186). By 1530, beards were trendy and fashionable, and hair was cut short (Tortora, 2010, p. 222). Men's pointed beards mirrored the V-shaped bodices of women's dress in 1580 (Batterberry, 1987, p. 115).

Wigs became popular after Louis VIII became prematurely bald at age 23 and eventually became a fashion with different heights and styles to show extravagance. Eventually everyone

including women would wear white powdered wigs in the eighteenth century to show that they are old and wise (Cooper, 1971, p.123).

Hats/Headwear

Hats and bonnets were worn at indoor and formal occasions, during certain dances, and at meals. When the hat was removed, there was still an undercap that covered the head, even in the presence of the Monarch. The custom of tipping the hat in greeting started in the last decade of the sixteenth century. (Kelly, 1938, p. 40) Bonnets with low or tall bag-like crowns (*See Fig 5*)



Figure 5: Men's Bonnet
c.1580
(Kelly, 1938, p. 41)

were worn perched or tilted over one eye and competed in popular value with different varieties of hat, high (most popular) or low, round, or flat topped, made of beaver, felt, silk, velvet, fur, leather, and a few of other less popular materials (Kelly, 1938, p. 41).

The two earlier styles of headwear for men was the buttoned cap and flat cap and after 1570, the flat cap was restricted to citizens, apprentices, and artisans on London. (Kelly, 1938, p. 40)

In the fifteenth century, men wore small round cap-like hat with or without a turn-up that appeared to be favored to be worn by Henry VIII in the portrait bust by Pietro Torrigiano with the crown pinched in four lobes and the side flaps or half brim standing out slightly. This cap was the ancestor of the scholar's cap worn late into the sixteenth century, and the Priest's biretta. (Nunn, 1984, p. 35) Henry VIII's wardrobe contained many black colored items, except for his bonnets and caps that feature other popular colors from this era: crimson, green, and russet (Richardson, 2004, p. 171).

In 1571, the Act of Parliament introduced the Statute Cap, which was a knitted wool cap that was to worn on Sundays, and holy-days by everyone except for nobility, to boost the wool trade. Eventually, the Act was repealed in 1597. (Kelly, 1938, p. 40)

Another style of hat is the wide-brimmed hats of the Flemish Dandies, which has the brim turned up off the face and a huge feather shooting up from the crown. It was worn over a small cap and these hats were held in place by a long scarf, which also hung from the shoulder and across the neck. (Nunn, 1984, p. 35, 38)

Chapter IV

Summaries and Conclusions

The Renaissance gave way to a new way of thinking and new forms of art that influenced not only daily life in Europe in fifteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century, but also influenced the way people presented themselves through clothes and hairstyles. There was a prevalent change from the Early Renaissance to the Late Renaissance not only between Northern and Southern Europe, but also the neighboring countries within those. Royalty often were trendsetters that influenced others to follow in suit and became a social norm in dressing similar to each other that showed their social class. In Early Renaissance, the style were more conservative and were more angular in shape, and as time progressed, style began to reveal more shape of the body's natural lines, hair, and modesty.

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