

1580's Spanish
Doublet and Venetians

By
Ld Jack Banyard
(Bryan James)
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www.chesholme.com/~jack

With the abundance of extant garments and period commentary, doublets and venetians would seem to be an easy reproduction. Unfortunately, the more you read of what has been translated and is available, the more you realize there are questions that are unanswered. Out of the 130 patterns that are in Alcega's book, only two of the doublets are for men (Fig 1 & 2). Plus, he doesn't include any venetians or breeches in his book. In Freyle, we do see two patterns referred to as sayo (suits) that are similar to alcega's doublet (fig 3 & 4). In the second one (fig 4) he does include a pattern for breeches that is similar to the breeches pattern with his cassock. In the Burguen manuscript (fig 5 & 6) that is available online, he does not include any doublets, but like Freyle, the cassock pattern does include breeches that are like those in the sayo pattern in Freyle.

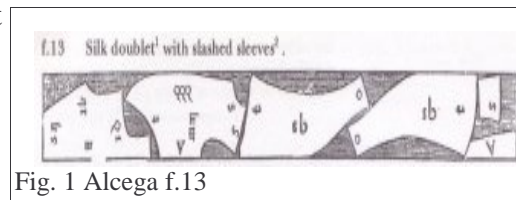


Fig. 1 Alcega f.13

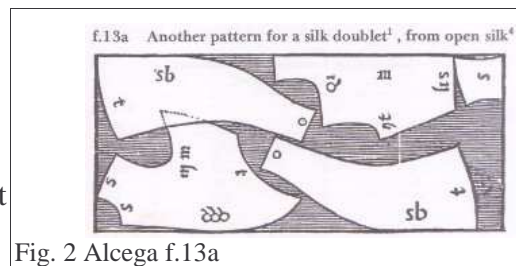


Fig. 2 Alcega f.13a

The available documentation is surprisingly vague. In the two publications from the 1580's and one later publication, patterns are given on how to best lay the pieces out on the cloth for a cutter. You will also noticed that whether it's a doublet, cassock or jerkin pattern, the measurements given are the same, showing that they were all laid out for the same size man. Alcega does include conversion tables to show how much fabric you need if the width of fabric is different then that listed on his pattern.

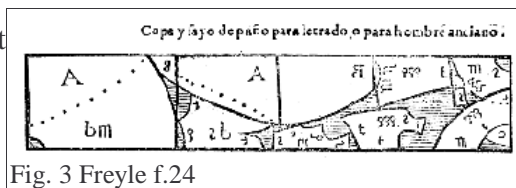


Fig. 3 Freyle f.24

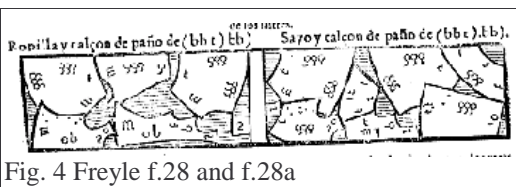


Fig. 4 Freyle f.28 and f.28a

But neither Freyle nor Burguen manuscripts have been translated to English, we do get clues for the lack of information from Alcega. In Alcega's prologue he states, "When I began this book, I was keen to write at enormous length about the profession, but when I thought of the great cost, and the amount of type that would be necessary, I took a short cut and compiled this little work entitle Practice of Tailoring" he goes on later to mention, "Though I went through such frustrations and suits in the Royal Council over the printing of this book." This raises the question of how much of the omitted information was left out at the will of Alcega or was kept out by law suites by the tailors' guild in Spain. What is also interesting that in the letter of approval by Hernan Gutierrez, tailor to the Princess of Portugal and Juan Lopez de Burgette, tailor to the Duke of alba, state, "Your Majesty should order the license to be granted to the said Juan de Alcega, so that he may print and sell the book at a fair price. Not only will no damage ensue, nor any prejudice to

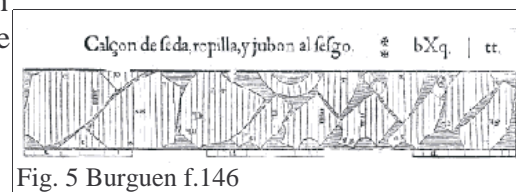


Fig. 5 Burguen f.146

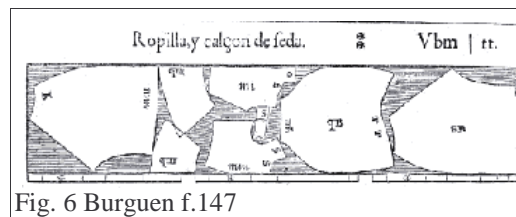


Fig. 6 Burguen f.147

any person, but rather great advantage and benefit, both enabling journeymen to learn the said craft better, more quickly and more easily". This statement is important for two reasons; it shows that Alcega had to limit what was in the book so not to interfere with others trying to make their livelihood. More importantly, it shows us who the book was intended for, a journeyman would already know how to do the patterning and would also know basic doublet pattern. The journeymen would also know construction method of the time. This may explain why Alcega would omit the basic options on patterns like epaulets and skirting. Freyle also just provides the patterns, but also would omit epaulets and also does not include the waistband on the breeches.

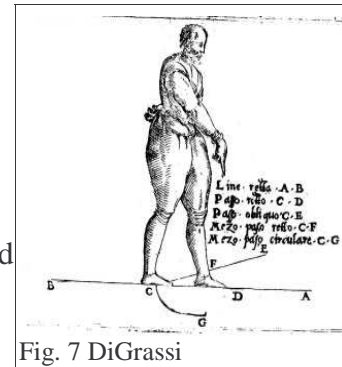


Fig. 7 DiGrassi

Design:

The design for the doublet comes from Alcega's f.13a Another Pattern for a silk doublet, from open silk 3x2/3 ells (fig 2). The Venetians are based on the breeches in Freyle f.28a Sayo y calcon de pano de (bbt).bb) (fig 4).



Fig. 8 Digrassi

After looking through a lot of doublets and venetians (fig 7 through 11) I decided to go with a simple style, I would make the sleeves a part of the doublet and not separate sleeves that are laced in. I also decided not to include epaulets or skirting. A doublet like this can be seen in a fresco by Paolo Veronese c1560 (fig 11), also seen in an arming doublet of Lord Astor Hever, castle, Kent c1560 (fig 12). The fresco also shows the style of Venetians I wanted to recreate. Another good depiction of the Venetian style I wanted can be found in DiGrassi fighting manual from 1570's. The manual has a wide variety that is full and gathered at the waistband and fitted at the knee without any gathering.



Fig. 9 Digrassi

Patterning:

Though Alcega and Freyle provided patterns, they didn't include how they made their patterns, this technique unfortunately has been lost and we may never know. We do have several surviving garments which show the final garment. Due to deterioration of some of the fabric, we can even see some detail on construction. Since we can not take the garments apart, good pattern pieces can not be made.

Alcega states though, "many kinds of clothes both for men and for women, set out in this book according to good order and plan (I have been guided in this by Geometry and Scale measurement)". This shows us that Alcega meant for the patterns to be proportionally modified since they are done in scale. This allows us to make a box pattern and overlay the Alcega pattern to fit a box pattern.



Fig. 10 Marozzo

I used the Sator system to make the block pattern for both the doublet and the venetians. I then laid out the Alcega pattern over it.

Details:

For the doublet and venetians almost all of the hand sewing that is done can be found in examples from the book "Textiles and Clothing". Textiles and Clothing shows us stitches from extant finds from the 1300's and 1400's. Fortunately all these stitches are still used today. The main stitches in the construction of the doublet and venetians were done by machine; all the finishing stitches were done by hand. The machine stitch that I used though has the same outward appearance as if done by hand. The seams are sewn with a running stitch, pressed open, and then held down with two parallel running stitches to keep the salvages from fraying. The doublet is constructed in three layers. You have an outer-shell, which might range in materials from silks to wools. I chose a modern brocade that has the appearance of the fabric from period. The materials of the inner-layer, might have from wools to linens, with multiple layers. It was common for doublets to be both quilted and not quilted. I chose a heavy canvas to simulate multiple layer of other fabric. The lining was often of linen or cotton. The cotton I used on doublet was referred to as pin-tuck cotton. I choose it for the rich appearance that it would give the finished piece, without the time involved. Once these layers were secured together along the perimeter, bias tape was used to finish the edging. (fig 13 & 14) This was commonly done on doublets, sometimes in silk or the same material as the doublet's outer-shell. This kind of treatment does again date back to the 1400's but here we have examples of the tape being used. Being on the bias, it is interesting to note that it wasn't necessarily on the true bias. All of the bias tape I used, I made from gold silk. Both the button holes and eyelets were done by hand, using silk thread. There are examples of buttons ranging from cloth button to metal buttons to wood buttons. I decided to use a nice metal button that is commonly available.



Fig. 11 Patterns of Fashion



Fig. 12 Patterns of Fashion

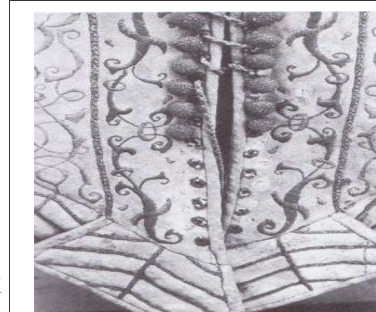


Fig. 13 Patterns of Fashion



Fig. 14 Patterns of Fashion

The venetians consist of two main parts, the waistband and the breeches. The waistband was laid out so that the bottom of the waistband matched the curve of the doublet. Next, from the center, I drew a perpendicular line a couple of inches in length and squared out. This can be seen in the drawings based on the surviving garments. But once completed, the front didn't seem right, so I cut the band to be close to the same width through out (see the Venetian build attachment). The inter-layer

was cut to match and the edges were biased taped. The breeches outer-shell was cut (there is no inner-layer to the breeches) and both legs assembled. The waist part was more than two times the needed amount of fabric. The edge was rolled, then cartridge pleated to the waistband. Simple cotton was used for the foundation lining of the venetians. The color of the lining closely matches that of the lining of the doublet. The leg cuffs were sewn together, and biased taped. The waistband was then whip stitched to the inner-layer making sure to catch the bias tape.

So what about the couching, embroidery, the elpuats, the pockets, leg cannons, or etc that we see in the portraits? All of those are options and can be seen on a variety of doublets and venetians, but there are also plenty of examples without. I hopefully have made something that someone in Alcega's time could have made based off his book or others that came out after his, or any that we still don't know about. Also one must ask if Alcega himself would have done that work, or sent it off to someone else. Unfortunately all we know about Alcega comes from his writings, so we may never know how he actually did things.

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