

Kuhlmaulshue

(German Cow Mouth Shoe)

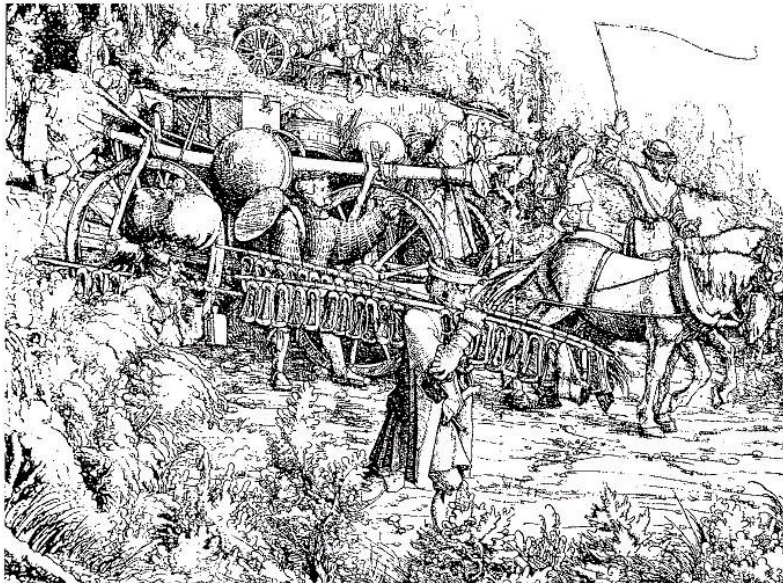
M. Mairghead de Chesholme

For many people, the first type of footwear that springs to mind when thinking about the German Renaissance is the cow mouth shoe or *kuhlmaulshue*. Period art often depicts the Renaissance German wearing a low profile, slip on shoe. Noted for their broad square toe, these shoes cross gender and class barriers and can be seen on art from a wide region. Soldiers and women represent a large population of the illustrated owners. Extant shoes exist in many collections; two predominant excavations include Alpirsbach and Kempten, Germany. By comparing these finds with existing art work, it is possible to reconstruct a replica of this style.



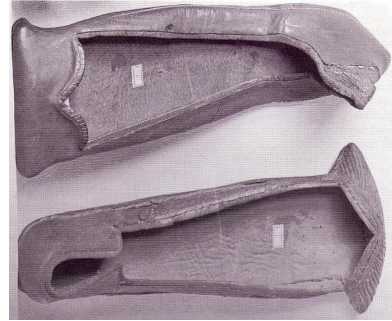
The top of the *kuhlmaulshue* came up the sides of the foot and barely wrapped over the toes. If the leather is cut with the proper curve and fit, the shoe will grip the foot and stay on without any extra fastening. Care must be taken to not step out of the shoe or bend the toes and drop the shoe. To lessen this possibility, the owner of the shoe could choose to sew one or more straps across the top. These straps could then have a toggle or a buckle to hold them tight at the side of the shoe. Another choice depicted in artwork is a lace across the arch of

the foot. Shoe merchants provided these shoes ready made to the consumer. Since they were frequently not custom made, the owner would alter them as necessary with these different strapping mechanisms for a more comfortable wear.



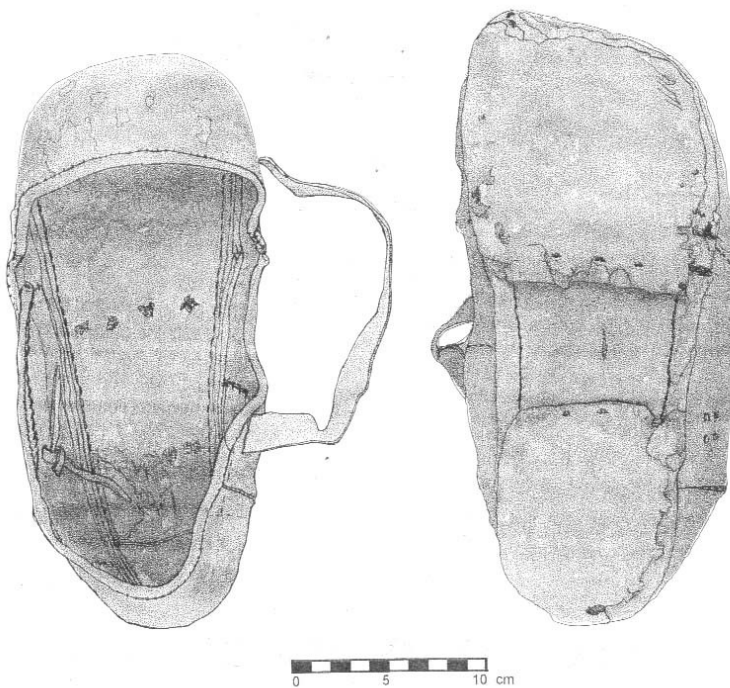


The second area of differentiation within this shoe type is at the toe. Three main styles present themselves in this area. The first is the plain toe. This style has a smooth toe that is squared off and is wider at the toe end of the



shoe than anywhere else. The sides of the shoe draw straight back to the ankle. The second type of shoe has a lobed toe effect. The toe is divided into two sections visually by a crease or piping at the center and can be further lobed by a drawn in section right behind the toe. This section immediately comes back out and draws back to the ankle the same as the plain shoe. Extant shoes of this type have been found made with tooled leather. The last type is the most ornate. It has slashing or cutwork at the toes. This is often depicted with a contrasting fabric pulled through for a richer effect.

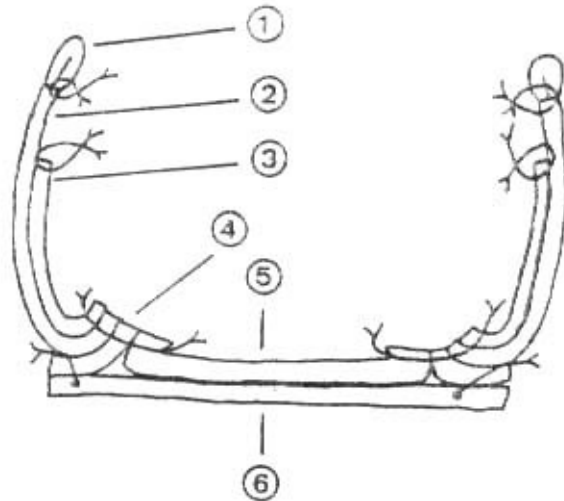
At the turn of the 16th Century, shoes were still being made in the turn-shoe style. Shoes were sewn inside out on a last. The leather was often sewn wet to stretch the leather resulting in a closer fit. After the sewing was complete, the shoe was turned inside out for wear. By the middle of the 1500s shoe were also being constructed using a welting method. This type of construction created a harder shoe with an externally attached sole. The welted shoe resembled the modern dress shoes worn today. At the beginning of this century, the welting technique had started to develop. Shoes found in Kempten have a narrow rand sewn in with the sides of the shoe while turned. After righting the shoe the rand of these shoes is then sewn to a second sole leaving the shoe with two layers of leather on the bottom.



Shoes were made from simple materials during the Renaissance. Leather from cow hides constitute the majority of shoe finds. At Kempten, the original shoe was made from cow while patches consisted of goat and sheep leather as well. Different thicknesses of leather were used in combination to form the shoe. Stitches in existing shoes reveal that flax thread was commonly used.

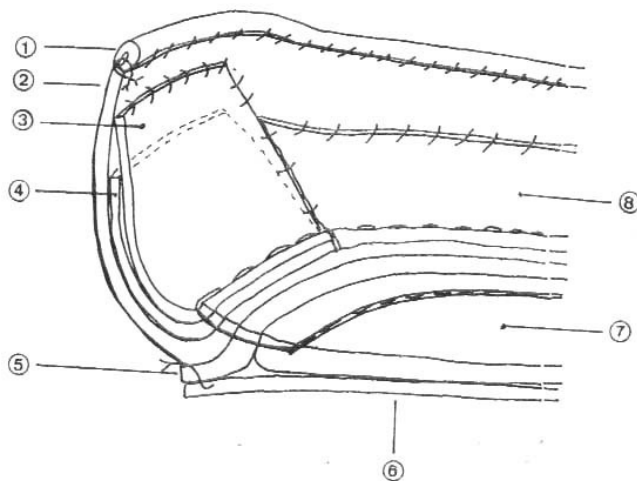
To pattern the shoe begin with a tracing of the wearer's foot. Measure across the widest part of the foot and notate. Measure from the paper, over the big toe and back to the point the shoes should stop on the top of the foot. Make a line across the pattern to mark the arch placement. Measure from the widest part of the foot to the arch on both sides and notate the length. Measure from side to side around the heel and notate. Using the attached pattern, insert these measurements and redraw.

Existing shoes show use of inner linings (3) and heel stiffeners. This gave the shoe slightly more durability and better shape. The inner lining should go between half way and two thirds of the way up the inside of the shoe. The heel stiffener should cover the heel. Once all the pattern pieces are cut out, place them on the leather to mark for cutting.



The outside leather of the shoe needs to be fairly thick and supple. The inner lining (4) and heel stiffeners (3) on extant examples are lap stitched to the inside of the shoe. This

is basically a whip stitch that anchors down the edge of the inner lining to the outside of the shoe without stitching all the way through the outer leather. The inner linings and heel stiffeners therefore can be made of much thinner pieces of leather. If using thick leather for the entire shoe, the inner pieces may aggravate the points on the foot that they are in contact with. The sole pattern is placed on thicker compressed leather and cut out.



The front part of the foot and the

heel are traced slightly larger and separated in the arch area and cut out of the same leather.

Once the pieces are cut out and holes are pre-punched, the heel stiffener (3), inner lining (4), outer (2), rand (5), and sole (7) are placed together inside out and sewn with a harness stitch. The inner lining and heel stiffener are then whip stitched in place. A thin strip folded in half is then stitched around the edge of the shoe opening. After turning the

shoe right side out, the two separate sole pads are saddle stitched to the rand. On the inside of the sole, under the foot, three to five stitches are run through both soles and tied off on the inside of the shoe. When sewing is complete, the rand and the second soles can be trimmed and smoothed out.

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Figure 3
Shoemaker's Shop
(Jost Amman)





Figure 4 Shoemaker's Shop (Jost Amman from Strauss)