

## ***The Capotillo***

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### **Background**

The *capotillo*, or Spanish cassock, was an essential travel garment. Carmen Bernis points out that the *capotillo* allowed women to “travel on horseback, a feat was difficult in a mantle (long cloak).”<sup>1</sup> Queen Ana of Austria, on a visit to the monastery of las Huelgas in 1571, wore “a black *capotillo* and hat with colored feathers and white and yellow, bordered in gold, with collar and edgings of gems and many fine diamonds and pearls of inestimable value.”<sup>2</sup> Royal inventories of 1595 and 1611 note the presence of *capotillos*,<sup>3</sup> and the style is widely pictured in paintings and engraving like the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Bernis 46.

<sup>2</sup> Bernis 46-7.

<sup>3</sup> Bernis 47.



Pietro Bertelli. *Diversarum nationen habitus*

### **Construction**

Since the *capotillo* is basically a shortened version of a male capo (cloak) and is frequently mentioned in extant tailor's manuals, the pattern drafting stage was fairly simple. I chose a pattern from the Freyle manuscript for my garment:



Diego de Freyle. “Ropilla y calçon de pano de (bbt) bb.”

I also referenced Burguen’s pattern #146: *Calçon de seda, ropilla, y jubon al sesgo*.

The *capotillo* is made of lightly fulled purple wool lined with gold silk. The same gold silk is used for the border and the collar edging. The collar is interlined with hemp canvas to maintain the shape, but the rest of the garment is left un-interlined for comfort. The garment is fully handsewn with silk thread; each edge was finished with a whipstitch, the lining was stitched down over the outer shell, and each seam was whipped closed.

The sleeves, like those of the Bertelli engraving, are left unstitched at the front armscye to allow the sleeve to fall decoratively behind the garment. The sleeves are stil functional, although quite snug, and are fully lined with silk.

The decorative edging is loosely based on Bertelli’s engraving above. The gold silk bands were applied to the garment after it was constructed, and were edged with black commercial braid that closely resembles braid patterns found in many Spanish portraits.

The buttons are inspired by the extant images on Cathy Snell’s website (Kate’s Corner). Each button is constructed of black linen floss wrapped over a wooden core. Gold linen floss is then laid down between the black ribs and wrapped.

**Notes:**

Further plans for the *capotillo* include adding more rows of silk and braid, as well as added the distinctive diagonal bands on the sleeves. Finally, I plan to add tabs or wings to the sleeve cap to finish the look.

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