

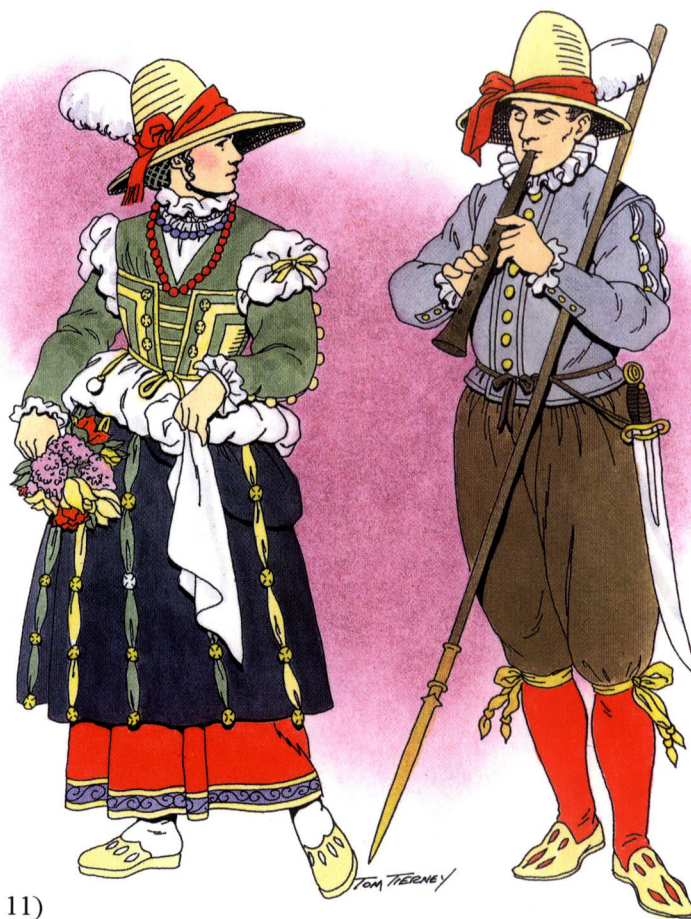
# Renaissance Fashions

Tom Tierney





French court couple, ca. 1550 (p. 37)



Italian peasants in wedding clothes, ca. 1450 (p. 11)

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# INTRODUCTION

The Renaissance period, which began around the year 1400 in Italy, continued through the 1500s. During that time, Europe made the transition from the plague-ridden medieval world into a more modern and affluent era. The ravages of the Black Death had reduced the populations of most parts of Europe drastically. The surviving gentry tended to have a worldly, luxury-seeking attitude.

Renaissance fashions at first retained many Gothic-era features. Women still wore wimples, hennins with elaborate veils, and houppelandes (an outer gown) over chemises. Men still wore houppelandes over short jackets and long, often multicolor hose, and sported long, pointed shoes and fancy turbans.

Italy's shipowners and merchants made the Renaissance possible, by developing new ocean-trade routes to east Asia. They brought to Europe gorgeous silks and brocades, new dyestuffs, and previously unseen jewelry, perfumes, and spices. Powerful merchant princes, such as the Medici and Borgia families, introduced Asian merchandise to the rest of Europe. As trade expanded, an affluent middle class developed. Italian fashions were comparatively simple and lightweight, emphasizing luxurious fabrics, elegant jewelry, and brilliant colors. Men wore a tight-fitting basic outfit: hose, a white or colored shirt made of linen, silk, or taffeta (taffeta was preferred, because it supposedly discouraged fleas), and a waist-long jacket called a doublet, or a hip-length one called a jerkin. The "codpiece" was designed as a practical covering for the frontal opening in men's tights. This triangu-

lar flap, tied in place, soon became an often blatantly sexual embellishment to a man's garb. It also was useful for secure storage of small, valuable possessions.

By 1450 the separate bodice, skirt, and sleeves were in vogue. The elaborate sleeves were made of contrasting rich materials, jeweled, and hugely puffed, or they were slashed, with puffs of the undergarment or chemise pulled through. The tight, boned bodice was the costume's foundation.

As trade carried Italian fashions north into the colder climates of France, Germany, and England, quilted linings (padded with wool or with straw) were added to garments for warmth. This padding made men's bodies look tanklike on spindly, tight-clad shanks, and gave women a bulky, covered-up silhouette. Generally, English costume was less graceful than the Italian, but less overblown than the German.

During the 1500s, the wealthy traveled throughout western Europe; one country's fashions were adapted in others. German costume was elaborately decorated with slashing, ribbons, and embroidery. By 1550 the English, French, and Spanish courts used German styles, toned down a bit. A Continental style was found in all countries. England and Spain by then were vying for domination of oceanic trade, supplanting Italy; they also dislodged Italy from fashion leadership. The "Spanish style" for women, with its confining boiled-leather corset and conical farthingale under elaborate petticoats, became fashionable throughout Europe.

Renaissance fashion terms are defined on page 46.

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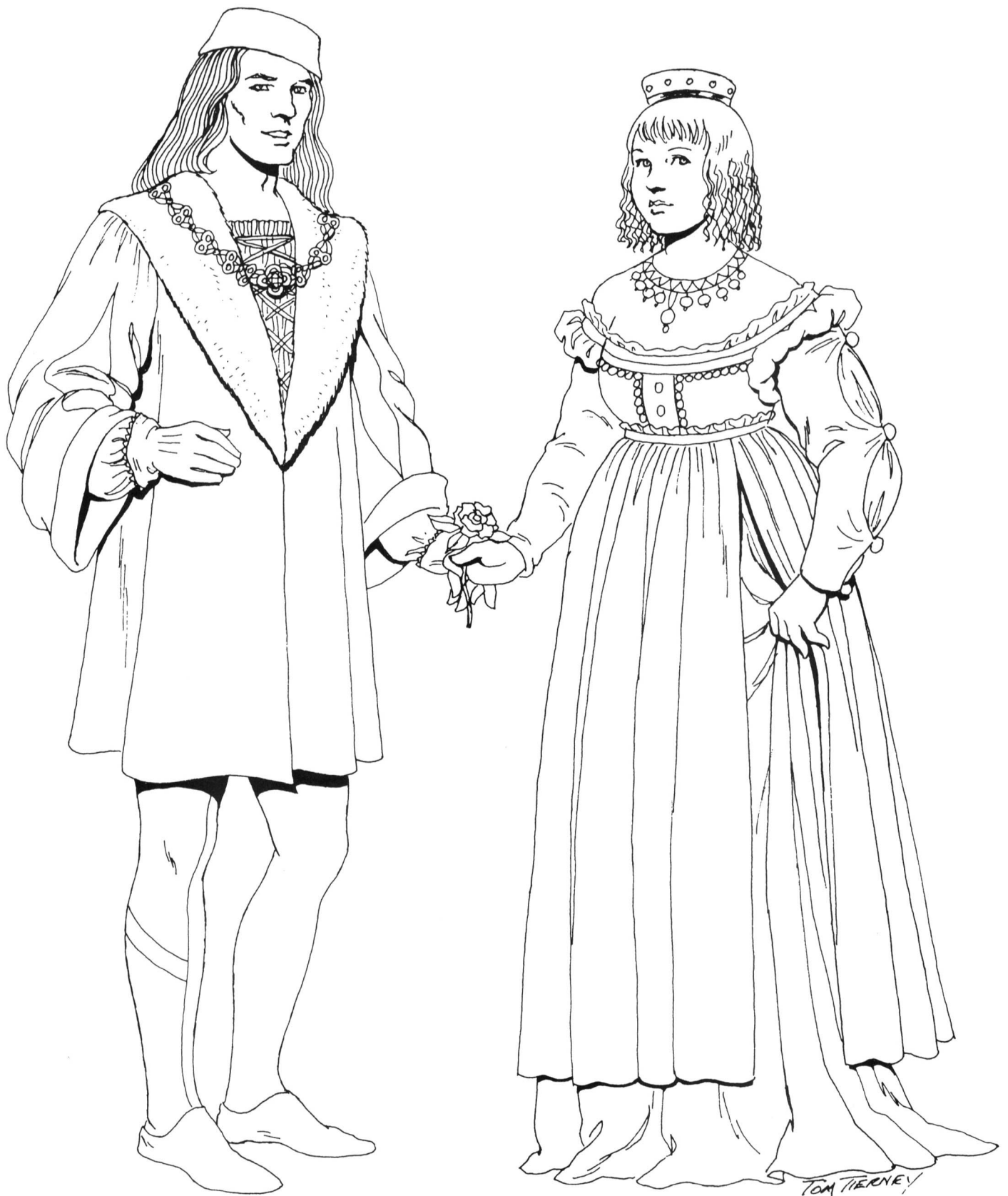




# Italy, ca. 1400

The woman wears an "Italian gown" with fitted bodice and attached sleeves in rich red-and-gold brocade. Her turban-like beret is of similar brocade. The man wears a short, dark-blue doublet under a short blue gown with attached

gold-trimmed full sleeves. He has a gold satin muff and wears parti-color red-and-white knit hose. Primary colors and other bright colors were popular at this time.



### Italy, ca. 1400

Venetian man and woman. His parti-color hose are red, yellow, and black. His short, red-satin gown has a black fur collar and full, slashed sleeves. His gold-color doublet is laced over a white shirt and he wears yellow kid gloves. It was fashionable for young men to wear their hair long. The young

woman wears a pale-blue silk, high-waisted short gown with a side slit to show her rose-color petticoat. Her tied-on sleeves are called "finestrella" because the chemise shows through. Unmarried girls could wear their necklines low.

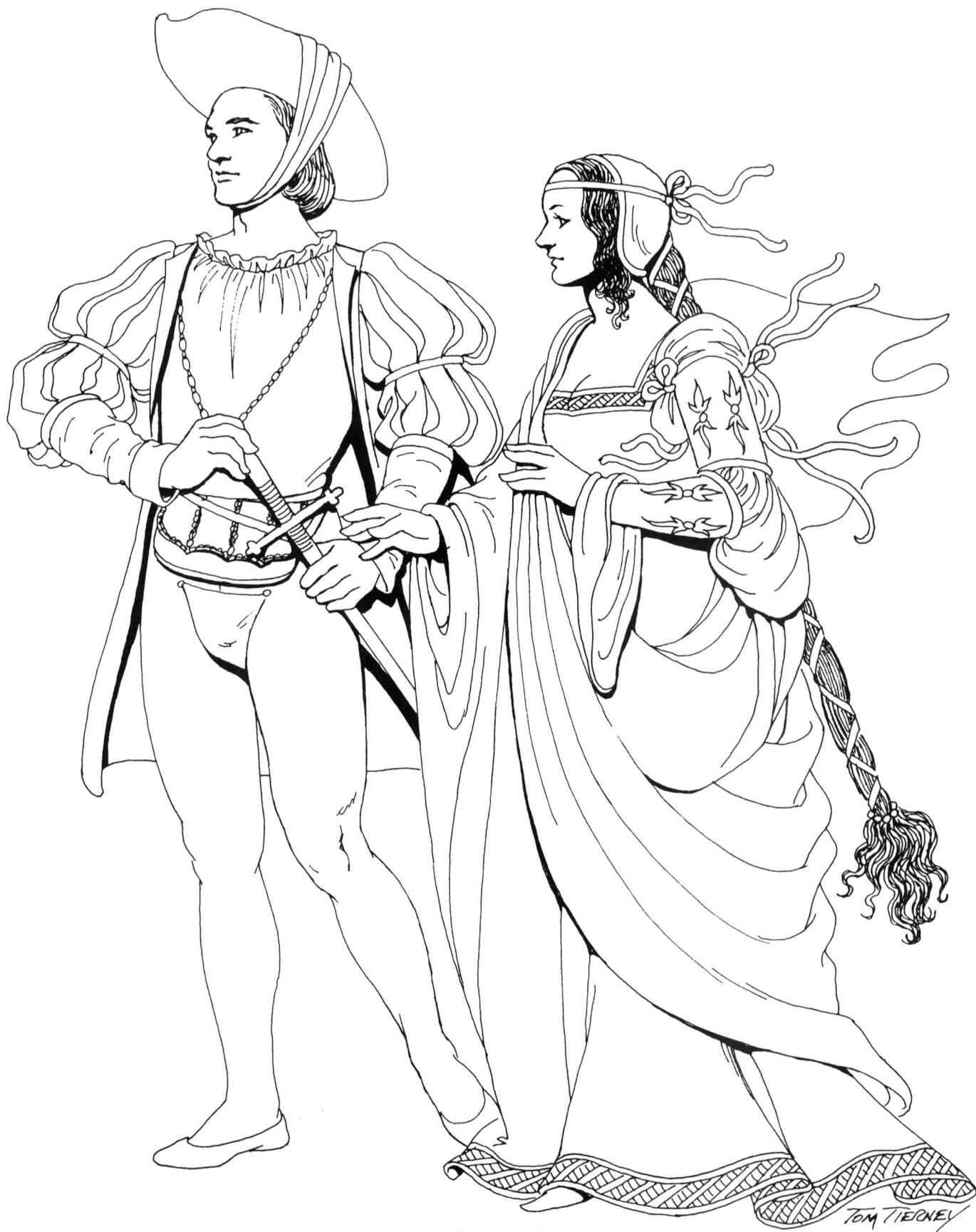




**Italy, ca. 1410**

Milanese couple. The young woman wears a high-waisted gown of lavender taffeta with attached finestrella sleeves, both elaborately embroidered in silver and gold. Her petticoat is of a rich wine-and-gold brocade. Her chemise and

cap are white. She carries a fan of white feathers. The youth wears a short tunic with rolled and padded gathering in the front. His apparel is pale blue with gold trim.



**Italy, ca. 1410**

This young Neapolitan man wears waist-high scarlet hose and a soft white shirt with a blue-gray gown that has blue-and-gold slashed sleeves. At his waist is a leather purse. His hat is of light gray felt. The young woman wears a gown of pale-rose moiré trimmed in gold embroidery, as are her

finestrella sleeves, which show her white chemise. Over one shoulder she wears a long shawl, folded and stitched to provide arm openings. She wears a white cloth cap; her long hair is bound with rose ribbons.





#### Germany and France, ca. 1420

The German gentleman on the left wears light-blue tights, a darker blue doublet with ermine trim, and a burgundy cloak with gold embroidery and ermine lining. The Frenchman on the right is wearing white hose with a fur-collared rose gown embroidered in gold and purple. He

wears a gold slashed doublet with blue embroidery and a white shirt with blue-and-gold embroidery at the neck. These garments illustrate that the Italian style was adapted for colder northern climates by the early 1400s.

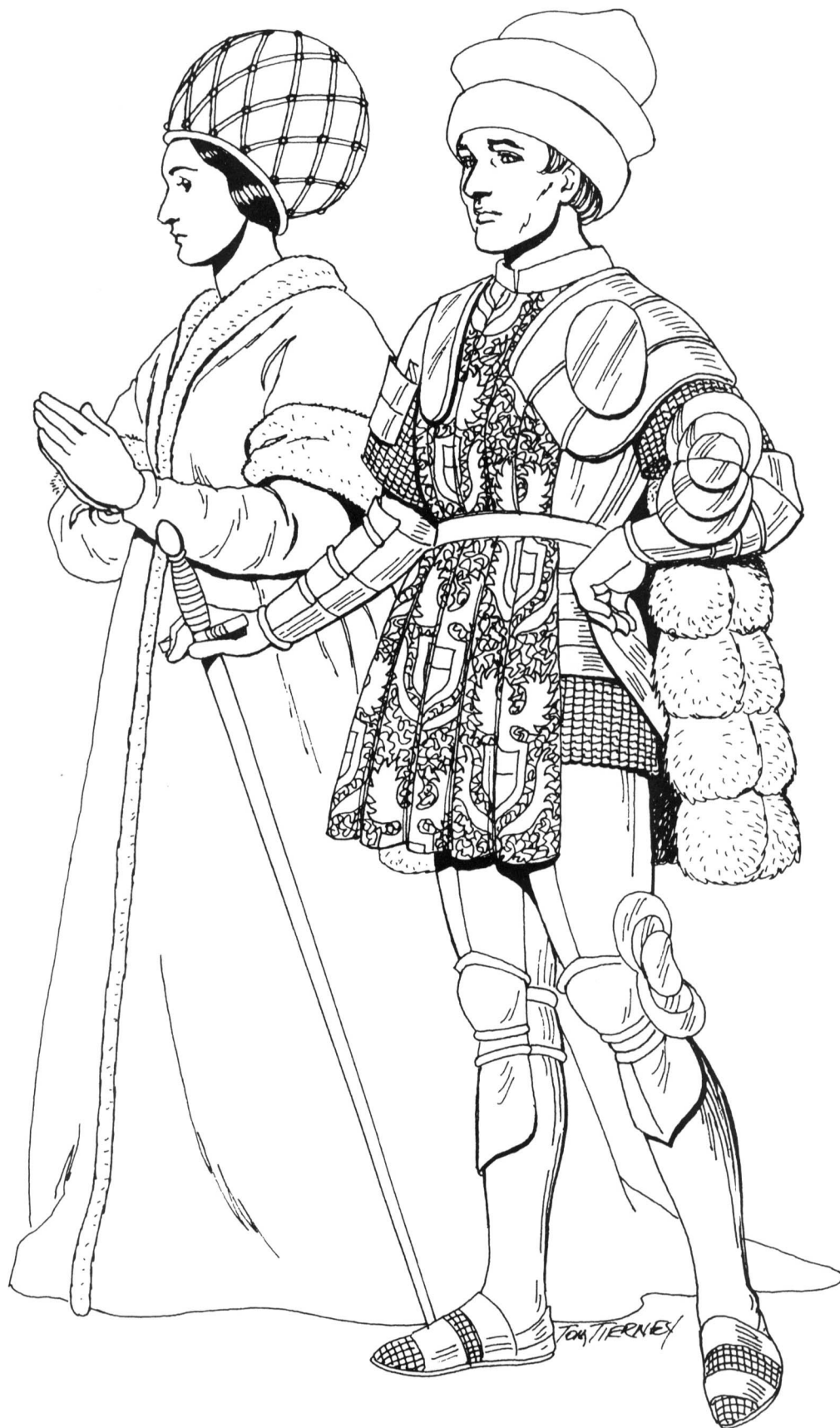


**Italy, ca. 1410**

Most Italian dignitaries chose to wear a gown of black or some other dark color. The man shown here wears his over blue tights with embroidered clocks. The bag hat is of the same blue. The woman is dressed for her wedding, in a

gown of peach-color taffeta. The attached sleeves and bodice are embroidered in a net pattern. She wears a white cloth cap and white veil.





#### Italy, ca. 1420

The Italian noblewoman wears a robe of green silk-velvet with gray-fur trim. The padded sleeves of her gown are of magenta silk-taffeta. Her hat is of magenta silk with gold

net. The Italian knight in armor has a tabard of red, blue, and gold wool in front and of gray fur in back. His hat is of red felt.



#### Italy, ca. 1430

For a short while, bag sleeves were the epitome of Italian fashion. This woman's plum-color velvet gown features such hanging sleeves and is trimmed with white fur. Her underskirt is of saffron silk. The hat is of the same plum as

the gown, with saffron slashes. The man is wearing a short doublet with balloon sleeves in the same plum color. It is trimmed in white fur. He wears pale-blue stockings and a blue hat adorned with white feathers.





#### Italy, ca. 1440

The houppelande style of outer garment still was worn for formal occasions. Here the gentleman wears a short houppelande of wine-and-gold brocade with cape-like sleeves. Its bottom edging is scallops of wine, black, and gold. His gold turban is called a chaperon and the fall

behind it is called a liripe. The woman's houppelande is of peacock-blue-and-gold brocade with trim of gold, deep blue, and green. The undergown is of gold silk and the sleeves are edged in white fur. Her blond hair is held with strands of pearls.



#### Italy, ca. 1440

This high-waisted silk gown features leaf-shaped dagging at the sleeves. The gown is in shades of moss-green and gold. The man wears parti-color hose in red, yellow, and black,

with the tunic repeating the same colors. His shirt and the fur trim are white.

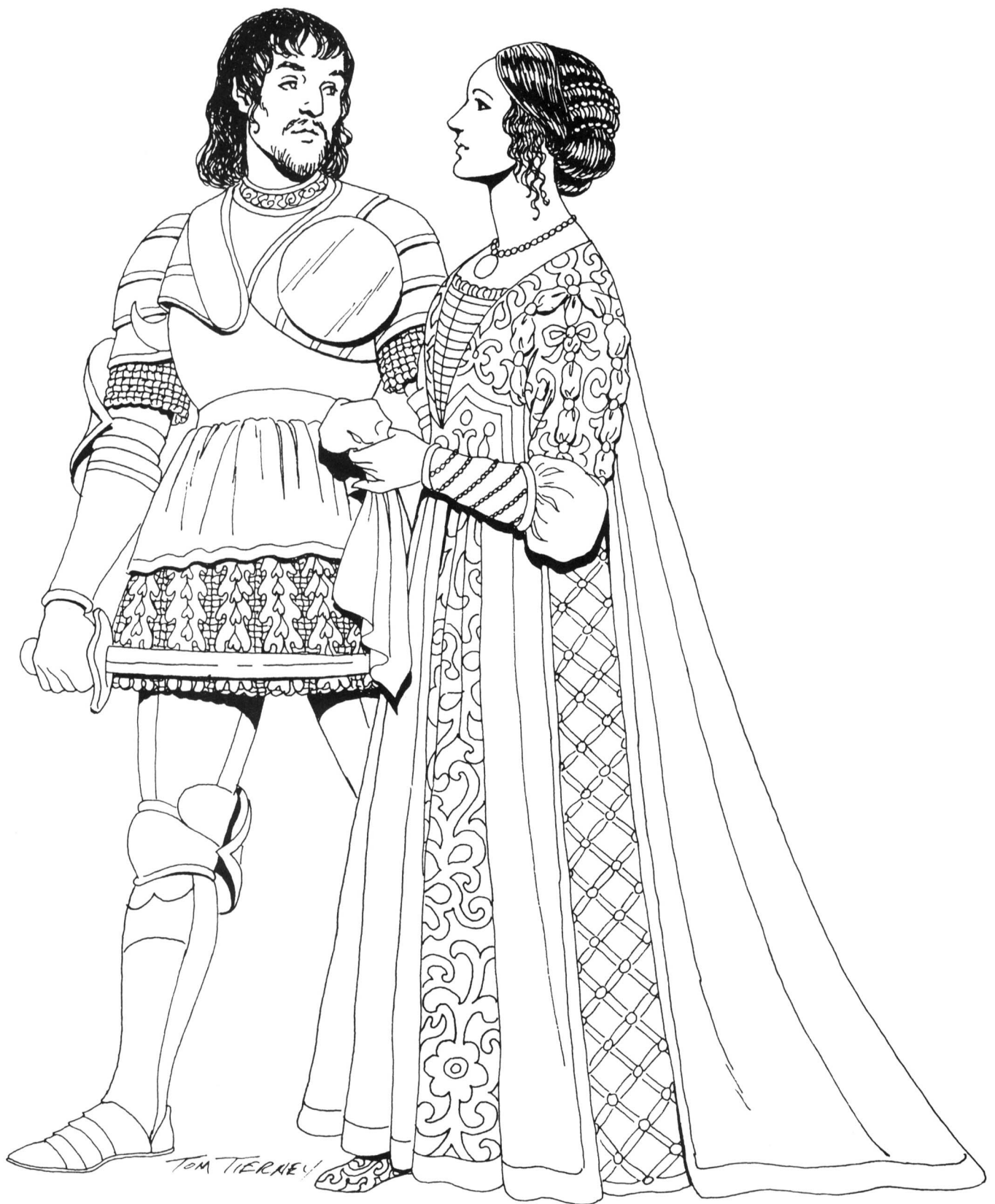


**Italy, ca. 1450**

Italian peasant couple dressed for their wedding day. The bride wears a white chemise with a gold-and-dark-green busk. The sleeves are dark green. Her skirt is dark blue and her petticoat is red wool with blue-and-yellow embroidery.

She wears a natural-straw hat. The groom's costume includes a blue-gray doublet, brown breeches, a white shirt and stockings, tan leather slashed shoes, and a natural-straw hat.





# Italy, ca. 1460

This Italian knight in steel armor wears a blue cloth apron at the waist. The woman's gown is rose silk, with a bodice and panels of rose-and-pale-blue brocade. The gown is slit

at the sides and held by pale-blue ribbons. The underskirt is of deep-blue silk.



**Italy, ca. 1460**

Italian couple. Her gown of coral-and-gold brocaded silk is worn over an underdress of slate-blue silk. Her embroidered cap is of matching colors. He is wearing rose-and-

blue hose under a wine-color gown with a gold lining. His sleeves are blue and gold and his cap is deep blue.



**Italy, ca. 1475**

Two gentlemen of Verona. The younger, on the left, wears black waist-high hose, shoes, and cap, a white shirt under his pink-velvet doublet and sleeves, and a tabard of brown-and-gold brocaded silk-taffeta. His gloves are tan. The

older gentleman, on the right, wears an academic-style gown in a dark color, indicating that he is probably a professor. He has black hose, tan shoes, and a black cap.





#### Italy, ca. 1490

Venice. The gentleman wears a tabard of gold-and-red brocade with his family's coat of arms embroidered at the shoulder. Worn over one shoulder is a silk-lined gown of white wool, tasseled in black. His stockings are red, as is his cap, and his sleeves and shoes are black. The woman's gown

is coral silk and has matching sleeves. The overskirt is slit at the sides and open at the front to reveal her wine-color-and-coral brocaded underskirt. Her white chemise has gold-edged fluting at the neckline, and a bit of her yellow-taffeta bodice is showing.



### Italy, ca. 1500

Venetian lady and dandy. She is dressed in a gown of sky-blue silk edged with silk fringe, over a pink-and-gold brocaded petticoat. At her neck is a white voile scarf, and she carries a white handkerchief. The colors of her embroidered and jeweled felt cap match the rest of her ensemble. The

Venetian dandy is wearing blue-and-gold parti-color hose. His white shirt is pulled through and puffed at the sleeves, waist, back, and sides of the brocaded doublet, which has smaller slashes showing the wine-color lining. His cap is dark-blue velvet with gold trimmings.



**France, ca. 1500**

French couple of the new merchant class. She wears an orange bodice with a gold-embroidered diaper pattern, a white blouse with gold chains at the neck and over the shoulders, a blue silk skirt over a brocaded petticoat, and a

white cap that is Flemish in origin. His brown-wool, fur-trimmed gown is worn over a red doublet and sleeves and a white shirt. He wears purple tights. The fur trim, hat, and shoes are black.





#### France, ca. 1510

The gentleman wears a brocaded pale-blue-and-gold cloak, lined with fur. His doublet is gold brocade, slashed to show the white shirt, which has red, blue, and gold embroidery at the neck. His stockings, trunk-hose, and codpiece are red, with gold and blue bands. The woman's gown is gold-

and-wine-color brocade, with ermine trim. It is worn over a red-velvet undergown. The fall of her headdress is black velvet, as is the band at the neckline of her gown and the edging on the undergown.



France, ca. 1510

French noble and lady. His doublet is blue-and-rose brocade, with blue, attached puffed sleeves. He wears white silk hose and a white shirt. His hat is blue velvet, with rose and blue ostrich-feather tips, and he wears blue velvet slippers.

The lady wears a green silk gown lined with the same gold-and-green brocade from which the sleeves are fashioned. Her petticoat is black velvet, as is the fall of her coif.



**England, ca. 1500**

English noble and lady. He wears a full-length gown of gray-and-blue brocaded silk with light-brown fur trim, over a deep-red doublet, and parti-color hose. His codpiece is red and deep brown. His fur cap has multicolor feathers

and gold braid. She wears a gown of rose silk with velvet brocade, trimmed with dark-brown fur. Her gabled coif is of jewels and gold and has a black velvet fall. Her girdle is gold silk, knotted and tasseled.

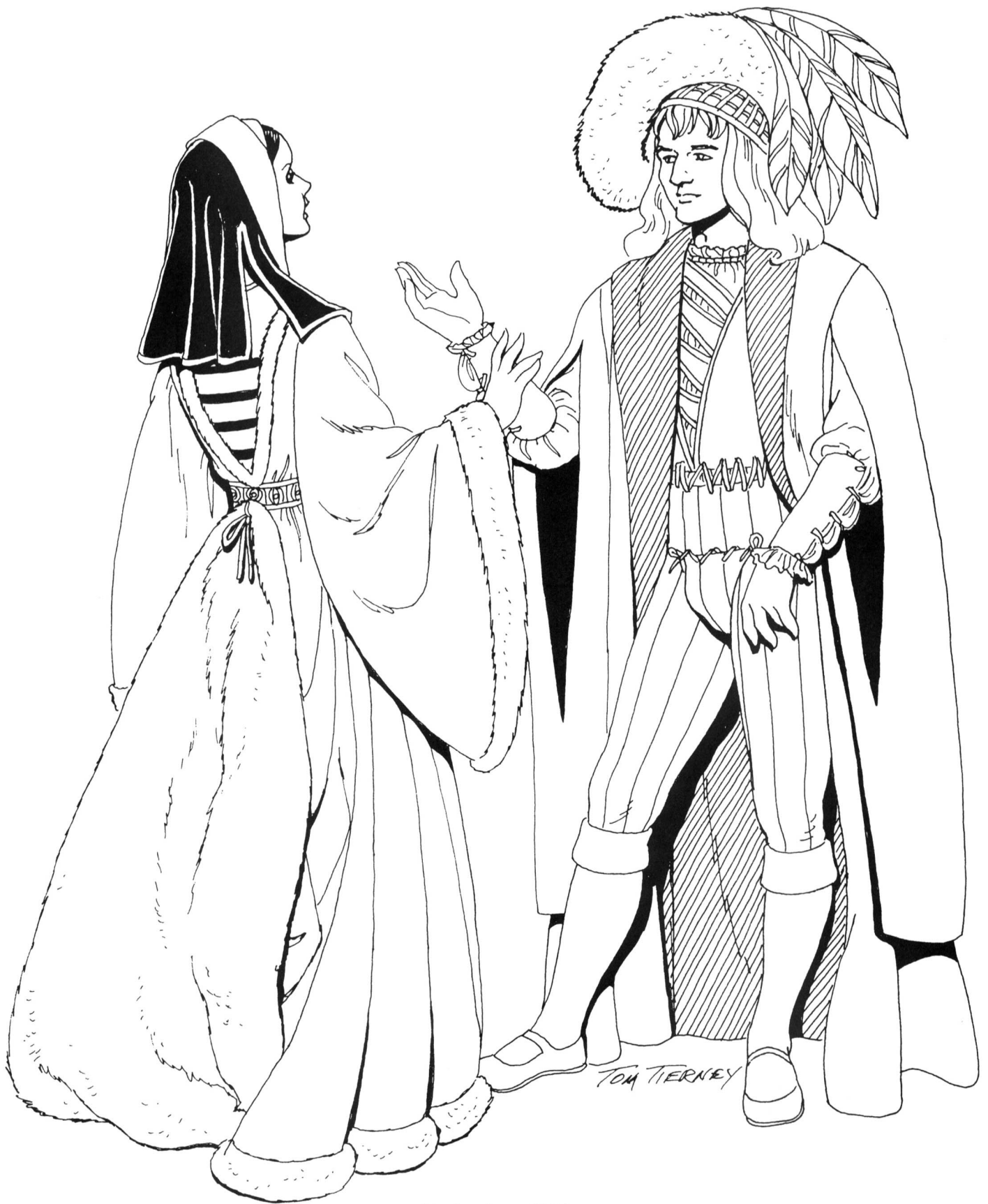


**England, ca. 1500**

English lord and lady dancing after a hunting trip. His green-red-and-yellow plaid doublet has a long skirt and is worn over fitted green trunk-hose and red stockings. His light-brown leather leggings are slashed; his shoes are of the same color. He wears a brown castellated cap over a white

coif. The lady's riding outfit is of red wool, bound and belted in gold ribbon; her sleeves and coif are of quilted green silk. Her dark-green velvet hat has red and yellow feathers. Both have purses of natural leather.





### England, ca. 1510

This English lady's dark-green velvet gown is lined and trimmed with white fur. The train of the gown is caught up and tied to the girdle by means of points. Her undergown is pale green banded with black, and the fall and lappets to her coif are of black velvet. The gentleman wears a rust-color vel-

vet gown with slashed sleeves. It is lined with darker-brown wool. His short, slashed green doublet is laced to his green-and-gold upper stocks, which are worn with shorter white stockings. A white shirt, white fur hat with multicolor feathers, and brown leather shoes complete his outfit.



#### Germany, ca. 1510

During the Renaissance, the Germans seemed to enjoy out-doing everyone else in the use of feathers, slashes, and puffs in their costume. The woman here wears a large-brimmed hat, edged in embroidery and covered with red, green, and gold feathers. Her pale-green silk gown has fur (animal-tail) trim around the skirt, and her attached gold sleeves

(slashed) are banded in the green silk of the gown. She displays her bright-red petticoat. Her partner is swathed in a rose-and-yellow cloak worn over yellow-and-blue parti-color hose. His cap is of black velvet and is decorated with wired feathers in rose, yellow, and blue.



#### Germany, ca. 1510

This German soldier, in a slashed and puffed uniform, wears a blue doublet over a white shirt. Over the blue doublet is a tan leather jerkin with puffed sleeves showing the red lining of the garment. He also wears an apron of pale-blue fabric with gold embroidered trim. His breeches are the same color as the doublet. His parti-color stockings are red and white on one leg, red and blue on the other. His castellated hat is

brown and sports red and blue feathers. His brown shoes show red through the slashings. The woman's gown is of scarlet, with puffs of white chemise showing. The skirt of the gown is edged with gold braid, as is the hem of the blue petticoat. Her coif consists of loops of blue ribbon, trimmed with wired red and yellow ostrich plumes.



#### England, ca. 1520

English courtiers. He wears a long doublet of red wool trimmed with darker-red bands. Slashing shows his white shirt. His sleeves are of the same red wool, with the lined slashings of the puffed upper sleeve the same as the bands of the doublet. He wears white hose and white leather

shoes. The lady wears a dark-blue bodice and skirt with the upper sleeves in gold brocade; the lower sleeves are black with gold braid. Her gable coif is gold in color, with black velvet lappets. She wears a gold-color girdle.

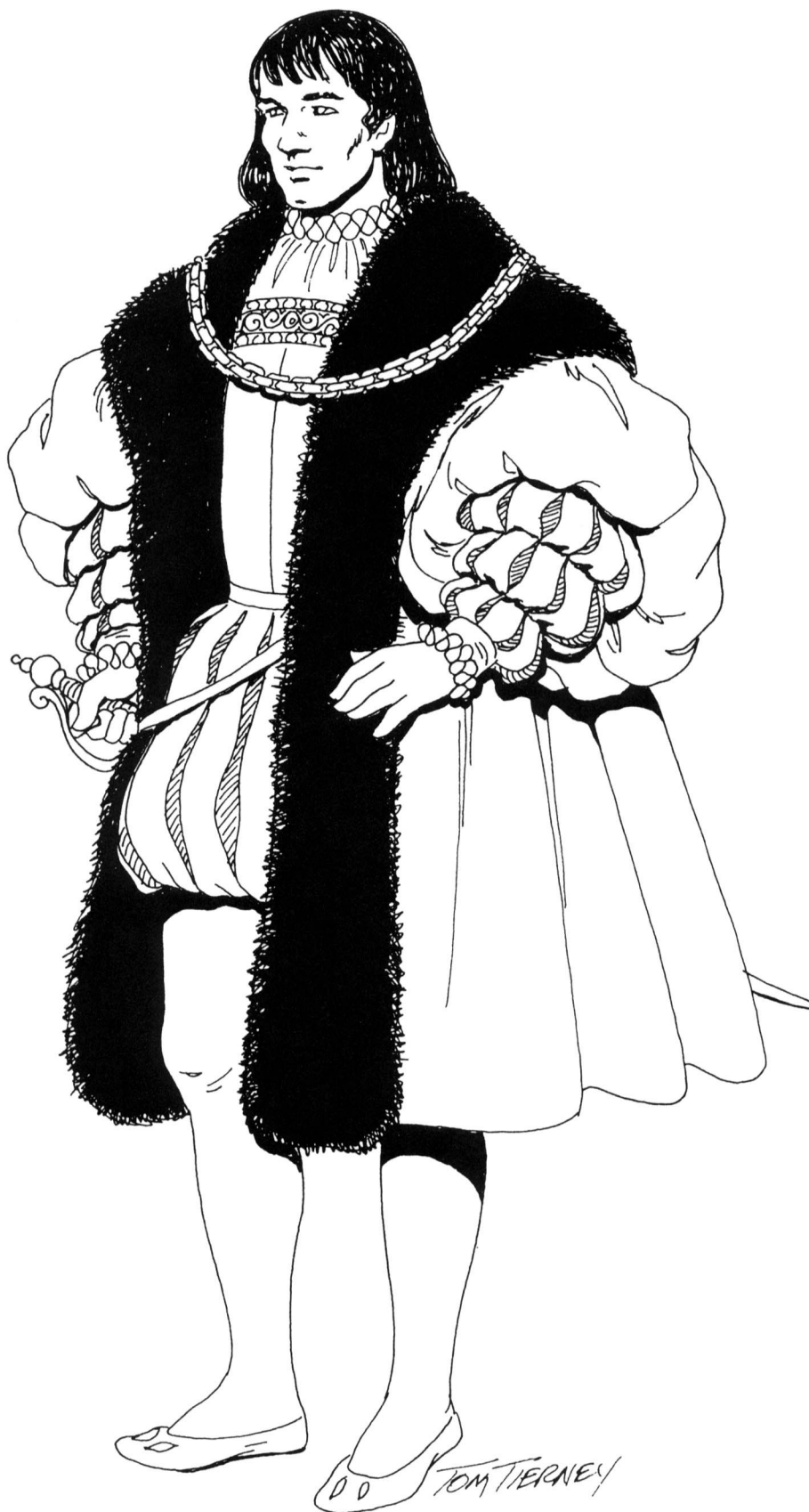




**France, ca. 1530**

This French lady wears a green satin gown with slashed puffs showing a lavender lining. The shoulders and caul of

gold-color sheer fabric are embroidered and pearl studded. The girdle and the crown are gold color.



**France, ca. 1530**

This French gentleman wears a blue gown slashed to show a dark-blue lining. His shirt, doublet, sleeves, trunk-hose, and hose are white. The slashed shoes are blue. There is a

gold embroidered band on the doublet and he wears a gold chain on his shoulders.



**Italy, ca. 1530**

This young woman's Italian gown is burnt-orange velvet with gold embroidered trim. Her white chemise is puffed

below the bodice. Her cap is made of both curled and flat gold ribbon.



#### Italy, ca. 1530

Italian courtesans bleaching and styling their hair. The seated woman wears a broad wooden brim with her hair pulled up and through it to keep the lye-based bleaching preparation from getting on her skin. She wears a shell-pink, soft

linen chemise. The standing woman is arranging her frizzed blond hair. She wears a gown of wine-color velvet, trimmed in gold, over a white chemise.





#### Italy, ca. 1540

An Italian courtesan showing her padded and slashed knickers. (Most women of the period would not have worn any kind of pants, which were considered “male only” attire.) Her rose-color gown has bands of trimming in

gold-and-red brocade. Her stockings are white with red clocks; the chopines are white with red trim. She carries a flag-shaped fan.



**France, ca. 1540**

This French noblewoman wears a black-and-gold brocaded gown with a black-velvet overskirt. The scalloped ruff, which was gaining in favor, is seen here at collar and cuff.

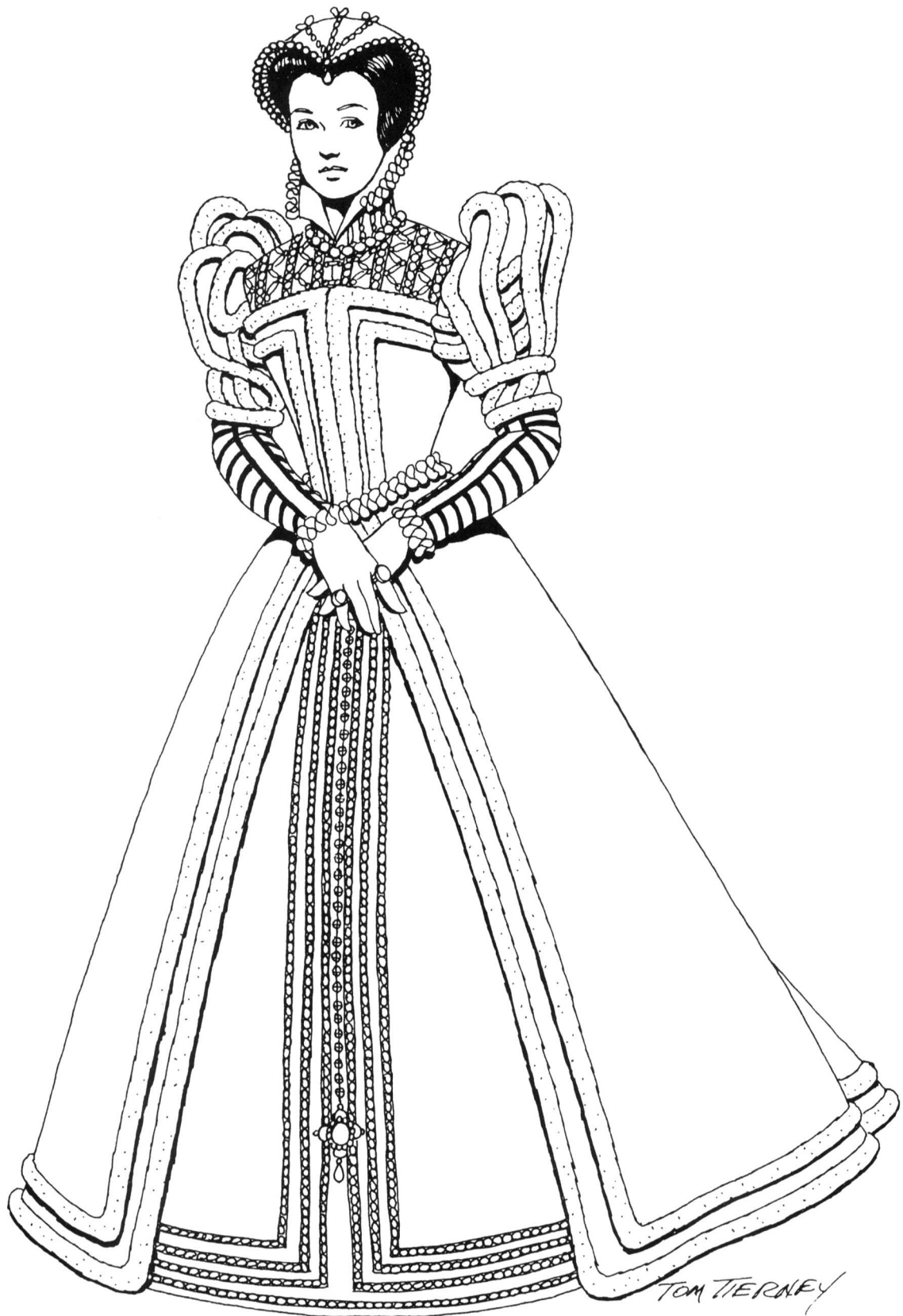
Her cap is of gold-color fabric with a white gauze veil. From a rosette of gold ribbon hang a mirror and bag.



#### France, ca. 1540

French court couple. He wears a deep-blue gown with silver galloon and loops, and a white ermine collar. The doublet and codpiece are silver-gray satin with slashing showing the white shirt. His silver-gray trunk-hose have white slashing; they complement silver upper stocks and white hose. His dark-blue velvet cap has a white plume. The woman's bodice and petticoat are of white satin with gold embroidery. Her

overskirt is gold-and-white brocade. The slashed sleeves are gold-color fabric with the white chemise sleeves bound with knotted gold ribbon. The same ribbon covers the white chemise at the shoulder. The white felt cap is decorated with pearls like those on the gown. She carries a white ostrich-tip fan. Her gloves, slashed shoes, and fan handle are red.



**England, ca. 1550**

A lady of the English court wearing a “Spanish-style” gown. Her burgundy-color wool gown and petticoat are trimmed with white fur and pearls. The white sleeves, also

trimmed with fur, are banded with black ribbon. The burgundy-color velvet cap has a white lining and frills.





#### Germany, ca. 1550

German royal children with their nanny. The boy wears a dark-red velvet outfit trimmed with gold galloon. His black hat has gold-color ornaments and white feathers. He wears black shoes and white stockings. The girl wears a pink-velvet gown in the Spanish style, with gold trim, and a

white apron and cap. Her doll is dressed in black and gold. The nanny is dressed in a black gown with a white apron, chemise, and cap. The embroidered trim on her blouse and apron is purple and green.



#### England, ca. 1550

An English nobleman and his ward. The man wears a doublet, trunk-hose, chamarre, and cap of brown velvet trimmed with bands of gold-color brocade and gold ornaments. His slashed shoes are brown. His white shirt is edged with pearls at the cuffs and he wears white hose. Gold ribbons decorate his codpiece. The youth wears a

deep-blue velvet chamarre trimmed in gold galloon and beige fur. His doublet, sleeves, and trunk-hose are gold-embroidered satin and his hose are white. He wears a pale-blue garter, which matches the lining of his chamarre and the feather in his deep-blue cap, which also is studded with pearls. His shoes are white.



**England, ca. 1550**

This English noblewoman wears a burgundy-color velvet Spanish-style cloak or “marlotte,” with embroidery on gold-color bands of cloth. Her gown is of the same fabric and colors as the cloak, and she wears a white pleated

apron. Her undergown is of embroidered gold-color fabric and her chemise is white. Her coif of gold is studded with pearls, and her cap is burgundy-color velvet with a white ostrich tip.



#### France, ca. 1550

French courtiers wearing Spanish-style attire. His cloak and cap are dark green, with gold embroidery. His doublet and trunk-hose are pale-green silk, embroidered in gold and slashed to show white puffs. He wears white hose, gloves,

and slippers, and has a white feather in his cap. The lady wears a gown of dark red with bands of silver embroidery, showing white puffs. Her ruff, wrist ruffles, and cap ruff are white. Bands of pearls decorate her hair.

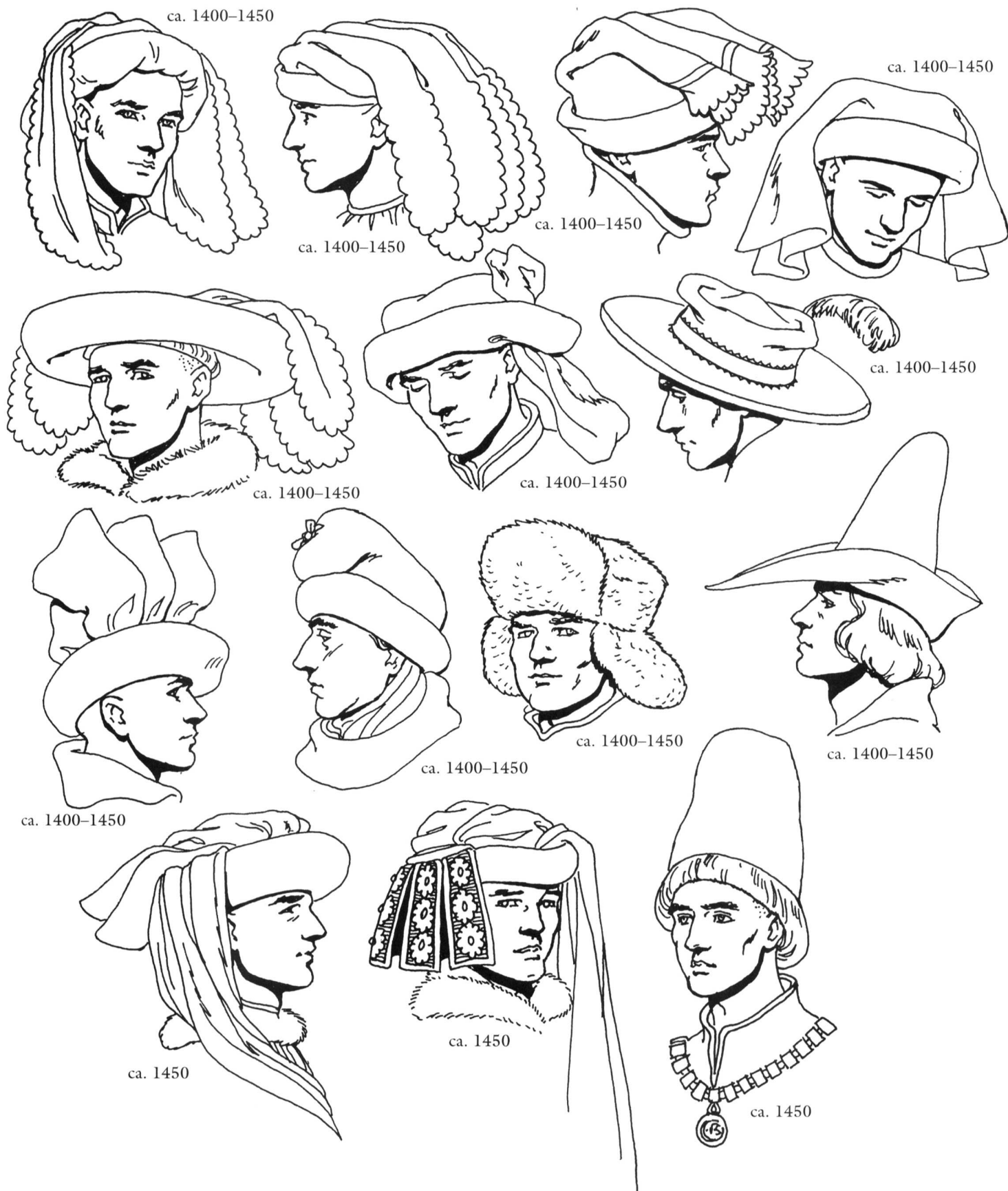


#### France, ca. 1550

Upper-class French merchant and his wife. She wears a mauve-and-gold brocaded gown with gold-and-plum trim. Her sleeves are bands of gold embroidery on a mauve ground. Her skirt is caught up and attached to the waist, revealing its plum-color velvet lining. Her petticoat is mauve, with gold embroidery and bands of gold and plum. Her cap is of plum velvet and has a sheer white fall. The

collar and cuff ruffles were referred to as a “suit of ruffs.” The man wears a deep-red velvet chamarre. His puffed sleeves are decorated with pearl-studded gold bands. The gown is lined with black fur, which shows at the collar and the tail of the garment. His hose, shirt, and ruff, and the feather in his red-velvet cap, are white. His slashed shoe uppers also are of red velvet.





**1400 to 1450**  
Men's headgear and hairstyles.



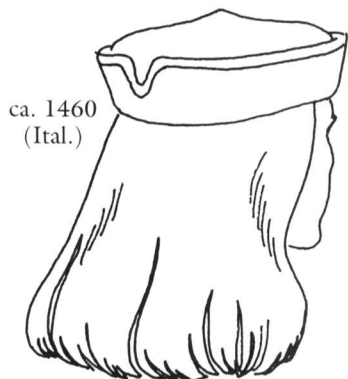
ca. 1450 (Eng.)



ca. 1450 (Fr.)



ca. 1450 (Ital.)



ca. 1460  
(Ital.)



ca. 1460  
(Eng.)



ca. 1480  
(Ital.)



ca. 1480 (Ital.)



ca. 1480 (Fr.)



ca. 1480 (Fr.)



ca. 1400  
(hairstyle)



ca. 1480 (Fr.)



ca. 1490 (Ger.)

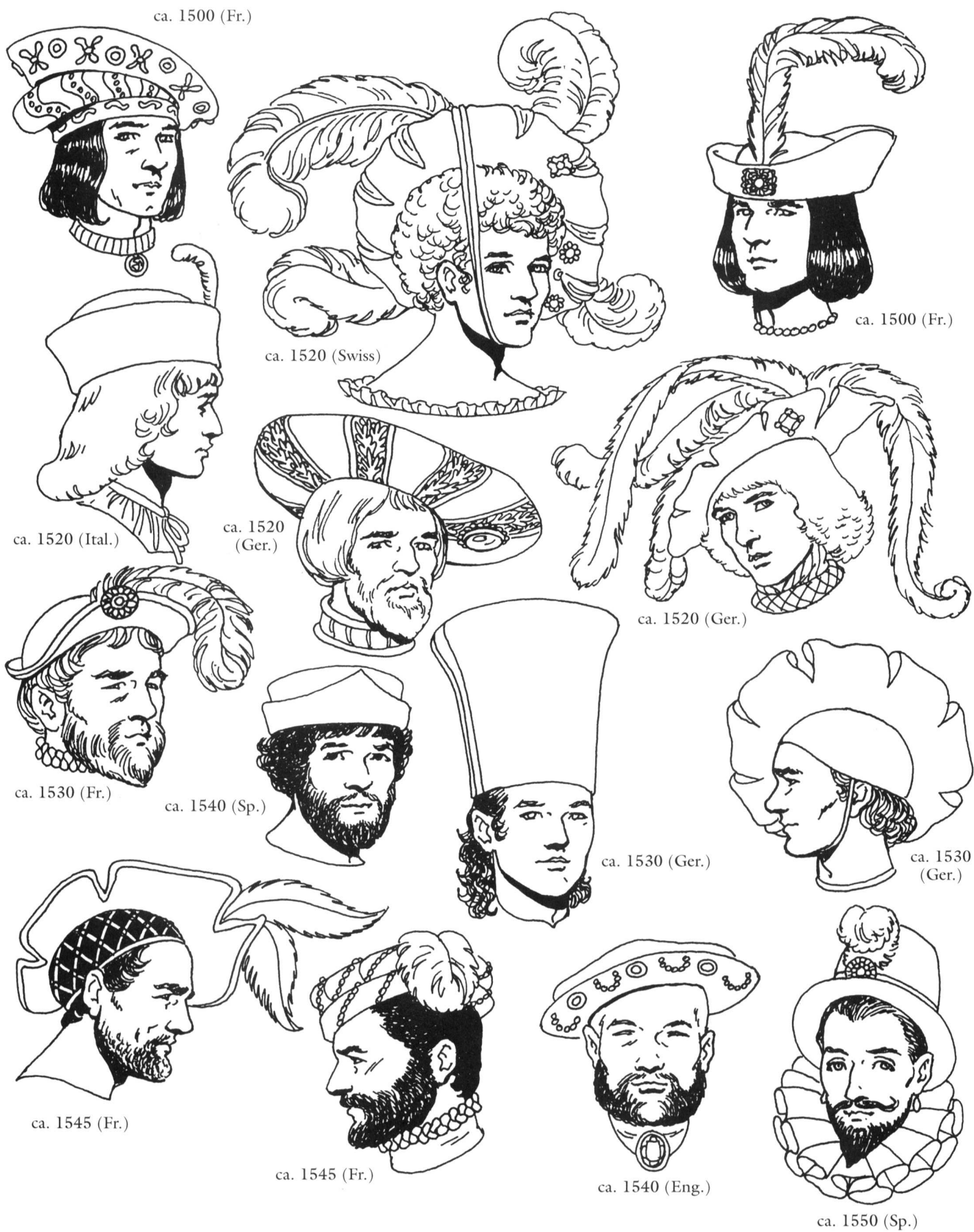


ca. 1490 (Fr.)



ca. 1490 (Fr.)

**1450 to 1490**  
Men's headgear and hairstyles.



1500 to 1550  
Men's headgear and hairstyles.



**1400 to 1450**  
Women's headgear and hairstyles.



**1450 to 1500**  
Women's headgear and hairstyles.





**1500 to 1550**  
Women's headgear and hairstyles.



## Glossary

Here are some terms for specific garments worn during the Renaissance that may be unfamiliar to modern readers:

*Attifet*: a heart-shaped woman's headdress of the 16th century with the front brim fitted closely to the wearer's mid-forehead.

*Caul*: an open mesh cap, often jeweled, to hold the hair in place (worn chiefly by women). It often was worn in conjunction with other headpieces or hats.

*Chopine*: a built-up platform shoe, designed to keep the wearer out of the mud or dirt of the streets. In Venice the *chopine* reached heights of 2½ feet; the wearer had to lean on a servant to avoid tipping over or tripping.

*Dagging*: a late medieval–Renaissance decoration of a garment by appliquéing petal-shaped pieces of material to the edges or (later) by cutting the edges into jagged shapes. The style that featured square indentations at the edges was called castellated.

*Doublet*: a vest-like or jacket-like garment worn in various lengths; it might have only short tabs at the waist, or knee-length skirts. During the Renaissance it often was slashed and padded. The doublet also was called *jupe*, *jupon*, *gipon*, *paltok*, *gambeson*, and *pourpoint*.

*Farthingale*: the first hooped-framework under-skirt, which would reappear in women's fashions from time to time. The earliest, the Spanish farthingale of about 1470, remained popular through Elizabethan times.

*Ferronière*: a fine chain or a band, with a jewel set in the center, that was wound around a woman's forehead (especially popular in Italy).

*Fitchet*: a vertical slit in a woman's skirt or in a man's garment through which a hand could reach a purse hung from the waist, beneath the gown.

*Girdle*: what we would call a sash or a belt.

*Gown*: during the Renaissance the gown was the rich outer garment for both sexes. The male version also was called a *chamarre*. Today we probably would call the man's gown a coat.

*Houppelande*: a full-skirted outer garment, usually full length, worn by both men and women in the 14th century and then by women only (except in England, where Richard II introduced a variety) until it went out of fashion about 1450.

*Parti-color*: Men's tights and hose could have each leg a different color, or one leg of two or more colors, etc. Parti-coloring sometimes was used in doublets, tunics, and sleeves.

*Patten*: a thick sole of wood, attached to a shoe by leather straps, to keep the foot above the mud and dirt of the streets.

*Points*: laces with metal tips, used to tie various parts of the costume together to form a whole. The metal tips sometimes were called *aiglets*. Points of ribbon could be used as a decorative element.

*Poulaine*: a soft shoe with a long, pointed toe, that was popular during the late medieval period and early Renaissance.

*Slashing*: a form of decoration by cutting slits in a garment to allow the undergarment or lining to show, or even to be pulled through in puffs. By 1520 no item of fashionable clothing in Europe was immune to slashing.

*Trunk-hose*: baggy and usually slashed and padded short breeches, worn over the leg hose, which became popular during the mid-1500s and continued to be fashionable through the next century. Trunk-hose also were called "upper stocks."



English nobleman and his ward, ca. 1550 (p. 35)



Milanese couple, ca. 1410 (p. 3)



# Renaissance Fashions

Tom Tierney

The Renaissance marked Europe's transition from medieval to modern times. Art, literature, and science flowered in the 15th and 16th centuries, while a vigorous trade with the Far East via newly developed sea routes enabled Italian merchants to supply a recently evolved middle class with materials and adornments for elaborately designed apparel.

After careful research, illustrator Tom Tierney has portrayed this dynamic age by accurately rendering an amazing diversity of clothing styles. Forty-five finely detailed illustrations showing *attifets*, *chopines*, doublets, farthingales, *houppelandes*, and other elements of Renaissance garb depict: an Italian peasant couple dressed for their wedding day (ca. 1450); an Italian knight in steel armor (ca. 1460); an English lord and lady in riding outfits (ca. 1510); children of a German royal family attired in velvet and accompanied by a soberly dressed nanny (ca. 1550); and many more outfits designed for various activities and occasions. In addition, seven plates feature dozens of examples of fashionable headgear, footwear, and hairstyles for men and women, from several stages in the flourishing of Renaissance styles.

Descriptive captions accompany each handsome, ready-to-color illustration, making this a collection that will appeal to colorists as much as it will delight costume historians and designers.

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