



Romanesque Costumes by Naya Tadavarthi
29 September 2020

Sources

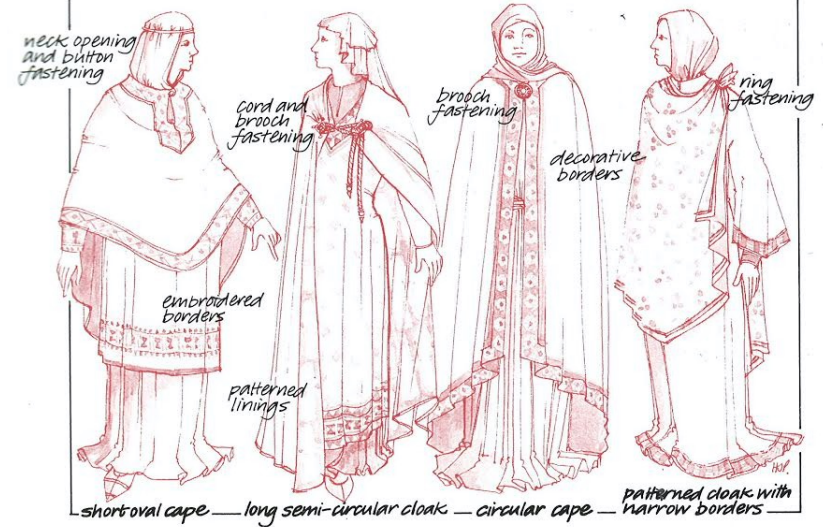
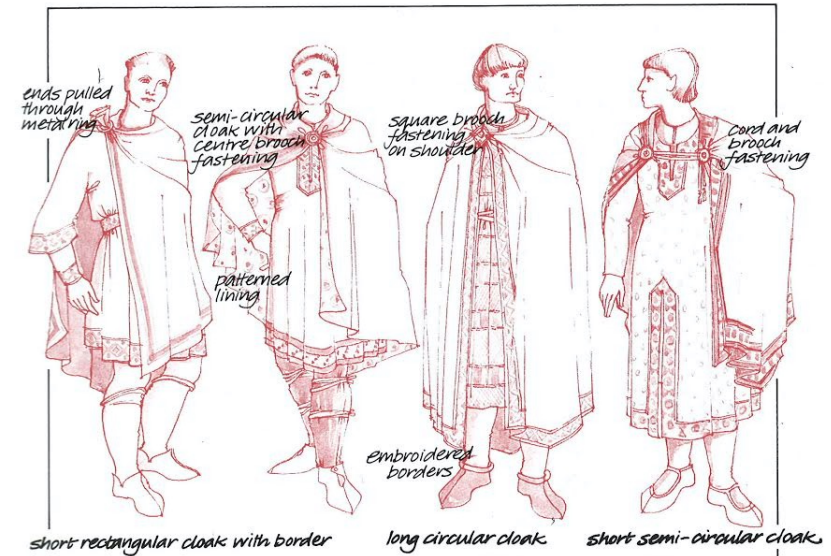
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Fig. 21. - Late Eleventh- and Early Twelfth-Century Designs



Primary



Secondary

Women's Dress - 1183



Eleanor



c. 1170

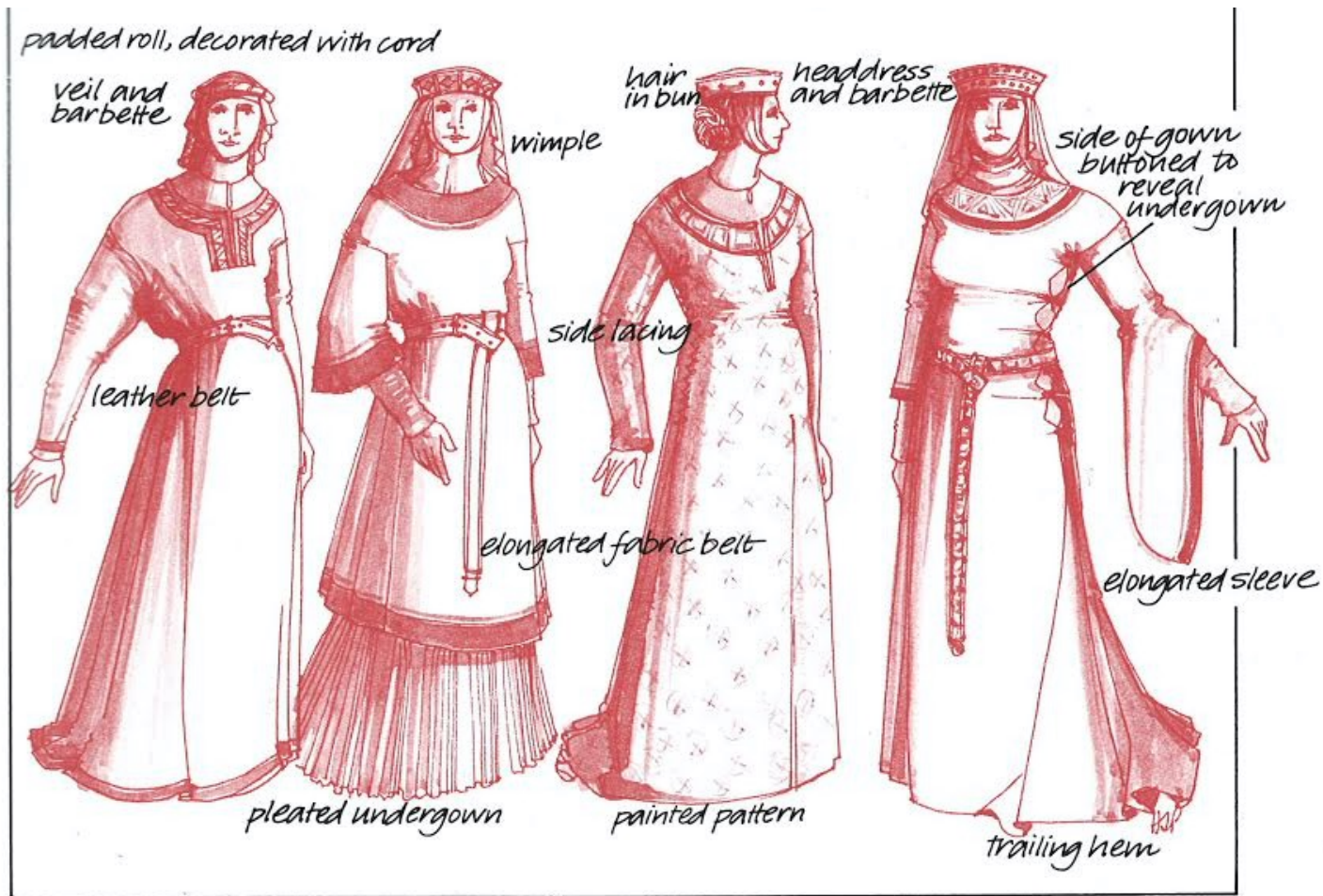
French lady c. 1185

1180

Eleanor



Asais



Alais

Alais - side ways hanging crown



plan to
colors comey
potential fabrics
skirt



Wynne Edwards

Men's Dress - 1183



Richard



Richard



Geoffrey



Geoffrey



blue - most subtle
+ least common
color of tunic
~ neither side
of round of SWT



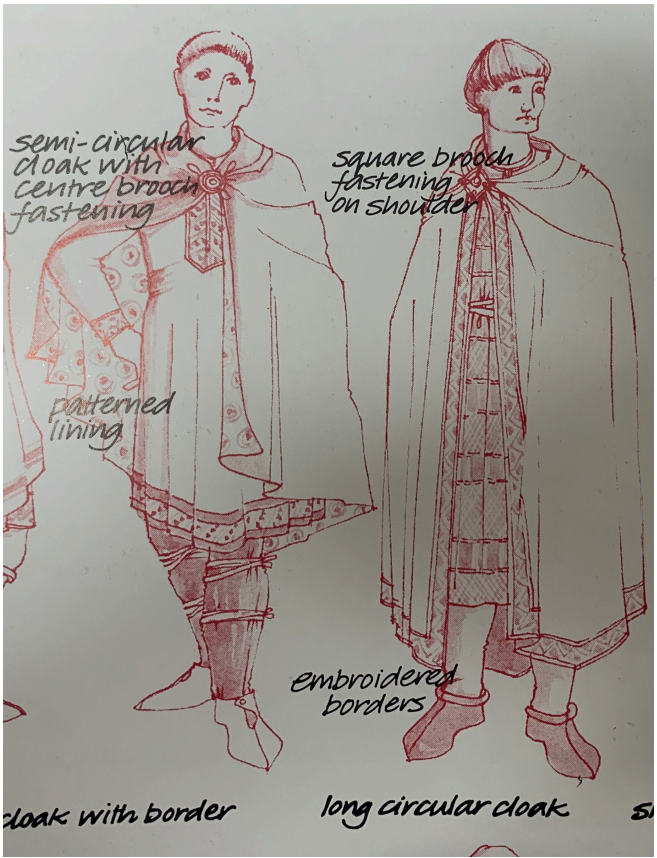
John



John



Henry



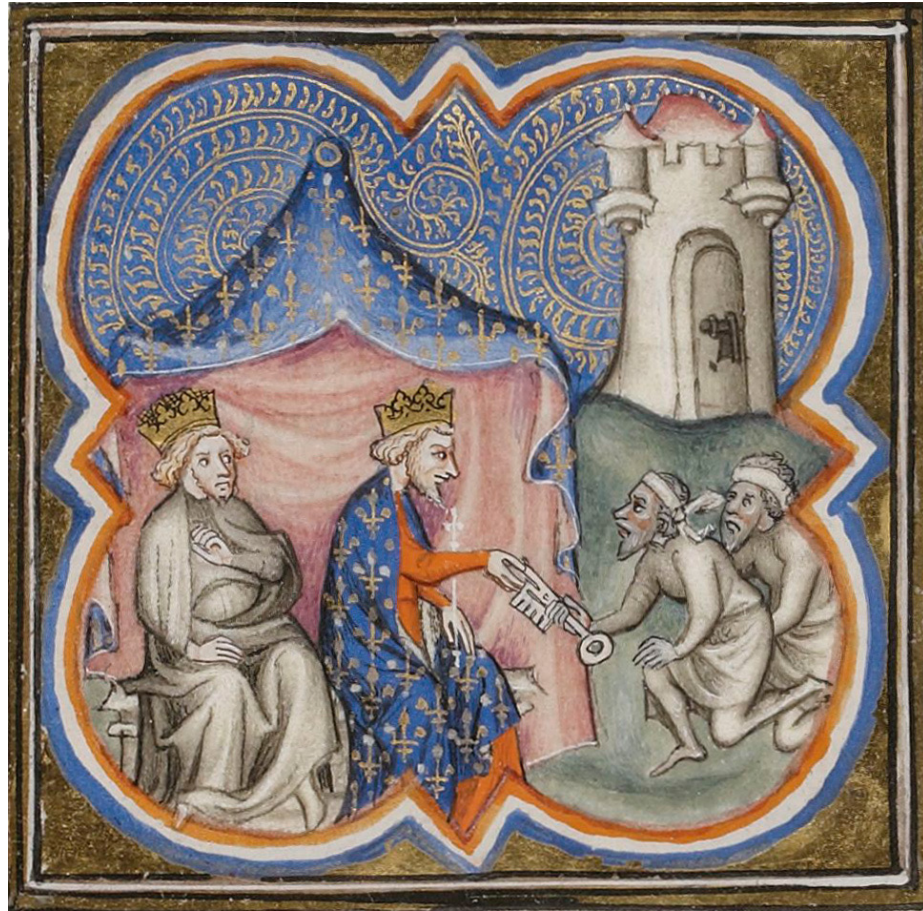
Henry



Philip



Cord and brooch fastening



short semi-circular cloak



Philip

Philip

philip - wide top sleeves
→ like prince

Philip



→ fleur
de-lis
border





Romanesque Renderings: Costumes for *The Lion in Winter*

Naya Tadavarthi

Prof. Donnelly

Historic Fashion

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Set at Henry II's 1183 Christmas Court in Chinon, France, *The Lion in Winter* captures the king's sons complex struggle for the crown. Yet however focused the princes might be on their headwear, their costumes nonetheless represent the Romanesque period from top to toe, while also conveying each characters' unique traits and social status.

As they emphasize the age difference between Eleanor and Alais, both women's garments also demonstrate popular twelfth-century upper-class trends. Over her hidden chemise and her tight-sleeved red kirtle, Eleanor of Aquitaine wears a bliaut with a sharp V-neck, as seen in John Peacock's renderings of Romanesque dress (*Western Costume* 37). The outergarment includes the long sleeves and train that the queen herself popularized in England, and the immense amount of silk fabric needed for such an item represents both conspicuous consumption and a need for warmth in the drafty December castle. Eleanor also wears a barbette, another trend which she set, and a long, chain-like belt with hanging pendants, which became more common by the end of the century (Brooke 8-9). On her head, she dons a crown similar to the headpiece in both her official seal and later artists' depictions (see Figure 1, Figure 2). The green of Eleanor's bliaut reflects a not only a popular dye color but also the accusations of envy from Alais, the king's mistress and Richard's betrothed (Bradfield 25, Goldman 95). The French princess, whom Eleanor herself raised, is dressed as a younger version of the Aquitanian queen. Her wide-sleeved, grey silk bliaut features embroidered burgundy spots, two colors associated with Eleanor (Nanney 55). The tight lacing is particularly noticeable up the sides of the garment, which causes deep folds or "rucks" from the breasts to the hips (Brooke 7). Underneath, Alais wears a kirtle with pleats, a fashion especially popular with French noblewomen and pictured by Peacock (Nanney 52, *English Costume* 11). She styles her hair in two braids, a trend reserved for upper class women, with decorative ribbons and a loose veil and crown over the top (Tortora and

Eubank 132). Her long locks stand in contrast to Eleanor's, hidden behind an opaque veil like most older women's (Tortora and Eubank 132). Hence, the women demonstrate the amount of variation present in the standard Romanesque style of chemise, kirtle, bbliaut, and belt.

Unlike the women, the men do not yet wear the crowns they seek, but their clothes nonetheless convey their ranking at court. All three princes model a tunic style which became popular during Henry II's reign, with sleeves that are extremely wide at the armpit but narrow at the cuffs (Bradfield 23). Copious embroidery, which men wore more in the 1100s, adorns their bbliauts (Brooke 10). Since both short and long outergarments remained common throughout the century, the differences in princes' tunic length here corresponds to their ages (Bradfield 23). Thus, Richard has a long bbliaut in the scarlet wool popular with elites, whose deep neck slit, fastened with a fibula, and split skirt enable the solidier-prince to move easily (Bradfield 23). The eldest son, favored by Eleanor, also sports a fashionable pointed beard and shoulder-length hair, which evokes a mane and hence Richard's "Lionheart" nickname (Tortora and Eubank 131). Furthermore, the embroidered bands on the upper arms of his bbliaut reflect a style seen in the *Hortus Deliciarum*, commissioned in 1175 in Alsace, France (Landsberg 144). Green hose encircles the prince's legs underneath his tunic, and he wears painted, pointed shoes of the type depicted in Peacock's fashion plates (*Western Costume* 37, 51). As the often-ignored middle child, Geoffrey has a blue bbliaut with less gold embroidery and a simple leather belt and slippers. The *Hortus Deliciarum* also portrays his square collar style, underneath which his white linen chainse shows (Landsberg 224). Upon Geoffrey's head sits his coif, a cap worn by lawyers in the twelfth century, whose cleverness and penchant for manipulation the middle prince embodies (Ashdown 49). This type of hat also appears in contemporary images of the scheming son (see Figure 3). John, the youngest and his father's choice for the throne, has the shortest bbliaut with a

low rounded neck in yellow, a popular color at the time (Bradfield 25). His low-cut shoes capture a trend for wealthy men, and crossbands hold up his blue hose (Bradfield 23, 27). While all three sons vie for the same crown, their dress overall communicates both their different personalities and their similar desires.

As members of the English court, the characters in *The Lion in Winter* represent the height of Romanesque luxury and fashion. And through their dangerous power plays, they hope to reach the height of royal authority, as well.

Images



Figure 1. Anonymous, *Seal of Eleanor of Aquitaine*. History Collection, <https://historycollection.com/10-things-prove-eleanor->



Figure 2. Anonymous, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*. BBC History, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/eleanor_of_aquitaine.shtml

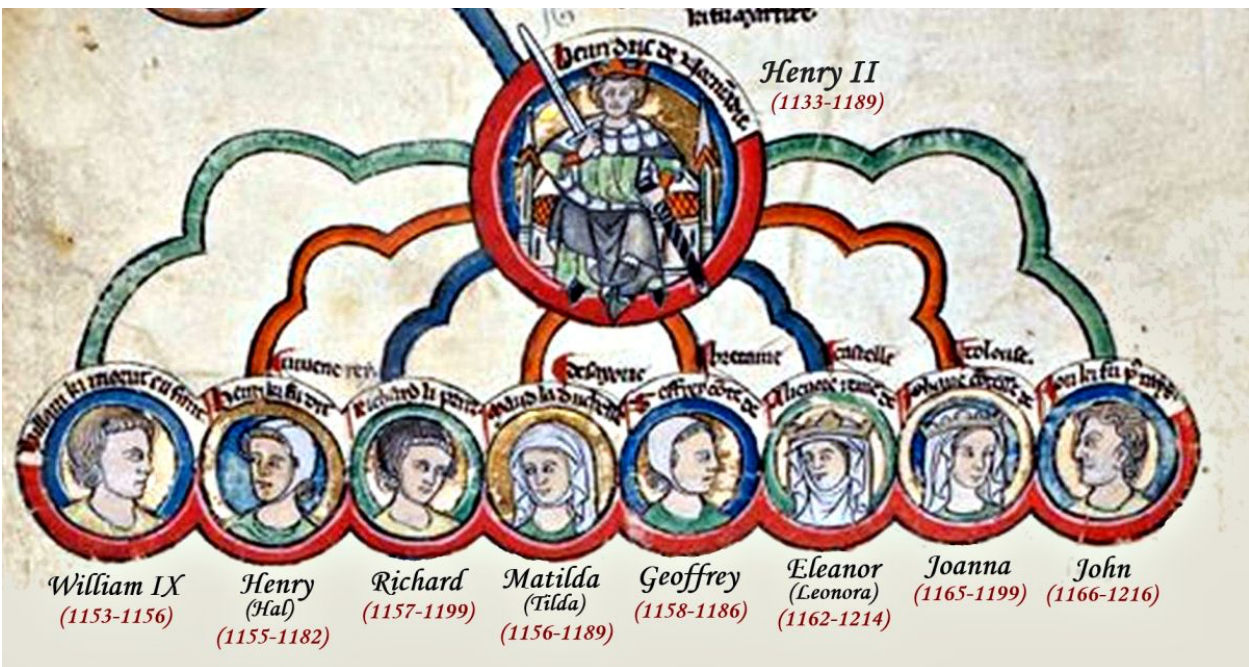


Figure 3. Anonymous, *The Children of Henry II*. Order of Medieval Women, <https://www.medievalwomen.org/genealogical-charts.html>

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