

“Ena silkes tröya” – clothing bequests in Finnish medieval wills

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies bequeathing practices and clothing terminology in medieval Finnish wills found from the Diplomatarium Fennicum database and compares them to other Nordic countries. The use of wills as a source for dress and textile studies is discussed and the concept of clothing bequests is examined. The material shows how clothing donations demonstrate the medieval practice of gift-giving, where favours, allegiance, and power were traded and negotiated with tangible objects, such as clothing, that had both monetary as well as symbolic value. After this, clothing terminology is discussed with the help of previous Nordic research and different clothing terms used in the wills are presented and analysed. The study indicates that clothing was bequeathed in the same ways as in other Nordic countries using similar terms. Finally it is suggested that the source-based terminology should be used together with modern neutral terminology especially when the language of the research is different from the language of the sources to accurately communicate the information to others.

Keywords: Middle Ages, wills, clothing, dress terminology, Finland, gift-giving.

1. Introduction

In the Middle Ages even mundane, everyday items had value because of the high cost of materials and labour. Items were used, reused, resold, and recycled many times during their life cycles. Clothing and textiles were no different, and they were worn down, repaired, altered to fit the new fashions, and in the end used as rags or shrouds (Østergård 2004; Crowfoot et al. 2006). Clothing was also commonly passed down from generation to generation, and items of clothing are quite often mentioned in wills. This paper both studies wills from the medieval era in Finland and discusses how wills can be used as a source for dress history and investigates what kind of clothing people owned and how and to whom they bequeathed them.

The Middle Ages in Finland takes place roughly between 12th and 16th century, from the start of the literary culture in the middle of the 12th century to the political and religious uproars of the Swedish Kingdom in the early 16th century. The establishment of the Swedish rule happened gradually in the 12th and 13th centuries and at first the term ‘Finland’ mainly referred to the southwest coastal area; it later came to denote all the eastern areas of the Kingdom of Sweden. The diocese of Turku covered all these areas east of the Gulf of Bothnia and is used in this article to refer to the administrative area of medieval Finland (Lamberg et al. 2009, 14–17).

In Finland, medieval dress has been a scarcely researched subject. Most of the archaeological material is too fragmented for dress research (Kirjavainen 2004 and 2009), although remains of a woolen dress that was probably used to dress a Virgin Mary statue has been preserved in the Turku Cathedral (Kirjavainen 2013). As such, it is an interesting but problematic item of clothing and does not necessarily represent the kind of clothing people used in everyday life. However, in addition to archaeological material, a vast though fragmented amount of written documentation has been collected into several publications, and this material can offer a different view on the subject. In this study the *Diplomatarium Fennicum* (DF) internet database is used, and though it does not contain all



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|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Skällvik | 8. Kemiö |
| 2. Stockholm | 9. Perniö |
| 3. Geta | 10. Inkoo |
| 4. Mietoinen | 11. Hämeenkyrö |
| 5. Naantali | 12. Sääksmäki |
| 6. Nousiainen | 13. Vyborg |
| 7. Turku | |

Map 2. Placenames mentioned in the article of Lempiäinen. Illustration: K. Vajanto.

the medieval material from Finland, it holds an extensive selection of documents from the middle of the 12th century to the 1530s AD.¹

This study puts a special note on terminology. Because of the limited amount of research there is a lack of common practice when it comes to medieval dress terminology in Finland. When a historian touches the subject or an archaeologist describes a finding it is easy to reference the most well-known works of European dress history and adopt the terms, even though they might never have been used in Finland or the meaning of the term might have changed. This paper investigates what terms were used in Finnish wills and what the terms meant, and aims to create a basis for more accurate terminological practices. Medieval dress terminology has been previously researched by historians including Hjalmar Falk, Camilla Luise Dahl and Eva I. Andersson, but they have focused respectively on Icelandic and Norwegian, Scandinavian and Swedish materials, and a study centring solely on Finnish material does not exist. In medieval Finland documents were written in Swedish or Latin and therefore it is easy to compare the terms between different Nordic countries.

2. Wills and bequeathing practice in the Turku diocese

There are 38 wills in the *Diplomatarium Fennicum* database that could be defined as Finnish, i.e. made by persons who lived or were active in the area of the medieval Turku diocese (Map 2). In addition to this, 5 will excerpts or other documents depicting the content of the wills have been included in the survey. Thus the number of will documents is 43, and of these documents, 15 bequeath clothing. The wills range from 1287 to 1526 and the ones with clothing are dated between 1326 and 1512. Three of these wills are written in Latin and the rest in Swedish. Knight Henrik Klasson and his wife Lucia Olofsdotter each made four wills, resulting in a total of 11 testators, i.e. people who made wills before their death. Lucia Olofsdotter was the only female testator, and of the men seven were nobles and three were clergymen. The material is by no means statistical, but it can still give some interesting information on clothing used and bequeathed in the Turku diocese (Table 1).

The most common property bequeathed in the wills is land, and several wills in the Turku diocese only list immovable property. Land was the most important source of wealth during the Middle Ages, and different laws and conventions, which varied by time and place, were created to protect family estates. In Sweden laws such as King Magnus Eriksson's law² from 1347 and King Christopher's law from 1442 controlled the order of inheritance. According to the laws, the primary heirs were the children of the deceased and their offspring, but if there were no relatives half of the estate went to the crown or in the case of clergymen, to the bishop (Koivusalo 2005, 48–60; Tolvanen 2012, 114–17). Inheritance laws' main purpose was to protect the hereditary estates from falling into strange hands, and the law guaranteed relatives the right of redemption of these lands. However, testators were able to bequeath self-acquired land and movable property as they wished (Aarnio 1991, 74). Thus, if the testators wanted to bequeath their property to someone other than their lawful heirs they could make a will. For example, in 1578 Philippa Fleming, sister of the Governor of Finland, Clas Fleming, left her brother with nothing, accusing him bitterly of negligence and unwillingness to hand over her share of their maternal inheritance (Lahtinen 2007, 136–42). Often a will could also be the means to secure the livelihood of a surviving spouse and children, to ensure heirs' rights to inheritance or to leave something to friends and servants. The movable property bequeathed by the testator could be money, an instruction to acquire a certain item or some personal belongings of the testator. For example, in 1512 Klemet Högenskind, a squire, left among other things a gold ring, a spoon and

¹ Primarily from the reference books *Registrum Ecclesiae Aboensis eller Åbo Domkyrkas svartbok* (1980) and *Finlands medeltidsurkunder* parts 1–8 (1910–1935), both edited by Reinhold Hausen.

² This was never formally ratified by the king (Tolvanen 2012, 114).

Table 1. Wills used in the study. The ones with reference to clothing are marked in bold.

Year	Place	Testator	Rank	Sign
1287	Skällvik	Benedikt	bishop	DF 189
1289	Skällvik	Benedikt	bishop	DF 197
1326	-	Matts Kettilmundsson	Governor	DF 328
1330	Perniö	Peter and Brynhild	nobles	DF 378, REA 55
1335	Turku	Asker	vicar	DF 418, REA 77
1355	Turku	Henrik Tempil	priest	DF 649, REA 160
1366	Vyborg	Torstanus	vicar	DF 745, REA 198
1445	Nousiainen	Henrik Klasson (Djäken)	knight	DF 2604
1445	Nousiainen	Lucia Olofsdotter	noble	DF 2605
1445	Stockholm	Henrik Markerland	vicar	DF 2628
1447	-	Greger Andersson (Garp)	noble	DF 2730
1449	Turku	Bengt Lydikesson	squire	DF 2830, REA 544
1449	Mietoinen	Henrik Klasson (Djäken)	knight	DF 2817
1449	Mietoinen	Lucia Olofsdotter	noble	DF 2818
1450	Turku	Gregers of Pakinainen	noble	DF 2839
1451	Turku	Lasse Bertilsson and Truda	squire	DF 2878
1451	Mietoinen	Lucia Olofsdotter	noble	DF 2886
1452	Turku	Henrik Klasson (Djäken)	knight	DF 2908
1453	Mietoinen	Henrik Klasson (Djäken)	knight	DF 2918
1454	Turku	Bengt Lydikesson	squire	DF 2950, REA 569
1455	Mietoinen	Lucia Olofsdotter	noble	DF 2970
1455	Stockholm	Jöns Henriksson	-	DF 2979
1459	Hämeenkyrö	Arvid Klasson (Djäken)	noble	DF 3090, REA 588
1459	Hämeenkyrö	Arvid Klasson (Djäken)	noble	DF 3091, REA 589
1459	Hämeenkyrö	Arvid Klasson (Djäken)	noble	DF 3092
c. 1470	-	Klas Jönsson	-	DF 3462, REA 623
1473 or 1474	-	Nils of Pedersöre	noble	DF 3563
1479	Inkoo	Jap Olsson	peasant	DF 3807
c. 1483	Turku	Håkan Frille	priest	DF 3984, REA 618
1484	Geta	Kort Hartviksson	squire	DF 4010
1486	Mietoinen	Hartvik Japsson	squire	DF 4111
1489	-	Konrad Bitz	bishop	DF 4236
1492	Naantali	Niklis Finvidsson	-	DF 4402
1494	Sääksmäki	Knut Bitz	squire	DF 4538
1502	-	Magnus	archdeacon	DF 4960
1504	-	Henrik Fris	vicar	DF 5028
1504	Kemiö	Olof Olofsson	-	DF 5091
1505	Naantali	Gudmund Anundsson	-	DF 5118
1505	Naantali	Jöns Larensen	mayor	DF 5160
1508	Perniö	Magnus Frille	squire	DF 5309
1510 or 1511	-	Jacob of Porvoo	noble	DF 5495
1512	Turku	Klemet Hogenskild	squire	DF 5622
1526	Turku	Jöns Västgöte	castellan	DF 6277

four ells of red velvet (*flogel*) to his brother Erik, as well as rye for the lepers.³ However, wills did not usually list all the worldly possessions of the testator, but instead the bequeathed items were part of an intricate gift giving practice that shaped social networks in medieval society (Lahtinen 2010; Kallio 2011, 67–75). For example, in 1445 the vicar of Äyräpää, Henrik Markerland, bequeathed clothing to his will’s executors so that they would faithfully fulfil his will as he wished.⁴

The Catholic Church, too, wanted to get their share of people’s worldly possessions, and in a papal bull from 1274, the pope urged people to name Christ as one of their sons and bequeath property to the Church (Aarnio 1991, 72). This advice was clearly well received, since the Church was the most common consignee for will bequests in Sweden (Andersson 2006, 23), and it was also remem-

3 DF 5622.

4 DF 2628.

bered in all the wills from the Turku diocese. Usually people bequeathed land, money, small metal items or textiles to the Turku Cathedral or Naantali monastery, but the local churches of the testators were also remembered. By leaving something for the Church the testator could also ensure a burial place and requiem masses for themselves. For example, in 1484 a squire, Kort Hartviksson, gave a tunic (*kjortel*), a jacket (*tröja*), and a pair of socks (*hosor*) to the sacristan of Finnström for one year of bell ringing in his memory.⁵

In most cases, when a testator bequeathed clothing it was something that they already owned. Usually the clothing had been used by the testators themselves, but sometimes they gave away clothing they had inherited or otherwise come to possess. For example, in a Swedish will from the 1350s a father bequeathed his late wife's clothing to their daughter (Dahl 2005, 21–22). Thus, in some cases where a testator left clothing for an opposite sex they were not bequeathing their own clothing. In other cases however, it is clear that the clothes had been the testator's own. For example, in 1451 Lucia Olofsdotter left her brown lined dress (*kjortel*) to master Henrik and her best hood (*hätta*) to master Nils.⁶ In these kinds of cases either the clothing used by men and women was so similar that they could be used by the opposite sex with little or no alteration (and based on visual sources this indeed was the case with several items of clothing), or they were given in order to be sold or altered.

Another common way of bequeathing clothing was to leave money or fabric for clothes that were to be made for the heir. It is usually impossible to know if the testator owned the fabric he or she left, or if the fabric was to be bought with money from the estate. In 1484 Kort Hartviksson bequeathed tabby for a gown (*kopa*) for his mother, his wife's sister and his two maids⁷ and in 1486 a squire, Hartvik Japsson, bequeathed cloth for a tunic or a dress (*kiortel*) for three people.⁸ In these cases it is possible that the testators would have already owned the fabrics, but when Torstanus, the vicar of Vyborg, left 100 ells of *vadmal*, a locally produced coarse wool, for the poor,⁹ it is quite clear that the fabric was yet to be acquired.

When clothing is mentioned in the wills it is usually done in a frugal manner, for example *myna swarte kapa* (my black gown) or *ena silkes tröya* (one jacket of silk), and the typology of the clothing can be difficult to deduce. If clothing is described at all, the will may mention a colour, material, possible lining or decorations. Thus, unlike archaeological and visual sources, the wills do not directly answer the question of what clothes looked like, how they were made, or in what context they were worn, but they can give information on the clothing terms and types of clothing as well as colours and materials. Another clear advantage of wills and other documents as a source is that they listed clothes that actually existed or at least were to be made according to the wishes of the testator. In other words, the wills were not written with the idealism and artistic interpretation that might be found in literature and visual sources. (Andersson 2004a.)

However, a problem with the wills as a source is that most of them are made by the upper classes. Since members of the gentry were wealthier and had more property to leave behind than the lower classes, they were also more prone to make wills. Therefore wills can easily skew our understanding of the clothing in the Middle Ages. Kirsten M. Burkholder (2005, 137) found out in her research on English wills made between 1327 and 1487 that the social status of the testators correlated to the amount of textiles they bequeathed. In the Turku diocese only nobles and the members of the clergy bequeathed clothing at all; the only peasant among the testators did not list any textiles in his will and only very few items of movable property. Instead, the lower classes appear in the wills mainly as the heirs. Many servants got at least part of their wage in clothing (Andersson 2004b, 189), and they were also frequently bequeathed clothing once their employer passed away. Donated clothing could be for everyday use, but occasionally servants received their masters' old clothes to be used as their "Sunday

5 DF 4010.

6 DF 2886.

7 DF 4010.

8 DF 4111.

9 DF 745.

best”. Servants could also get clothes based solely on the resale value (Dahl 2005, 21). In the Turku diocese, only Mats Kettilmundsson, Governor of Finland, and a squire Kort Hartviksson remembered their servants with clothing in their wills. The former bequeathed among other things a tunic (*tunica*) and a cloak (*capa*) to the head of the masons and to his messenger¹⁰ and the latter left tabby for his two maids to be made into gowns (*kopa*).¹¹

The age of the bequeathed clothing is not always evident in the wills, and thus it is difficult to know how fashionable the clothes were, although in many wills there are clothes listed as being old. However, textiles were valuable enough to be reused and altered, and different embellishments could be transferred from one item of clothing to another. Clothing was an important marker of status in medieval society; visual messages were conveyed through appearances and were carefully observed by others (Piponnier and Mane 1997, 83). Thus donation and bequeathing of clothing served both as a monetary gift and a way to establish a socio-economic status, as well as a means to trade favours or allegiance.

Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that even though textiles were valuable, smaller less expensive items such as socks and underclothes are not necessarily listed in the wills. In the Turku diocese socks, *hose*, and men’s under shirts both appear in only one will, and women’s undergarments or caps and veils are not listed at all. Clearly in most cases only the more valuable textiles and the ones the testator wanted to donate to a specific person were listed in the wills.

3. Clothing and clothing terms in the Turku diocese wills

3.1. Terminology system

With medieval material there always raises the question of terminology. It can be difficult to express one’s research in writing, since the terms employed in Medieval documents are no longer in use; in the case of these Finnish wills, the difficulty is compounded by the fact that they were originally written in “foreign” languages, i.e. Swedish and Latin. Common terminology is especially important when researchers from different fields wish to transfer their knowledge and communicate with each other. Camilla Luise Dahl (2005, 2007a and 2009) has written much about medieval clothing terminology and about different terminology systems and the terminological method in this survey is based on her work.

Dahl (2009) has pointed out that researchers tend to use archaic terminology, modern descriptive terminology, or source-based terminology when describing clothing. Archaic terminology refers to the terms that are used to bring historical ambience to the subject and to simulate historical vocabulary that is no longer in use. However, in many cases the meaning of the word has changed since the Middle Ages and the terms are used in their anachronistic 17th to 19th century meanings. Archaic terminology has traditionally been used in Nordic countries, but it has been replaced especially in the field of archaeology by the modern neutral terminology. Here neutral terms such as headwear are used, and they can be further elaborated with terms such as hat or veil or with additional explanatory descriptions. Descriptive terminology is used especially when the aim is not to link a piece of clothing to a certain source-based term, but to describe a find or remnant. The advantage of the source-based terminology, where the terms used to describe the clothing are the same as in the original medieval sources, is consistency and clarity, but the interpretation of a certain term can sometimes be very challenging and depend on the scholar’s own understanding. Dahl also argues that, as with today, people in the Middle Ages also used a variety of different terms to describe clothing, and some of these were more specific than others. She divides these into generic, semi-specific and specific terms. For instance, we might call trousers by many names. A generic term would be trousers, a semi-specific term

¹⁰ DF 328.

¹¹ DF 4010.

Table 2. Clothing terms used in the Turku diocese. When an item of clothing is mentioned in plural, it is marked with a star (*) and counted as two.

Term	Year	Characteristics	Total
bonath	1449, 1451	nothing (1449, 1451)	2
capa (Lat.)	1326, 1326, 1326, 1326	nothing (1326, 1326, 1326), of cloth of Ghent (1326)	4
capucio (Lat.)	1355	nothing (1355)	1
fellebordh	1445	nothing (1445)	1
ganh kläder	1445, 1449	nothing (1449), gowns, tunics and other (1445)	2
hätta	1449, 1451, 1484	nothing (1451, 1484), best (1449)	3
hosor	1484, 1484	nothing (1484, 1484)	2
huffue	1512, 1512, 1512	yellow (1512, 1512, 1512)	3
kopa/kappa	1449, 1449, 1449, 1451, 1453, 1455*, 1455, 1455, 1484, 1484, 1484, 1484, 1486, 1486	nothing (1455*), best (1449), best with decoration (1449, 1451), best with silver on the corners (1455), red (1455), red with lining (1449), black (1453), black tabby (1484), brown of cloth of Leiden (1486), green (1486), tabby (1484, 1484, 1484)	15
kiortel	1445*, 1445, 1445, 1449, 1449, 1449, 1451, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1453, 1455, 1455, 1484, 1484, 1486, 1486, 1486, 1486, 1486, 1508, 1512	nothing (1445*, 1484, 1486), brown (1455, 1484), brown cloth of Ypres (1445), brown with leg furs of fox (1445), brown lined (1451), brown cloth of Leiden (1486), black lined with marten (1449, 1452, 1453), best black (1449), black fox fur (1512), red (1449), red lined (1451), green (1543, 1455), of cloth (1486, 1486, 1486), blue (1508)	23
vestitu/par vestimentorum (Lat.)	1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326	nothing (1326), fitting for a solder (1326), whole (1326), whole with various linings (1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1326)	9
skjorta	1512, 1512, 1512	nothing (1512, 1512, 1512)	3
toga (Lat.)	1355	doubled (=lined with cloth) with a hood (1355)	1
tröja	1449, 1484	nothing (1484), of silk (1449)	2
tunica (Lat.)	1326, 1326, 1326, 1326, 1510 or 1511	nothing (1326, 1326, 1326), of cloth of Ghent (1326), simple and better (1510 or 1511).	5
subductura (Lat.)	1510 or 1511	of squirrel fur (1510 or 1511).	1

would be shorts, and a specific term would be Bermuda shorts. Medieval scripts could choose from a wide variety of different terms which they then used in the way that was logical to them, as well as adding descriptive attributes.

During the 14th century clothing terms in Scandinavia seemed to change from gender-specific to gender neutral and from specific into more generic (Dahl 2009) and Turku diocese is no exception. There are relatively few different terms that were used to describe clothing and as most of the wills are from the 15th century, the terms are gender-neutral and mainly generic.

This means that the terms found in the wills may be grouped into main categories, such as underclothes, leg coverings, main layers, headwear and decorations, but a specific typological distinction is very hard to make, especially since descriptive attributes are only occasionally added to the terms. It has also been necessary to use the previous works of especially Dahl (2005, 2006, 2007a, 2007b) and Andersson (2006) to deduct the meaning and interpretation of the terms as there is so little material compared to Sweden and Denmark.

In the research material 16 different terms were used to describe clothing, while clothing was mentioned altogether 77 times. However, some garments were mentioned several times in the wills made by Henrik Klasson Djäken and his wife Lucia Olofsdotter. Six terms were Latin and the rest Swedish (Table 2).

3.2. Underclothes and leg coverings

The only piece of underclothing mentioned in the wills is *skjorta*, a men's shirt that was worn under other layers. Women's underdress was called *särk*, but it is not mentioned in the wills. These under-



Fig. 1. The marriage of Mary and Joseph. Mary is wearing a loose dress (*kiortel*) and Joseph a tunic (*kiortel*) and socks (*hosor*). From an early 16th century mural painting in the Church of the Holy Cross in Hattula, Finland. Drawing: A-M. Grönroos.



Fig. 2. Two men wearing tight fitting jackets (*tröja*), detail from the Cenotaph of Saint Henry, c. 1415–1420 (The Church of St. Henry in Nousiainen, Finland). Drawing: A-M. Grönroos.

clothes could have been made of any material, although linen and hemp were apparently preferred (Dahl 2006, 5–8). Klemet Hogenskild left a shirt each to three men in 1512, but did not specify the material.¹²

Leg coverings include *hosor*, long socks (English term “hose”) that men used throughout the Medieval Period as main leg covers. They attached to breeches, belt or jacket and were usually made of wool (Figs. 1 and 2). During the 15th century a middle gusset joined the legs together, forming a pair of trousers. Women used knee length socks with garters under their dresses, but the only socks mentioned in the material are the two pairs in the will of Kort Hartviksson from 1484, in which he leaves one pair to the sacristan of Finström and one pair to Hartvik Markusson along with a brown tunic (*kiortel*) and a hood (*hätta*).¹³ Even though socks were the only leg coverings used by men it is no wonder that they are not mentioned more often in the wills since they wore down relatively quickly and required little fabric, and were therefore of relatively little value.

3.3. Main layers

In the early 14th century a tight fitting jacket called *tröja* was originally an under layer worn by men underneath the armour, and socks were attached with laces to its hem. *Tröja* is similar to the English term “doublet”, and as the name suggests it was double layered, i.e. lined (Geijer et al. 1994, 47). Jackets were closed with either buttons or lacing. During the 14th century, with the arrival of the more tight fitting fashion, it started to be used visibly (Fig. 2); in 1449 and 1484 when jackets are mentioned in the wills of Henrik Klasson¹⁴ and Kort Hartviksson¹⁵ respectively, they are already used as a main layer. The will of Henrik Klasson especially mentions the jacket being made of silk.

Kjortel or *tunica* in Latin was the most common clothing term during the Middle Ages and it was used all over Nordic countries even after the Middle Ages (Pylkkänen 1956, 106–9, 116–20). It could

12 DF 5622.

13 DF 4010.

14 DF 2817.

15 DF 4010.



Fig. 3. A woman wearing a tight fitting dress (*kiortel*) and a man sporting a fur lined gown (possibly a *kopa*) with buttons, detail from the Cenotaph of St. Henry, c. 1415–1420 (The Church of St. Henry in Nousiainen, Finland). Drawing: A.-M. Grönroos.

have been used as almost any layer of dress, from underclothing to outer clothing, and by both genders. The meaning of the term changed from the loose, long tunic or dress of the early Middle Ages into a short, tight fitting jacket, dress, or even loose coat (Figs. 1, 2, and 3). The term was never fixed to mean a certain layer of a certain outfit, as is the case with English “kirtle” during the 14th century (Dahl 2007b, 4–5). *Kjortel* and *tunica* were the most common clothing terms in the wills, appearing 28 times in total. The bequeathed dresses and tunics were mainly red, brown, green and black, and sometimes they were mentioned as being lined, occasionally with fur. Klemet Hogenskild even bequeathed one tunic made out of black fox.¹⁶

Another common term in the wills of the Turku diocese is *kopa* (also *kåpa*, *kapa*). Andersson (2006, 84–94) connects these terms to Latin *cappa*, and interprets all these terms to mean a sleeveless cloak-like garment typologically similar to Latin *mantel*. Dahl (2005, 39–74), however, suggests that these terms are not equivalent, but instead have meant different types of garments in different times. According to her, *kopa* (Danish *kåbe*) was originally a woman’s loose gown with or without sleeves that could be used as an upper or outer garment, whereas Latin *cappa* covered many types of cloaks, mantels and gowns, some of them used by both genders. In 1326 Mats Kettilmundsson bequeathed to his four friends and servants a tunic and a *capa* each,¹⁷ and in this case *capa* is to be understood as a cloak. From the late 14th century men started to use long gowns too (Fig. 3), and at that point *kopa* could also mean men’s gown. An exact typological analysis is, however, very difficult to make, especially since *kappa* was still used to depict men’s mantle (Dahl 2005, 39–74). It is sometimes challenging to distinguish these terms from each other, and for this reason, the two terms are grouped together in this survey (see Table 2). *Kopa* is mentioned in the wills 15 times by both men and women. It is uncertain if the *kopas* the men bequeathed were cloaks or gowns, but Lucia Olofsdotter donates several gowns, and one is decorated with silver.¹⁸ Interestingly, in her second will from 1449, she bequeaths a red lined gown (*kopa*) to her sister,¹⁹ but in her third will her sister is to receive a red lined dress (*kiortel*),²⁰ and in her fourth will it is a red gown again.²¹ This might indicate that since clothing terms became more generic and broader in meaning, the variation between different clothing items became less clear, especially if they were not that different in appearance.

Toga is another term used to signify upper and outer garments of both gender. It has possibly been used as a general term to depict a finer garment. In 1355 priest Henrik Tempil left for his tenant Nicolaus “j togam duplicatam cum capucio”.²² The term ‘double’ means that the garment is lined with the same cloth as it is made of. It is however unclear if the hood (*capucio*) is an integral part of, or separate from, the garment.

In addition to single clothing terms, the wills also mention terms *gångh kläder* and *par vestimentorum* in Latin, which both mean an outfit or a group of clothes. *Gångh kläder* literally translates

16 DF 5622.

17 DF 328.

18 DF 2818, DF 2886, DF 2970.

19 DF 2818.

20 DF 2886.

21 DF 2970.

22 DF 649.



Fig. 4. Devil's banquet. The two men on left and right corners are wearing their hoods (*hätta*) fashionably set so that the face opening is worn on top of their head. The man on the left has also wrapped the tail of the hood around his head. The man sitting on a right end of the table is wearing a long gown. From an early 16th century mural painting in the Church of the Holy Cross in Hattula, Finland. Drawing: A-M. Grönroos.

to walking clothes, i.e. everyday clothing, and it could apparently include several different types of clothing. The vicar of Äyräpää bequeathed his *kåpas*, *kiortels*, that is, his gowns and tunics, and other *gangh kläder* to his will's executors.²³ On the other hand, Henrik Klasson left one pair of his everyday clothing (*ett par*) to his servant, indicating that the term could also mean a specific set of clothing.²⁴ According to Andersson (2006, 122–25) *par vestimentorum* meant a set of clothes that were to be used together and were usually also made of the same material.

3.4. Headwear

As for the headwear, only a few pieces are mentioned in the wills. *Hätta*, or *capucio* in Latin, was a type of hood that was used by both men and women all through the Middle Ages (Andersson 2006, 114; Dahl 2007a, 170). It consisted of a hood and a cowl that usually covered the shoulders and it could be either pulled over the head or closed with buttons at the front, and in the 14th century a long tail was attached to it. At the end of the century men started to position the opening intended for the face over the top of the head and to wrap the tail round their head, creating a new turban-style fashion (Fig. 4, Rosendahl 2009, 24). The basic shape of the hood, however, changed little during the centuries, and because of the only slight differences between the hoods of men and women, it is no wonder that Lucia Olfosdotter could bequeath her hood and dress to men.²⁵

Huffue is a term that has been used all over the Nordic countries but the typology of the term is hard to deduct. The term is used for both men and women's headwear during the Middle Ages, and apparently it could have meant different kinds of small caps and hats. In the 16th century it came to specify married women's most common cap, especially among the upper classes (Dahl 2007a, 87–92), but in the Turku diocese it is only mentioned in 1512 when Klemet Hogenskild left three yellow (*gull*) hats to three men.²⁶ Unless they were his wife's caps (in which case the yellow could also mean golden) it seems that – at least in the early 16th century Finland – *huffue* could still mean men's hat or cap.

3.5. Decorations

Clothes could also be decorated in myriad ways, from embroidery and gilded bezants to different decorative borders. Since the small decorations, such as borders, buttons, and buckles made of furs

23 DF 2628.

24 DF 2817.

25 DF 2818, DF 2886.

26 DF 5622.

or prized metals were of considerable value, they were often detachable or were taken apart from the clothing and reused (Crowfoot et al. 2006, 172); for this reason they are often listed separately. In the wills three different terms are mentioned: *subductura*, *bonath* and *felleborth*. *Subductura* is actually a lining made out of fabric or furs, and it is mentioned once, in the will of Jacob of Porvoo, who bequeathed squirrel furs for a *subductura*.²⁷ *Felleborth* on the other hand is specifically a fur trimming and the vicar of Äyräpää left a brown tunic and a fur trimming to master Simon Nicolaus.²⁸ The trimming was apparently not intact, since it is mentioned independently of the tunic. Andersson (2006, 126–28) interprets *bonath* as a metal decoration, and indeed Lucia Olofsdotter's second will, from 1449, lists her best gown with a *bonath*, and the fourth will, from 1455, specifies that the gown had silver in the corners.²⁹

3.6. Materials

The material of the clothing is only sometimes mentioned in the wills. The most common material was *kläde*, a fine quality felted and shorn imported wool cloth. According to written documents cloth was imported to Finland from Flanders during the 14th century and from Netherlands and England in the 15th and early 16th centuries (Kirjavainen 2009, 93). Many times the word *kläde* is not used in the documents, but instead the cloth is named after the city it was imported from. For instance Matts Kettlimundsson bequeathed one piece of cloth of Ghent (*panni genst*) as well as a tunic and a cloak of the same material in 1326,³⁰ Hartvik Japsson donated a tunic and a gown made of brown cloth of Leiden (*leysk*) in 1486,³¹ and Klement Hogenskild left six ells of black English cloth (*eengilsth*) and one and a half ell of black cloth of Leiden to various recipients in 1512.³² In addition to *kläde*, other types of wool were also imported to Finland and especially the lighter wool fabrics were commonly used for linings among another purposes. There are a few items of clothing in the wills that are said to be lined, though the material is not specified. Camlet (*cameloth*), a fabric originally woven of camel or goat's hair and usually mentioned together with light wool fabrics, is mentioned two times in the will of Klement Hogenskild, in which he bequeathed four ells of black camlet and four ells of unspecified camlet.³³

All of the wool cloth did not come from abroad, and *vadmal*, a home-produced coarse wool fabric was widely manufactured even by individual farms. *Vadmal* was typically shrunken but not shorn, and in addition to being used in clothing, *vadmal* could also function as a method for paying taxes and tithes. *Vadmal* was an everyday consumer product that was also used by the upper levels of the society, albeit with more colourful dyes. (Kirjavainen 2004, 59–62.) In the material *vadmal* is only mentioned when it is given as charity. The vicar of Vyborg left 100 ells of *vadmal* for the poor in 1366,³⁴ and in 1484 squire Kort Hartviksson donated shoes and *vadmal* to the poor and lepers of Turku as well as to the Hospice of the Holy Spirit. In addition to *vadmal*, remnants of wool tabby and twill have been found from excavations in Turku and there was local twill and tabby production in Finland (Kirjavainen 2004, 59–68, 76–82). In 1484 Kort Hartviksson bequeathed tabby (*lerf*) for four gowns, including one black (*swart lärft*).³⁵ *Lärft* is usually used to denote linen tabby, but linen would have been an impractical material for a gown unless it was intended for the lining. Furthermore, black linen was relatively difficult to dye, and therefore it is more likely *lärft* in this context meant wool tabby. Different spellings of *lerf* and *lärft* in the same document however could indicate that there was

²⁷ *pelles dictas dockor pro j subductura*, DF 5495. Here the Swedish term *ekorre* is used in otherwise Latin will.

²⁸ DF 2628.

²⁹ DF 2818, DF 2970.

³⁰ DF 328.

³¹ DF 4111. Cloth seals from Leyden have also been found in Finland (Kirjavainen 2009, 94).

³² DF 5622.

³³ DF 5622.

³⁴ DF 745.

³⁵ DF 4010.

some difference between the two terms. This is the only possible reference to any plant fibre in the wills, but hemp, nettle and linen fabrics were produced in Finland to some extent, and linen and hemp were also imported from Russia and Estonia (Kirjavainen 2004, 8–10). They were used especially for underclothes and the three undershirts bequeathed by Klemet Hogenskild³⁶ might have been made of plant fibres.

Furs were used especially as linings and edgings, and the wills mention a brown tunic lined with fox’s leg fur from 1445 (*ræffskins benlingha*),³⁷ a black tunic lined with marten (*maardh*) in the three wills of Henrik Klasson,³⁸ a fur edging of undetermined quality from 1445,³⁹ and the squirrel furs for decoration.⁴⁰ In addition to this, Matts Kettlimundsson bequeathed large amounts of various skins and furs such as marten and ermine to several recipients.⁴¹

4. Conclusions

The wills show that people in the Turku diocese bequeathed clothing in a similar way to other Nordic countries. Items of clothing were donated alongside jewellery, horses, money and land, proving that clothing was considered an integral part of personal wealth. Clothing bequests were also connected to an intricate gift-giving system where allegiance and favours were traded and as such they had monetary value as well as more intangible, symbolic value. This is proven for example by gifts of clothing given by the testators to their will’s executioners. However, as the wills that list clothing are scarce and all made by the upper classes, our understanding is limited and we cannot draw too many firm conclusions.

Because of the small number of wills it is crucial to compare the terms to other Nordic countries in order to interpret their meaning. The material shows that the clothing terms used in the Turku diocese were relatively similar to ones in other Nordic countries and especially in Sweden, with minor spelling differences. No specifically Finnish terms or terms exclusively used in the area were found, and it seems that the terms were used in the same manner as in other Nordic countries. No signs of eastern influences could be traced in the wills either. During the 16th century eastern types of jackets and coats became fashionable among men, meaning that there was some flow of influence from the east; however it is not apparent in the wills, at least not on the level of terminology used during the period. There are also several terms common in other Nordic countries that were not mentioned in the wills from the diocese of Turku, but because of the very limited material it is impossible to know if a certain term was not in use in the area or if it was just not recorded in the surviving wills.

Even though the information given by the wills is far from comprehensive, knowing what kind of clothing terms were used in the Turku diocese helps us understand the terminology system better and creates a clearer picture of medieval dress in the area. When information is conveyed in writing it is crucial that the writer is familiar with different clothing terms and understands their meaning. The use of source-based terminology enables the study of clothing in an exact manner, but especially when the language of the sources is different from the language of the research, modern and descriptive terminology can be used as aid. By combining these methods it is possible to describe clothing clearly and understandably, but also at the same time accurately communicate the information from the sources to avoid the game of “Broken telephone”, where the message is passed and the errors accumulated in the retelling.

36 DF 5622.

37 DF 262.

38 DF 2817, DF 2908, DF 2918.

39 DF 2628.

40 DF 5495.

41 DF 328.

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