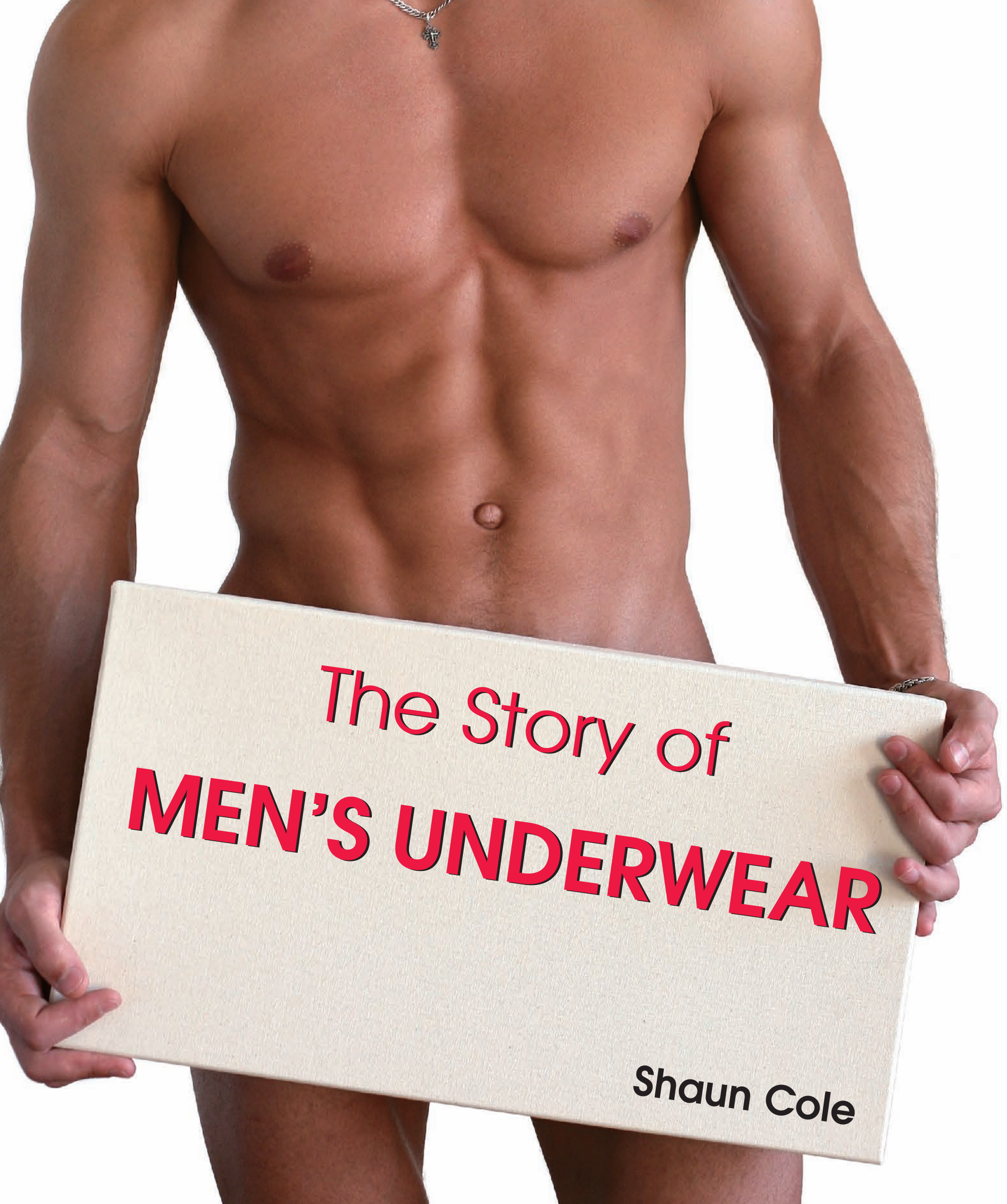

The Story of
MEN'S UNDERWEAR
Shaun Cole

Author: Shaun Cole

Layout:
Baseline Co. Ltd,
61A-63A Vo Van Tan Street
4th Floor
District 3, Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam

ISBN: 978-1-78042-882-6

Shaun Cole

The Story of MEN'S UNDERWEAR

PARKSTONE
INTERNATIONAL

For My Mum and Dad

(who first introduced me to underwear)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

There have been many books on the history and significance of underclothes, some concentrating on particular aspects of underwear and others offering a historic overview. However, men's underwear has frequently been relegated to a back seat in such works. When it is addressed, it is often in relation to the technical or social development and aspects of women's underwear. Histories of both men's and women's fashion tend to marginalise or ignore the development of men's underwear. One of the chief reasons for this is the comparative simplicity (in comparison to women's) and almost utilitarian aspects of men's underwear.

Publications that have been dedicated exclusively to men's underwear have often addressed the subject as a humorous exercise, reflecting the way in which images of men in popular culture are presented for comic effect, such as Rhys Ifans opening the front door in baggy grey Y-fronts in the film English romantic comedy film *Notting Hill* (1999). However, as Gaetano Savini-Brioni, of the Italian tailoring company Brioni, asked in 1961, "Why *should* a man look a figure of fun in his underclothes?… A man should be dressed with as much care as a woman down to his vest and pants." [1] Men's underwear deserves to be viewed less comically and with attention to its importance in fashion and cultural history, and as a key item in any man's wardrobe. As trade journal *Men's Wear* noted in April 1933 "Underwear should have the grace of Apollo, the romance of Byron, the distinction of Lord Chesterfield and the ease, coolness and comfort of Mahatma Gandhi." [2]

Histories of women's underwear have discussed the role of underwear in the seduction of men and its role as a prop in the spectacle of men looking at women. Curator and fashion historian Richard Martin, meanwhile, noted that men's clothing was a "sign and register of the modern". [3] Considering both of these points leads to a number of questions in relation to men's underwear. How and why do men choose their underwear? Is it for comfort and practicality or for the moment when it is revealed or exposed? Do men choose and buy their own underwear for themselves, or do mothers, wives and girlfriends undertake this? (Addressed in cultural historian Jennifer Craik's "set of denials" – "that women dress men and buy clothes for men" and "that men dress for comfort and fit rather than style".) [4] Does men's underwear reflect modernity and the changes in masculinity? Is underwear in fact private? Is men's underwear related to the seduction of the opposite sex (or the same sex?) In an age when the male body is an object of sexual and social spectatorship, is the presentation of the underwear clad body for women, or is it homoerotic or homosocial?

Clothing both hides and draws attention to the body. The part of the body that is usually first to be covered (for reasons of protection or modesty) is the genitals but, as anthropologists have demonstrated, cache-sexe garments are often used to draw attention to the body beneath. In his study of the loincloth, Otto Steinmayer recorded that "Usually people have felt that they ought to render the genitals symbolically harmless with some covering or decoration … to ornament it, humanize it and socialize it" [5] and fashion historian Valerie Steele believed that such ornamentation "preceded - and takes precedence over – considerations of warmth, protection and sexual modesty." [6]

Underclothing comprises of all garments that are worn either completely or mainly concealed by an outer layer of clothing: covered as the body is covered. Just as a person wearing underwear is "simultaneously dressed and undressed" [7] so underwear can be both private and secret, or a public

Page 6.
Grey Boxer Briefs.

Page 8.
Language postcard: *"I - er - want one of those 'Howdyer-doos' with long sleeves" "Miss Smith, show this gentleman some thingamebobs"*, 1932.
Private collection, London.

form of clothing. Until the twentieth century the development of men's underwear was predominantly unseen and the prevailing attitude was "out of sight, out of mind." It was, Jennifer Craik wrote, as if "keeping men's underclothes plain and functional could secure male bodies as a bulwark against unrestrained sexuality." [8] This does, however, belie the dynamics of technological and stylistic change. Over the last one hundred years, men's underwear has become increasingly visible and public, something not all men have been happy about, as demonstrated by journalist Rodney Bennet-England in 1967: "what he wears – or doesn't wear – under his trousers is largely his own affair." [9]

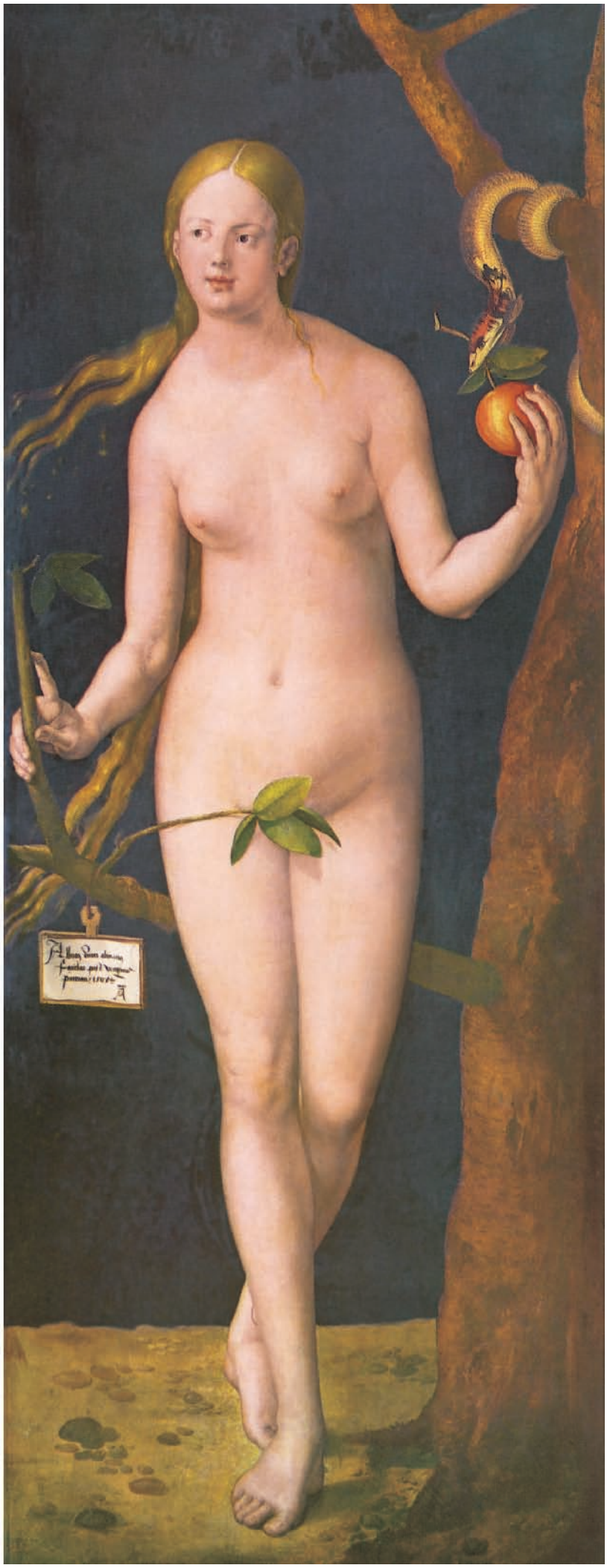
Men's (and women's) underwear has served a number of purposes: for protection; for cleanliness; for modesty and morality; to support the shape of the outer clothes; as an indicator of social status and; for erotic or sexual appeal. Underwear has offered protection to the body it covers in two ways. The additional layer acts as a temperature moderator, providing extra warmth and protecting the body from cold or keeping the body cool. It also minimises irritation and abrasion from rough fabrics. At the same time, underwear protects outer garments from bodily dirt and odours by providing a hygienic and more easily cleaned layer. Frequent changing of underwear offered a means of personal hygiene when bathing was not regularly possible or encouraged. Concepts of "clean" and "dirty" "inside" and "outside" played a part in the role assigned to underwear in (particularly religious) teachings on morality and the body. Related to notions of morality are those of modesty. The naked body was often deemed unacceptable, and so underwear acted as a means of covering certain areas and preventing embarrassment on the part of the wearer and any spectators. Whilst women's underwear played an often vital role in supporting the shape of outer clothes, this has been less important for men's underwear. Prior to the late nineteenth-century, padding and corsetry was employed by men to create an ideal fashionable body shape beneath outer layers. Although men's underwear has been predominantly invisible, certain sections have been on view and the visible fabric and its cleanliness was used as an indicator of the class and social status of the wearer. Historically, men's underwear was not considered to be erotic or sexually alluring in the same way as women's underwear. However, in addressing the British costume historian James Laver's theory of the shifting erogenous zone, Valerie Steele determined that male sexuality was centred on the genitals. [10] Men's underwear can, therefore, be seen to reflect and enhance sexuality and sensuousness, especially when considered alongside the idea that concealment plays a part in the eroticism of clothing: calling attention to what is beneath those clothes. Men's underwear and the increasing public representation of underwear-clad men's bodies played a part in sexual attractiveness and sexual attraction, ensuring that men's underwear was not enjoyed by the wearer alone.

The history of the writing and documenting of men's underclothes has seen a shift in disciplines over the past fifty years. Initially it was studied as a part of costume history, as in the cases of C. Willet and Phillis Cunnington's 1951 *The History of Underclothes* and Jeremy Farrell's 1992 *Socks and Stockings* (both crucial to the research of this book), but in recent years the approach shifted towards Cultural Studies with a much broader understanding and analysis of the garments and their social and cultural contexts, including the presentation and merchandising of men's underwear. Therefore, the history of men's underwear could be characterised, as Richard Martin noted "as a progression in technology, invention, and cultural definition". [11]

This book covers all types of garments that have at some stage been considered an under garment, including some, such as socks and hosiery, which are often excluded from histories of underclothes. The main focus of the book is on underwear in Western countries, but considers undergarments in non-western dress where they are pertinent to the story. During the history of underclothes, particular garments such as men's shirts, waistcoats and T-shirts have risen to the surface and become outerwear. Other garments have followed the reverse path, as was the case with early Saxon breeches, which were

concealed by tunics and became drawers. This vacillation between layers of clothing has had an effect on the names of garments. As garments evolved, they changed in character becoming smaller in some way, and diminutive terms were substituted and so, for example, early nineteenth century men's "pantaloons" became "pants." The first four chapters of this book are a chronological overview of the development of men's underwear, which as well as charting the stylistic changes in the garments, address issues such as technological innovations, male identity, gender and sexuality. Chapter Five offers a similar approach but is dedicated to the development of men's hosiery and socks. The last chapter takes a thematic approach and looks at advertising and the ways in which men's underwear has been promoted and sold since the early twentieth century.

Page 9.
Paris Underflair, 1973.
Private collection, London.

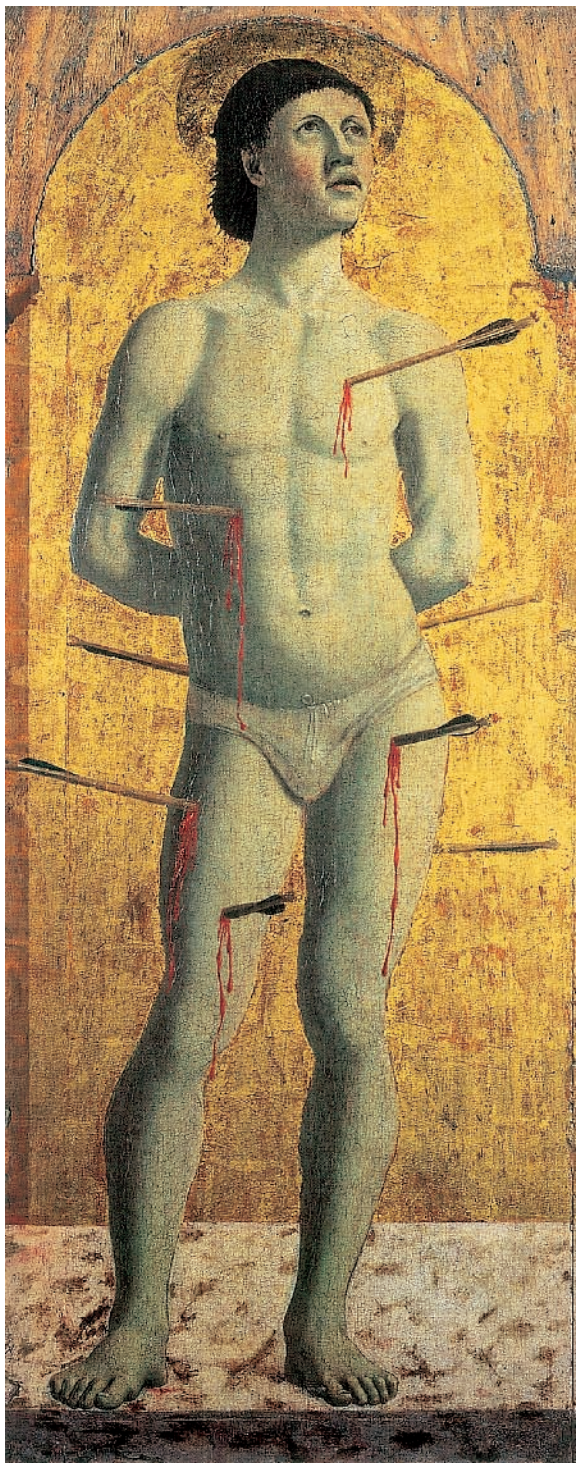


I. A FIRM FOUNDATION

It has been argued that the fig leaf was the first underwear, but that only holds true if one subscribes to a Judeo-Christian notion of the world and believes that Adam was the first man to wear clothes. And if those fig leaves are to be considered *under*wear then one has to suppose that they were in fact worn under another layer of, perhaps bigger leaves! It would, therefore, be far safer to say that the loincloth, in its various forms, was the precursor of men's underwear. The shape and form of this simple garment was dictated by men's anatomy. The need to protect the genitals from heat, cold and violence, dictated that a simple garment that bound up the genitals would be created, and much of the development in men's underpants has been linked to the protection and comfort of the genitals. No skill in sewing was necessary to make a garment from a simple shape of any material that could be pulled between the legs and around the waist. The loincloth developed in many areas including the Malayo-Polynesian area of the Pacific Ocean, southeastern Asia, Africa and the Americas and the simple shape of such garments has meant that it continued to be worn in various parts of the world until modern times. The ancient Indians were the only Indo-European speaking people ever traditionally to have worn a loincloth and traditional Chinese male underwear has always been a cut-and-sewn version of the loincloth, a nappy-like brief tied in front with two cross-panels. Men's underwear in western countries has on the whole been that of cut and sewn garments since the Middle Ages.

There are, in fact, very few existing examples from man's early history to demonstrate and prove the development of men's underwear. In 1922, 145 loincloths wrapped in bundles of 12 were discovered in the tomb of the young Pharaoh Tutankhamen. Each was an isosceles triangle-shaped piece of hand-woven linen with strings to be tied around the hips. The point of the triangle hanging down at the back was brought between the legs to hang over the strings tied at the front. [12] But these may well have been worn as the sole garment rather than underwear. Along with the frozen body of a man who had lived around 3300 BC and was found in 1991 by hikers in the Tyrolean Alps, were the remains of parts of items of clothing, including a loincloth made from strips of leather sewn together with sinew. This loincloth along with patchwork leather leggings would have been held up with a leather belt.[13] Men in a number of North American native tribes wore similar hide leggings and loincloths (or breechclouts) until the early twentieth century. The Romans in Britain wore underwear, and it was of enough importance for it to be sent to a Roman soldier stationed in North East England between AD 90 and 120. In one of the letters known as the Vindolanda Tablets (named after the Roman fort at which they were found) is a list of clothes sent from Gaul, which included socks and two pairs of underpants "Paria udonum ab Sattua solearum duo et subligariorum duo." [14] At around the same time, senator and historian of the Roman Empire, Tacitus noted that the "wild tribes" of Germania thought it "a mark of great wealth to wear undergarments". [15] As part of their 1951 study *The History of Underclothes,* C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington acknowledged that the majority of men's underwear or records about men's underwear available for study indicate it was worn by or referred to the upper or upper-middle classes and that little had been recorded of the underclothes of working men up to the early twentieth century.

Page 10.
Albrecht Dürer,
Adam and *Eve*, 1507.
Oil on panel, 209 x 81 cm and 209 x 80 cm.
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



Page 12.
Piero della Francesca,
St. Sebastian, polyptych of the Misericordia (detail),
1445-1462.
Oil on panel, 109 x 45 cm.
Museo Civico, Sansepolcro.

Medieval Undergarments

Up to and during the medieval period, underwear was purely utilitarian – its dual purpose was to protect the skin from the abrasive fabrics of outer garments and to protect those garments from the dirt of the body. Additional layers were welcomed for warmth, and in addition, offered protection for the outer, usually more expensive, garments, keeping them clean by providing a barrier from body heat and moisture and thus dirt. Soiling and odours from direct body contact were regularly washed away. The need for protective underclothing amongst the higher classes increased as more finely woven outer garments developed. This protective layer also protected the skin of the wealthy from the abrasiveness of brocade (silk fabric woven with a metal thread) as well as the irritation of woollen fibres and fur linings.

Men's underwear comprised of two simple garments: the shirt, for the upper body and "braies" or "breeches" for the lower. English author and poet, Geoffrey Chaucer described these garments in *The Rime of Sire Tophas*, from his *Canterbury Tales*:

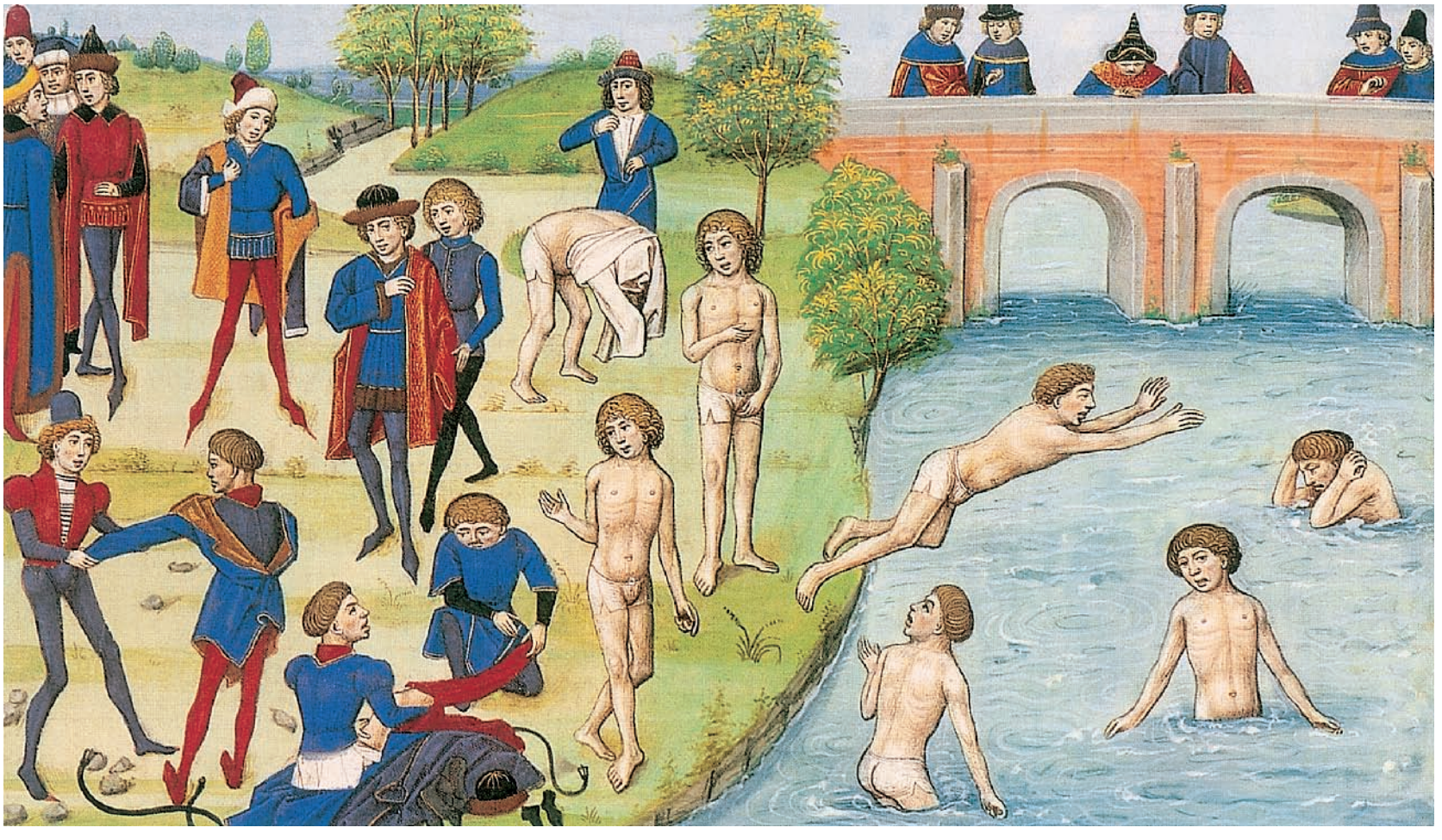
> He didde [put on] next his white lere [skin]
> Of cloth of lake [linen] fin and clere
> A breche and eke [also] a shirte [16]

The shirt, which in various forms was worn by both sexes, is the one garment that has been continuously, until around one hundred years ago, worn as an undergarment next to the skin. It has also retained its basic shape throughout its history. During this period, it was simply made of front and back sections joined by seams across the shoulders and down the sides, with a neck opening large enough to slip over the head, and simple straight-cut cuff-less sleeves. The length of the shirt varied over this period, reaching at different times, the tops of the thighs or the knees (or anywhere in between). The fabric used was dependent upon the class of the wearer; made predominantly of wool, linen or hemp, and occasionally, for the wealthy, silk. The status of the higher ranks was further indicated by the use of embroidery round the neck and at the wrists. By the late fifteenth century, full folds of the fine linen of wealthy men was allowed to billow out and show between the bottom of a short doublet and the top of the hose.

Braies were, in effect, outer garments, only becoming a true undergarment in the middle of the twelfth century when a tunic largely concealed them. At this point, most braies had wide baggy legs reaching to mid-calf, and were fastened round the waist with a "braiel", a string or belt-like girdle. Gradually throughout the century, the seat of braies became fuller and the legs shorter, tucked into long stockings which were fastened with cords to the braie girdle. Over the next century the length varied, reaching between the knee and ankle, but with a tendency to shorten as the century progressed. In the fourteenth century, braies became shorter, and the waistline lowered to the hips. As braies became shorter they also became tighter until, by the beginning of the fifteenth century, they were little more than a loincloth, and by the close of the period resembled modern swimming trunks. The wearing of braies or breeches, as they were increasingly known, was considered a sign of good manners and civilisation. In book four of his *Chronicles,* French chronicler, Jean Froissart described how he "cured" the Irish of their "many boorish and unseemly habits" including remedying the fact that they did not wear breeches, which he sought to achieve by having "a large quantity of linen drawers made and had them sent to their kings and their servants" [17] and teaching them to wear them.

Cleanliness and Morality

Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh believes that "garments covering private parts of the body scarcely ever form part of religious discourse". [18] However, rulings on undergarments did feature as part of many



religion's teachings or codes of conduct. Underwear was worn by some but not all religious orders in the medieval period. In *De officiis (On the Duties of the Clergy),* written circa 391, St. Ambrose discussed modesty in relation to the body parts observing that nature "has taught and persuaded us to cover them." He recommended that loincloths or breeches were worn during clerical duties or when bathing, "with a view to governing modesty and preserving chastity" to comply with the ruling from the Bible: "as it was told Moses by the Lord: 'And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their shame: from the loins even to the thighs they shall reach' and Aaron and his sons shall wear them, when they enter into the tabernacle of witness, and when they come unto the altar of the holy place." [19] The Cistercians, for example, were permitted no underwear, whereas the Benedictine monks of Cluny in France wore linen drawers much like laymen, and each monk was allotted two pairs of braies, along with other garments including two cowls, two gowns, two tunics and five pairs of socks. During the medieval period, underclothes were associated with the body and the idea that the body was sinful and needed constant discipline, such as the wearing of a hair shirt. Underwear also symbolized humility; pilgrims, such as the Lord of Joinville who "[went on pilgrimage] barefoot in my shirt," [20] practiced a form of self-abasement by appearing clad only in their underclothes. It was a short step from this to forcing public appearances in underclothes as a punishment. In 1347, the burghers of Calais were ordered by the English king, Edward III to surrender wearing only their shirts.

The importance of the binary concepts of 'clean' and 'dirty' and their association in differentiating 'inside' and 'outside' in terms of both identity and the body played an important role in how underwear was viewed in many religious and cultural teachings that continued up to the twentieth century. Irish traveller communities, for example, had a ruling that "Outer garments must not be mixed with Inner garments". [21] Thus the traces of dirt that the body had ejected were kept separate from the dirt that is

Page 13.
History of Alexander the Great, illuminated manuscript, 15th century.
Musée du Petit Palais, Paris.

Page 14.
Pieter Aertsen,
Peasants by the Hearth, 1560s.
Oil on wood, 142.3 x 198 cm.
Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp.

accumulated from outside the body, even in the process of washing those clothes. For male Orthodox and Hasidic Jews, the tallit katan (a form of undershirt with fringes or tzitzi) is worn beneath the shirt, but over an undershirt so as not to touch the skin, as part of the fulfilment of the biblical commandment to "bid them that they make them throughout their generations fringes in the corners of their garments, and that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread of blue". [22] Similarly some Hindus wear a Yajñopavitam, or sacred thread underneath their clothing as a marker of having been through the Upanayana ceremony, a rite of passage which marks the beginning of a boy's formal religious education. The Yajñopavitam is supported on the left shoulder and wrapped around the body, falling underneath the right arm.

The clothes of the wealthy and the lower classes throughout this period were similar in style but differed in the fabric used, as well as the detailing and decoration. Wool and linen outer and undergarments were worn by all classes, but aristocracy also wore the much more expensive silk. The wardrobe accounts from 1344-5 of English King Edward III show that he and his family were well supplied with underclothing that was made up by a member of the royal household from lengths of linen supplied to the king's tailor. [23] Historian Virginia Smith argued that the development of underwear which could "trap the body's evacuations in a layer above the skin, allowing fetid bacterial decomposition to

take place" was "apart from the economy, the Church, education, and baths, the greatest single difference in the physical regime of medieval personal hygiene." [24] Standards of hygiene and cleanliness were greater amongst the upper echelons of society, and rules of hospitality required that travellers be offered washing facilities and fresh clothes as well as a bed and food. French sociologist and historian Georges Vigarello has noted how in the Middle Ages, the skin "was seen as porous" and linen undergarments were worn almost as a second skin in order to mop up the body's secretions and those of the parasites that habitually lived on the body. [25] In this respect the undergarments were laundered more frequently than outer garments, forming the habits of organising and meaning of laundering that continued to exist until the present day. Following Vigarello's train of thought, sociologist Elizabeth Shove notes the shirt's role as a "boundary object" forming a protective barrier between the socially significant "outer garments" and "socially anonymous body". [26] Cleaning, or "shifting" as it was known, was undertaken by the wearer in the lower classes. In 1499, German student, Thomas Platter "used to go and wash my shirt on the banks of the Oder … whilst it dried I cleaned my clothes." For aristocracy and Royalty this task was allotted to a dedicated washing man. English King Edward IV's court accounts show that regular money was given to the "lavender man" to obtain "sweet flowers and roots to make the kings gowns and sheets breathe more wholesomely and delectable. [27]

Page 15.
Pieter Brueghel the Elder,
The Wedding Dance, 1566.
Oil on wood, 119.3 x 157.5 cm.
The Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit.

Shirts 1500 – 1603

Until around, 1510 shirts were full cut and had a low square-cut neck, allowing them to be pulled on over the head. Amongst the richer classes, the bands at both the neck and wrist were embroidered as a sign of wealth and social position. As well as being a decorative sign of wealth, this embroidery strengthened the exposed areas of the shirt and disguised soiling. From 1510 onwards, this decorative embroidery began to be replaced by lace decoration or a small frill. Lace was a very desirable but expensive dress accessory and, therefore, what lace was owned was ostentatiously displayed. As the century progressed, the neckline of shirts increased in height and the frill developed into a ruff. Made from "cambric, holland, lawn, and the finest cloth that can be got" [28] they were stiffened with starch in order to stand out from the neck. Men's (or gentlemen's) shirts continued to express social rank, and in England, a Sumptuary Law introduced in 1533 allowed only men over the rank of knight to wear "plaited shirtes or shirtes garnished with silk, gold and silver." [29] Following the Reformation of the early sixteenth century, and mirroring the rise of Puritanism, there was a backlash against such excesses in clothing. However, by the second half of the century it was once again fashionable to expose the shirt which was allowed to spill out from under the doublet. White linen increasingly became the marker of the courtier, and according to Vigarello, changing the shirt daily became normal for men in French court circles by the late sixteenth century, and it was "enough if he always has fine linen and very white" [30] The gradual change in the design of the shirt had a marked impression upon attitudes towards masculinity. The low cut horizontal neckline of the beginning of the century revealed the top of the chest and emphasized the breadth of the wearer's shoulders. As the century progressed and the neckline rose, so the emphasis in shoulders decreased and the symbol of masculinity changed to the codpiece.

The Codpiece

Unlike women, with their farthingale hoops (from 1468), bum rolls or "hausse-cul" from 1580s, French farthingales (wheel or drum shaped struts from waist to hold out the skirt), and Stomachers (bone lined bodices to compress the stomach), men had little in way of artificial structure to add to their under linen. The codpiece was one such item in which padding increased in importance. First appearing around the end of the fourteenth century, the codpiece (which derived its name from an archaic term for the scrotum, and known as "bragetto" in Italian or "braguette" in French) started as a purely practical and utilitarian flap to cover the opening of the hose. It was lightly padded to offer some protection to a vulnerable area. The codpiece was fastened to the hose and short jacket or doublet by points. Sometimes worked on a foundation of leather, they increasingly took on a decorative role, growing in size to almost ridiculous and unnatural proportions. A lined metal codpiece even became a prominent feature of armour. Sixteenth century medical doctor and Catholic monk, François Rabelais devoted several passages of his five volume work *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel* (1532) to the subject of the codpiece, one of them entitled "Why the Codpiece is Held to be the Chief Piece of Armour amongst Warriors". These passages humorously emphasized the dimensions of codpieces: "Panurge insisted on having his codpiece almost a yard long, and cut square rather than round, which was how it was done. And it was a fine sight to see. He often remarked on how little the world understood about the advantages of wearing a good-sized codpiece, remarking philosophically that someday they would learn, as the wheel of time eventually reveals all good things". [31] Unlike underwear which protected in an "invisible" way, codpieces drew attention to the genital area and were often highly decorated. Their main purpose was not a sexual invitation to women, but an aggressive and

Page 16.
Silk Night Shirt Embroidered, c. 1581-1590.
Museum of London, London.

Page 17.
Silk Night Shirt Embroidered (detail), c. 1581-1590.
Museum of London, London.

Page 18.
Henry VIII, c. 1540-1545 (?).
Oil on oak, 237.9 x 134 cm.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

eye-catching warning to men. Its importance was concerned with social, temporal and territorial power rather than just sexual prowess. It became popular right across Europe because its appeal to men wishing to project an image of power was so great. English playwright William Shakespeare highlighted the importance of the codpiece as a key item of men's clothing in his play *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Lucetta, making a male costume as a disguise for Julia says: "Thou must needs have a codpiece, madam. A round hose now's not worth a pin, unless you have a codpiece." [32] The codpiece also served a practical purpose as a pocket in which men carried keys, coins and a handkerchief. In reaction to the increasing popularity of codpieces amongst his fellow countrymen, English pamphleteer Philip Stubb*[e]*s accused them of being "poisoned by the arsenic of pride". [33] Enguerrand de Monstrelet, a chronicler of fourteenth and early fifteenth century Europe, complained that the tight leggings and newly merged breeches and hose (made popular by the Bergundian Grand Duke Philippe III) overemphasised the male member and condemned the wearing of codpieces.

Padding was also evident in both doublets and hose. Cotton and wool were used to pad out doublets to give a fashionable swollen "peascod" belly shape. The lower edge of doublets had a downward point,

Page 19.
Jakob Seisenegger,
Emperor Charles V with a Hound, 1532.
Oil on canvas, 203.5 x 123 cm.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

often reaching twenty four centimetres long, which drew the eye towards the codpiece. Under their doublets, many men wore a waist-length, sleeved or sleeveless, usually padded or quilted, waistcoat, except when the doublet was taken off *en dishabille*. The fact that waistcoats were only worn under doublets meant they were a form of underwear. Hose were divided into two, the upper and lower, also known as upper- and nether stocks, and made from different materials. The lower were developed from traditional hose or stocking (and will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Five). The upper, or trunk hose, were a development of the breeches and gradually became more bulbous in shape and were padded with "bombast" made from cotton, wool or horsehair.

Doublets and Waistcoats

In the early seventeenth century, waistcoats were often called "vests," a term still used by tailors and in the United States. They were made of both simple cheap fabrics, such as linen and more

luxurious ones such as velvet or silk and were frequently embroidered: “[made] of cloth of silver quilted with black silk and tuffed out with fine cambric.” [34] Around the 1630s, it became fashionable for men to leave their waistcoats unbuttoned in both the summer and the winter, displaying their costly and decorated shirtfronts. At the same time the luxurious fabric of shirts was revealed through slashes in the doublet through which the shirt was revealed. This practice had first become fashionable in the 1560s when the silk lining of trunk hose was pulled through vertical slashings and panes. The style was allegedly begun by (mostly) German mercenaries, known as Landsknecht, who wore their battle torn clothes with pride. The wealthy adopted the style, putting one expensive fabric over an even more expensive layer and slashing the top to reveal both layers. French fashion historian, Farid Chenoune reports that tailors were important intermediaries in the transfer of this style into “fashionable” dress.

Shirts 1604 – 1710

The doublet was shortened by 1640, exposing the shirt between the doublet and the breeches. This practice was glorified in portraits of wealthy men during the English Restoration of 1660. Doublets were often left open to expose the shirt or decorated waistcoat. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, stand-up lace collars, which had developed from the ruff, were replaced by flat collars of fine linen or lace, which fell over the doublet top. The middle of the century saw the appearance of the cravat hanging down the front of the shirt and concealing the opening and fastenings. Shirt cuffs reflected this trend changing from a turned back form to ruffles of lawn or lace, which fell onto the hand, characterising superior wealth and rank. The cuffs of coats, which had replaced doublets by the end of the century, were frequently left unbuttoned to further reveal the snowy white luxury of the shirt beneath. For those of lower classes, collars and cuffs were of simpler design without extravagant lace edgings. English naval administrator, Member of Parliament and diarist Samuel Pepys highlighted the aesthetic and social value of clean linen and its importance in personal presentation and thus impression gained by observers: “I do find myself much bound to go handsome; which I shall do in linnen, and so the other things may be all the plainer … Got me ready in the morning and put on my first new laceband; and so neat it is, that I am resolved my great expense shall be lacebands.” [35]

Undershirts were hip-length and known as a “half shirt” and were worn during the summer but sometimes replaced in the winter for warmth by a waistcoat: “this day left off half shirts and put on a wastcoat” Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary on October 31, 1661. [36] Half shirts were fashionable in France and in his *Histoire du Costume* (posthumous publication in 1949); Maurice Leloir refers to them as “camisoles” made of flannel in winter and linen in summer. Two English youths undertaking their Grand Tour in 1670 recorded their Parisian purchases as “4 half shirts laced, 4 pyr of cuffs laced, 4 cravattes, 2 payr of drawers, two payr stockings fr. 90. 10.” and “2 payr half shirts for me, a cravatte, 2 pyr cuffs fr.32”. [37]

Costume historians C. Willet and Phyllis Cunnington argue that during the seventeenth century was the last time that men attempted to give their underclothes an erotic suggestion. This eroticism reappeared in the late twentieth century, almost half a century after the Cunnington’s were writing. They quote Mrs. Aphra Behn’s comedy of 1677 in which a man in an amorous scene is dressed only in “his shirt and drawers” and this was a kind of male striptease which was highly attractive to the play’s female (and although the Cunningtons do not suggest it, we with the benefit of twenty-first century hindsight might suppose, a male homosexual) audience.

Page 20.
Sir Anthony van Dyck,
Lucas and Cornelis de Wael, c. 1627.
Oil on canvas, 120 x 101 cm.
Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome.

Page 21.
Johann Ulrich Mayr,
Self Portrait with One Hand on an Ancient Bust, 1650.
Oil on canvas, 107 x 88.5 cm.
Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

Page 22.
Frans Pourbus the Younger,
Henri IV (1553–1610), King of France, Dressed in Black, 1610 (?).
Oil on wood, 39 x 25 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Page 23.
Frans Pourbus the Younger,
Portrait of Louis XIII, King of France, as a Child, 1611.
Oil on canvas, 180 x 90 cm.
Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

Drawers 1604 – 1710

From the mid-seventeenth, century trunk hose lost their padding and grew in length to become (knee) breeches, making the final transfer from under- to outer clothes. Under their breeches men wore two varieties of "drawers": a long version reaching to the ankle with a stirrup to stop it from slipping, made of linen or, for winter, worsted, and a short version, usually of silk that was fastened at the front with ribbons. By the end of the seventeenth century most men, of all but the poorest classes, wore washable linen breeches linings, which were tied above or below the knee and at the waist, and prevented abrasion from wool, or damage to silk, breeches. For those men who did not wear drawers, tucking the tails of long shirts between their legs acted as a substitute, and protected the breeches from bodily soiling.

The Sikh Kacha

As part of his establishment of a new baptised brotherhood of Sikhs, the Khalsa, on March 30, 1699, the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, specified five articles of faith. The kasha (long hair), kangha (comb),


東洲齋寫樂画

kara (steel bracelet), kirpan (sword), and kacha (drawers) were to be worn at all by baptised Sikhs times as symbols of their belief and to represent the ideals of Sikhism. The kacha (variously spelt as khaccha, kachhehra, kachera and kakar and usually translated as breeches) were specifically given as a reminder about the control of the Five Evils, specifically lust or Kam. The kacha was the same for both men and women of all castes, thus a unisex garment that could be meant to eliminate divisions and inequality between the genders. However, as historian Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh notes, the kacha is usually understood as a male garment and has been variously described in texts about Sikhism as useful for "male protection", "soldierly duties", "control of the penis" and a way of abandoning "effeminate submissiveness" and "Hindu customs and superstitions." [38] The kacha took the form of a tailored, sewn, shorts-like garment, as an opposition to the wrapped dhoti worn by Hindu men and so related to the rejection and abandonment of Hindu Brahmin teaching. It was secured and tied with a drawstring or nala, which served as a reminder when untying the drawstring the wearer was given time to think about any action to be undertaken. Originally, it was intended to be made from a thick coarse cloth with many folds at the front which Ravi Batra explained was "to provide a little cushion and consequently protection to the most vulnerable part of the body from any blow of the enemy in hand to hand combat." [39] Whilst the fabric used in the construction of the kacha changed, and is today popularly made with less protective folds and usually from lightweight white cotton, the essential shape is the same as the original garments that were easy to fabricate, maintain, wash and carry, compared to other undergarments of the day, like the dhoti or lungi.

The Japanese Fundoshi

In both China and Japan at around the same period, an untailored wrapped cloth was worn as underwear. A form of loincloth, the Japanese fundoshi (or shita-obi) was initially made of linen but from around 1600 (the beginning of the Edo period) cotton became more commonplace and the fundoshi was increasingly made from cotton. Statues from the (Haniwa) of Kofun Period (c. 300-710) and a mention in the *Nihon Shoki' Chronicles of Japan*, finished in 720, demonstrate that this form of clothing was already being worn at that time. [40] The fundoshi was worn by all classes in Japan, but had a particular association with the military class of Samurai during the Sengoku period (1568-1615). The samurai also wore an undershirt, known as a shitagi. Similar to a kimono but with narrow sleeves, it was wrapped over across the body and fastened with a belt tied at the back. Dress historian Valery M. Garrett noted that during the Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), "underwear consisted of a thinner robe of silk worn with a sash around the waist." [41] The fundoshi became the standard under garment for all classes (for both men and women) until just after the Second World War, when western-style underwear was increasingly adopted for everyday use. As in many other Eastern countries, the fundoshi / loincloth was acceptable as the only garment worn by men when working during the hot summer months, particularly in lower class trades such as filed labourers or grooms.

Cleanliness in the Seventeenth Centuries

Cleanliness was not of great importance during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and most people, even of high rank, were generally dirty, often verminous, and infrequently washed in water. The "dry wash," the changing or "shifting" of undergarments was more common and was a sign of a disciplined and refined body, as French historian, Daniel Roche has noted: "Expressing a hygiene

Page 24.
Tōshūsai Sharaku,
Ichikawa Omezō in the Role of Tomita Heitarō and Ōtani Oniji III in the Role of Kawashima Jubugorō, 1794.
Colour woodblock print, 38.8 x 25.8 cm.
Honolulu Academy of Arts, Honolulu.

different from our own, conforming to the moral style of "good manners", suited to the technological capacity of an age when water was scarce, the invention of linen marked the apogee of an aristocratic civilisation in which appearances were all important." [42] Two contemporary pieces of writing emphasise this practice. The Duchess of Newcastle described how her husband "shifts ordinarily once a day, and every time when he uses Exercise, or his temper is more hot than ordinary," [43] while Sir John Oglander (1585–1655) writes contemptuously of "a heavy, dull, drunken fellow, slovenly and nasty, a man in wants, scarce having linen to keep him sweet". [44] In 1626, a fashionable French architect noted how contemporary society could manage without domestic baths "because our use of linen, which today serves to keep the body clean, more conveniently than could the steam-baths and baths of the ancients, who were denied the use and convenience of linen". [45]

The increasing popularity for silk and linen worn next to the skin can be attributed to the fact that they were less liable to harbour lice than woollen garments, as lice preferred to live on bodies clothed in animal product fibres: "[give me] a lace shirt to keep me from lice" demanded Thomas Verney, in *Verney Memoirs* (1639). [46] In England, this dislike of wearing wool may have been further accentuated by a Parliamentary Act of 1678, which decreed that people could be buried in no fabric "other than what is made of sheep's wool only." [47] White linen undergarments could also be easily and frequently hand washed, as they were durable and hard wearing, albeit they creased easily. They were washed by trampling in cold water, wrung out and laid on grass or a hedge to dry. The sun was the main means of whitening, although some bleaching and cleaning agents such as the traditional stale urine, which contained ammonia, were known and used. By the mid-seventeenth century, new agents like lye (an alkaline solution from wood or plant ashes), mixed with water to produce "buckwash," were discovered and became more commonly used. Standards of cleanliness improved further in late seventeenth century. Hot water, boiled in a copper and soap were more generally used for washing linen, and smoothing stones and flat irons were rigorously employed to smooth out the creases.

Shirts 1711 – 1799

During the eighteenth century, the prominent display of white shirts continued to act as a visible marker of social class. At the beginning of the century, shirts were voluminous with ruffles down the front, and waistcoats and jackets were worn open to reveal the shirtfront. From around 1710, the hanging cravat was gradually replaced by a horizontal neck cloth, worn tightly around the neck, developing into a stock and leaving the increasingly elaborately ruffled and embroidered shirt front exposed: "his new silk waistcoat which was unbuttoned in several places to let us see that he had a clean shirt on which was ruffled down to his middle," reported *The Spectator* in July 1711. The front ruffle indicated that a man was not a manual worker, and while ruffles were often detachable for washing, jabots were not, and so a fashionable gentleman would require a large number of shirts. The *Tatler* (1710) described a fop who wore "twenty shirts a week." The neckband of the shirt also grew to form an attached collar which, in France, was high enough to be turned down over the neck cloth. In a similar way, the large open cuffs of coats revealed the sleeves of the shirts. Ruffles and cuffs were often still trimmed with lace. In the second half of the century, the shirt was used far less as an extravagant display of wealth and the size of ruffles decreased as did the use of lace. The wealthier a man the more necessary shirts and linen he would have in reserve, as well as having the room to store it and in the late eighteenth century a household tradition of holding weekly, monthly and three monthly washes developed. The more ostensibly wealthy the family, the more infrequent the wash and the wash cycle, therefore, it became a sign of social class. The number of shirts and the frequency of changing and

Page 27.
William Hogarth,
After, c. 1730-1731.
Oil on canvas, 38.7 x 33.7 cm.
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.