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Academical Dress in Germany Part 1—A Historical Outline and the Development of a New System

by Thorsten E. Hauler

The present-day ceremonial customs at German universities are very rudimentary.¹ The first university degree is celebrated hardly anywhere at all, even though one has to study for an average of five or six years for a first degree in the Natural Sciences. It is slightly different with respect to a PhD as usually the research group produces a homemade hat (*Doktorhut*), generally consisting of cardboard and paper and alluding strongly in its decoration to the topic of the thesis.

I started my studies at the University of Mainz and received my first degree (*Diplom* in Physics) from the University of Heidelberg, both being amongst the oldest universities in Germany. My PhD (*Dr. rer. nat.*) is from the Technical University in Munich. My last job, Academic Administrator in the School of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences at City University, London, was unrelated to my doctoral research, but having the opportunity to act as a marshal during graduation ceremonies sparked my interest in academical dress and ceremonial. In carrying out these duties I conceived the idea of introducing a system of academical dresses for German universities.

Italy, Spain, France and England were the centres of education in medieval Europe. The Universities of Bologna, Salamanca, Paris, Oxford and Cambridge—amongst others—laid the ground for a cultural revolution which advanced knowledge in an unprecedented way. At the edge of this development—both geographically and intellectually—we find university foundations in places like Heidelberg and Cologne, some of which did not survive the first centuries. Nevertheless, the fashion and style of the time required academic personnel to be dressed appropriately.

¹ This is a revised version of a paper submitted for the Fellowship of the Burgon Society in 2004. I wish to thank the following for their help during its preparation: Miss Katy Beavers (PA to the Dean, School of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, City University London); Mrs Katja Caspar (PR, Marketing and Organisation Dept, NIT, Hamburg); Dr Michael Handschuh (University of Leipzig); Mr Duncan Simms (Ede & Ravenscroft).

This paper will consider the higher education sector then and now and will give a summary of the present situation as far as graduation celebrations are concerned. The documentary evidence for medieval academical dress in Germany will form the basis on which a logical system of gowns, hoods and hats for use at present-day German state universities will be proposed.² The focus of this paper is on the first degree and only touches on the doctorate degree where necessary.

I am very well aware that the demand for first-degree academical dress may not be very high in Germany itself although it might be of use in other countries where German students decide to carry out their doctoral studies. One reason for this is the fact that for most students in Germany, the first degree is also their highest and the end of their academic career. Furthermore, as the chances of considerable demand are higher for doctorate dress and I may be involved in its development, it seems sensible to dedicate a separate publication (Part 2 in this series) to this aspect of academical dress. The past and present designs of doctoral robes, gowns and hats will be published there. Part 3 will investigate the situation at private institutions of higher education in Germany.

1 The present higher education system in Germany

There are three main groups of degrees at German universities: academic, state or ecclesiastical examinations are necessary for the award of the related professional qualifications or degrees. There are no academic degrees awarded on the basis of intermediate examinations. As a rule, the completion of a degree dissertation is obligatory in addition to all examinations.

In the UK, the degree of bachelor—BA, BSc, BEng or the like—is the highest academic degree most students attain. However, the educational level equals the intermediate examinations at German universities, for which there is no degree in the conventional system (*Vordiplom*, *Zwischenprüfung*). The academic system in Germany comprises the first academic degree of *Diplom*—which concentrates on a single subject and can be understood as being a research degree—and *Magister Artium* (MA), allowing a combination of several subjects. For this reason, the expression ‘postgraduate’ will not be used in this paper, in order to avoid confusion with the British system. The term ‘graduate’ will be used instead to describe holders of the first degree.

In the case of professions which are ‘of particular importance to the public interest’³ such as the medical, pharmaceutical and teaching professions, as well as jurisprudence, state examinations (*Staatsexamen*, in the singular in German) are

² The term ‘state university’ is used in contrast to the private institutions which will be looked at in a subsequent publication (Part 3 of this series).

³ Documents by the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (Committee of Secretaries of Education from all German Federal States), cited as KMK in the Bibliography.

taken. These are of an equal standard to the academic examinations but are administered by the federal examination offices. Having passed the First State Examination, prospective lawyers and teachers in particular enter a second phase of practical training. This phase is concluded by the Second State Examination—again set by the federal examination offices—which entitles candidates to practise their profession.

Courses of studies for the degrees of *Diplom*, *Magister* or *Staatsexamen* have a standard period of study of four or five years, with up to six years for Medicine.

Since 1998, bachelor's and master's degrees have been introduced at German state universities in order to increase international comparability, especially in the European context. This is due to the EU Bologna Process, which was agreed by the European Ministers and Secretaries of Education in 1999. It aims at a common two-tier system in higher education and the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010.⁴ The master's degree corresponds to the *Diplom* or *Magister* in the customary university graduation system that will be supplemented rather than replaced by the new system. Degrees leading to teaching professions are not yet included.⁵

As the German educational system is controlled by the Federal States (*Bundesländer*), different courses of studies are possible. The federal state of Baden-Württemberg in southern Germany, to give one example, has separate academic institutions for the training of teachers, the so-called *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (colleges of education). State examination degrees are not necessarily accepted in federal states other than the one conferring the degree.

In the case of academic examinations in the Faculty of Theology, the arrangements are the same as in other faculties. Ecclesiastical examinations are held at state-approved ecclesiastical universities (*Kirchliche Hochschulen*), which are administered by the church.

Successful completion of a first degree course of studies concluding in the *Magister*, *Diplom* or *Staatsexamen* or the German version of the master's degree entitles a student to study for a doctorate. Based upon a doctoral thesis—comprising independent research in a given subject area—and an oral examination or *viva voce* (*Rigorosum*, *Disputation*), a doctorate is conferred. This entitles a doctoral graduate to bear the title of *Doktor* (Dr).⁶ The right to confer a doctorate degree is the common attribute of all state or state-approved universities in Germany.

⁴ Further information and documents on the Bologna agreement can be found on the web pages of the European Association for International Education (EAIE) <<http://www.aic.lv/ace/bologna/default.htm>>

⁵ Documents by the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK in the Bibliography).

⁶ Documents by the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK in the Bibliography).

The doctorate degree in the Natural Sciences is equivalent to the internationally known PhD, which reflects one of the four ancient Faculties at medieval European universities. Nowadays, there are about thirty different doctorate titles in Germany associated with a variety of faculties and subject areas. The classical root of the designation PhD is preserved in the titles of *Dr. phil.* (*Doctor philosophiae*) and *Dr. phil. nat.* (*Doctor philosophiae naturalis*). The latter is equal to *Dr. rer. nat.* (*Doctor rerum naturalium*) which is more commonly used.

The three other medieval Faculties are represented by the titles of *Dr. med.* (*Doctor medicinae*), *Dr. theol.* (*Doctor theologiae*) and *Dr. iur.* (*Doctor iurisprudentiae*).⁷

2 Academic dress in medieval Germany

The grouping of subjects into four Faculties originated in Paris and was adopted by (amongst others) the University of Heidelberg.

Academical dress at the University of Heidelberg is mentioned for the first time in the orders of Ruprecht I to install a university there, again referring to the customs in Paris and valid for all four Faculties (1386):

Furthermore, that every Master and Bachelor in each Faculty shall read and perform academic acts in *cappas* and appear in (clerical) habits which are of similar proportion and appearance, as hitherto observed in the respective Parisian Faculties.⁸

Cappa (or *cappa clausa*) is the term used to describe an outer garment, first with one slit, later with two slits for the arms. Hargreaves-Mawdsley gives a drawing of both.⁹

Masters of Arts were obliged to wear robe and biretta for all congregations and official university ceremonies and prove the possession of the dress annually on the occasion of the allocation of the main lectures.¹⁰ Their dress is given in detail in 1387; Hargreaves-Mawdsley summarizes the regulations as follows:

⁷ A detailed discussion on this topic will be presented in my paper: ‘Academical Dress in Germany: Part 2—Doctorate Degrees and Their Dress’, in preparation.

⁸ E. Winkelmann, No. 4, p. 5: ‘[...] Insuper quod singuli magistri et bachalarii singularum facultatum legant et actus scolasticos exerceant in cappis ac in habitibus incedant modo proportionali et consimili, quo illud Parisius in eisdem facultatibus hactenus fuit observatum. [...]’

⁹ W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 191.

¹⁰ R. Klauser, p. 242; ‘Zu allen Zusammenkünften hatten die Magister in Talar und Birett zu erscheinen, deren Besitz alljährlich einmal bei der Verteilung der Hauptvorlesungen offiziell nachzuweisen war. Gleiche Tracht war für alle öffentlichen Akte der Universität vorgeschrieben...’

Fig. 1. Rudolphus Agricola (1443–85), humanist and Professor of Arts at Heidelberg, 1482–85

Woodcut by T. Stimmer, c. 1500



They are to wear a dress which is a form of tabard lined with miniver or silk with two lappets (*cum duabus lingulis*), of which there are many examples in illustrations of academical and legal persons at this time throughout Europe, worn at the neck.¹¹ The tabard is either to be without sleeves or with short and close-fitting sleeves, and the head-dress is to be the biretta, that is the round one.¹²

The dress for incepting Masters of Arts and the obligatory gifts to their teachers are described in the oldest statutes of the Faculty of Arts:

Likewise, anyone of these [students] shall incept in a black *cappa*, with a varied lining or at least in a new habit with varied or silk lining, if not excused by the Faculty for a reasonable cause; he shall have at least three birettas: one for the Master under whom he incepts [his Promotor], the second for the responding Master [his Respondent or examiner] and the third for himself.¹³

¹¹ See Fig. 1.

¹² E. Winkelmann, p. 43, cited after W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, pp. 155–56.

¹³ E. Winkelmann, No. 23, p. 41: ‘Item quilibet eorum incipiet in cappa nigra varia subducta vel ad minus in habitu novo vario vel serico subtracto, nisi propter rationabilem causam desuper per facultatem fuerit dispensatum, habebitque ad minus tria biretta, unum pro magistro, sub quo incipit, 2^m pro magistro sibi respondenti et 3^m pro se ipso.’

In 1437, the Faculty of Arts renewed its orders for an official dress for its members.¹⁴ In 1444, an even more strict decree had to be proclaimed to prohibit the use of unseemly garments.¹⁵

In the year 1469, a general regulation on the specification and use of academical dress at all Faculties was published:

Decided and agreed by the Deputies, and approved by the University, and then published:

The said University decrees and desires that indecent and outrageous vesture must be eschewed by everyone under its discipline.

First: as to the hood, which shall be in an appropriate and distinguished way not fastened down over the length of each hood, although it is accustomed to be so made by many, hanging in a circle; but close to the ancient use of our profession they shall be sewn on at the upper part. And so let cease this newly introduced abuse, which has been transmitted to the students by the Rùthers¹⁶, who are accustomed to make the front of the hood, which has to be rolled up and pleated, into a cover for the head, and the remaining part, which is meant to be a cover, hangs behind, in a very undignified manner. But it shall be made decently, close to the tradition, for this part [*of the hood*], folding it back again from the head and making it a cover, and [*this*] shall be ordained here.

As for the collars, it is fitting that they shall not be made, as is now seen, almost halved, but that they should totally surround and encircle the neck.

Let it also be forbidden that the robes of others should not be worn with the front portion next to the breast cut and opened, and the same prohibition shall pertain to that bundle of cords, wherever it is made from material with which mantles or tunics are customarily joined.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., No. 97, p. 137: Artistenfakultät bestimmt den Gebrauch der Amtstracht.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁶ Origin unknown; nowadays a German surname.

¹⁷ Ibid., No. 127, p. 186: ‘Deliberata et conclusa per deputatos et per universitatem approbata et deinceps publicata: Statuit et vult ipsa universitas indecenciam et enormitatem vestium debere a singulis suis suppositis de cetero vitari. Inprimis quantum ad cappucia, quod in debita et honesta fiant longitudine quodque cappuciorum ligatoria non infra, ut a quam plurimis fieri solet, in circulis appendantur, sed iuxta veterem usum nostre gentis a parte assuantur superiore, cessetque abusus ille noviter introductus et a rùtheris translatus ad studentes, quo solent anteriorem partem cappucii, que convolvi et complicari deberet, capitibus tegumentum, parte reliqua, que ad operiendum deputata est, rethro cum magna turpitudine, suspense; sed fiat decens iuxta consuetudinem replicatio capitisque conteccio per eam partem, que ad hoc est ordinata.

‘De colleriis placet, quod non fiant, ut nunc videntur, vix dimidiata sed collum ex tot ambient et circumdent. [...]

‘Interdictum quoque sit, ne de cetero pallea gerantur a parte anteriore a pectoralibus secundum scissa et aperta, ad quam eandem prohibitionem fasciculus ille funicularum, quacumque ex materia fiant quo pallea sive tunicas connectere solent, pertinebit. [...]

I am greatly indebted to Nicholas Groves for his help, especially on this Latin excerpt.

It seems to have been necessary to prohibit the use of alternative head-wear after depriving them of the use of their hoods. Therefore in 1497, the use of biretta for all non-doctorates was prohibited.¹⁸

Apparently from the early sixteenth century onwards, a closed tunic was increasingly replaced by a garment similar to the gown as we know it today: the *Schaube*.¹⁹ This costume has its roots in the clerical habit of the Reformation and was for academic purposes always faced and edged with fur (see Figs 2 and 3).

Apart from doctoral robes, colours are not mentioned at all.²⁰ This is due to the fact that colours in the Middle Ages were a sign of wealth, and dyed clothes were only to be worn by royalty, the aristocracy, or priests. On the contrary, the official rules abolished any tendency to fashion:

The academic profession held on to this plain dress with mature tenacity; in contrast to the extremely variable fashion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the University wanted to stress its continuity by simplicity of appearance. It reprimanded in numerous mandates the use and emergence of certain garments or opposed increasing misuse and waste by the introduction of regulations. But even individual innovations were not tolerated: it was regarded as inappropriate to wear the hat (*pileus*) instead of the hood (*Gugel*) or to wear the *cappucia* bound like a scarf, drawn over the face or extended at the back in a fashionable way. The University especially took action against the emergence of slit, coloured or striped garments.²¹

Faculty colours are generally observed in Germany from the seventeenth century.²² The colours stated in A. Steger will form the basis of the development of the colour scheme for a new system of academical dress in Germany (see Section

¹⁸ Ibid., No. 142, p. 198.

¹⁹ M. Bringemeier, pp. 41–47.

²⁰ See T. Hauler: ‘Academical Dress in Germany: Part 2—Doctorate Degrees and Their Sress’, in preparation.

²¹ A. Thorbecke (1886), pp. 60–61: ‘[...] mit wohlüberlegter Zähigkeit hielt der Stand der Gelehrten an dieser anspruchslosen Kleidung fest; gerade im Gegensatz zu den im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert von einem Extrem zum anderen schwankenden Moden [...] wollte die Universität in der Einfachheit der Erscheinung die Stetigkeit ihrer Stellung [ausdrücken]. [...] Sie rügte in vielen Mandaten den Gebrauch und das Aufkommen bestimmter Gewandstücke oder suchte in ganzen Kleiderordnungen [...] eingerissenen Mißbräuchen und sich verbreitender Verschwendung entgegenzutreten. [...] Aber auch einzelne Neuerungen wollte sie nicht dulden: es schien ihr z.B. unziemlich, wenn der Hut (*pileus*) die Kapuze oder *Gugel* verdrängte oder wenn diese nur umgebunden oder tief ins Gesicht hereingezogen wurde, oder wenn sie gar in einen hinten weit hinabreichenden modischen Anhang auslief; sie verfolg-te mit besonderer Strenge das Aufkommen geschlitzter, bunt gefärbter oder gestreifter Gewänder [...].’

²² A Steger, pp. 29–30.



Fig. 2. Martin Luther (1483–1546) wearing a *Schaube*



Fig. 3. David Pareus (1548–1622), Doctor of Theology and Professor of Heidelberg. The shape of the cap seems to represent an intermediate stage between the round bonnet and an early type of the trencher cap.

4, below). These were: Divinity: black; Law: red; Medicine: blue; Philosophy: violet.

At the University of Göttingen, for example, which was founded in 1737, faculty colours were introduced on the occasion of the centenary in 1837. These were: Divinity: black; Law: scarlet; Medicine: crimson; Philosophy: purple.²³

Further schemes can be found in H. H. Smith/K. Sheard and are quoted in a letter from a British tailor, both of which are cited in the next section.

²³ <www.uni-goettingen.de/de/kat/6819.html> (in German).

3 Graduation customs and the use of academical dress in contemporary Germany

In 1968, the third reform bill for higher education institutions in the then GDR (*Dritte Hochschulreform der DDR*²⁴) abolished both the faculty structure and the use of academical dress. At the same time in Western Germany, students revolted against traditionalism at university in order to modernize teaching and learning conditions. Their famous slogan was ‘*Unter den Talaren der Muff von 1000 Jahren*’ (‘under the robes the frowst²⁵ of a thousand years’). This led to the condemnation and abolition of traditional customs such as academic dress and graduation ceremonies.

After these events, the first degree was no longer celebrated officially. I myself received my *Diplom* Certificate from the Dean’s Personal Assistant in her office, shook hands and left. Compared to the glorious customs which are in place in the UK, this procedure seems inappropriate and disappointing, if not unworthy. Similar discontent with the abolition of traditional rites at graduation is expressed by Jan Königshaus, author of a book on the history of the University of Kiel, which was founded in 1665. A review notice about it appeared in the newspaper *Kieler Nachrichten*.²⁶ In summary, Königshaus said it was a pity that all you received after years of hard work was a certificate and a handshake. In giving up long-established traditions, universities had lost parts of their identity within society. Königshaus himself received an Oxford MA.

A different view of rites in academia is offered by F. Bretschneider and P. Pasternak:²⁷ in the last decade of the twentieth century, more and more people became aware of the relevance of academic rites in the life of a university. This

²⁴ BPB and H. Laitko.

²⁵ This rather antiquated expression is, in my opinion, the closest you can get to the original. The *OED*, second edition (1989), offers: ‘The close and fusty air of a room, etc., which is over-warm or over-crowded and without adequate ventilation.’

²⁶ M. Drexler. The last paragraph of the review notice is quoted here (Königshaus’s words are shown within double quotation marks):

‘Der Anwalt, der demnächst bei einer großen Kanzlei in Düsseldorf einsteigt, hat in Kiel den würdigen Rahmen “schmerzlich vermisst”, als er sein Studium beendete: “Nur eine Urkunde und einen Handschlag, das war es. Dabei hat man schließlich jahrelang dafür gearbeitet”. Die deutsche Entwicklung weg vom akademischen Glanz bedauert er: “Zeremonien und Talare sind nicht nur reine Äußerlichkeiten. Sie verkörpern die Universität als unabhängige Institution und sind nicht politisch, sondern wertneutral anzusehen”. Insofern habe die Studentenrevolte einen Fehler begangen, indem sie jahrhundertealte Traditionen in wenigen Jahren weggewischt habe: “Dies hat zu einem Identitätsverlust der Universität in der Gesellschaft geführt”. Und auch für die Studierenden, vermutet er, sei der Wegfall dieser Traditionen ein Nachteil: In Oxford habe ihn die feierliche Atmosphäre bei den Klausuren jedenfalls sehr beruhigt.’

²⁷ Chapter 1, pp. 9–16, of their essay and sources cited therein.

new awareness led to the diffident revival of certain ritual celebrations such as anniversaries or other academical ceremonial acts. Bretschneider and Pasternak describe events at the Universities of Leipzig, Dresden, Greifswald, Jena, Munich, Hamburg and Cologne. The symbolism of academical rites in eastern Germany seems to be of much greater importance. Here they are seen by many as a remaining part of their tradition which survived the Communist era with its enforced rituals. The authors also quote an account of an oral examination in the Netherlands, one aspect of which may be stated here: ‘*Viva voce* examinations are very popular with English professors and their colourful gowns.’²⁸

However, by the end of the last century, individual faculties began to set up small ceremonies for recent graduates. For example, former colleagues in Munich told me about an official degree ceremony in 2000 in the Department of Physics at the Technical University of Munich, where the certificate was conferred by the *Präsident* (equivalent to the Vice-Chancellor in the UK). During these small celebrations, formal dress is usually worn but no academical robes or gowns are used.

In June 2003, the Berlin newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* published two articles on the pros and cons of the re-introduction of rites for graduates.²⁹ They state that especially universities in eastern Germany were making increasing use of their chains of office and even their old robes. The new *Rektor* (another equivalent to the Vice-Chancellor in the UK) of the Free University in Berlin carried the chains at his inauguration but refused to wear them or even wear a robe. He says: ‘New times require new rites.’ In contrast, the *Rektor* of the University of Greifswald was given a robe, chains of office and a ring at his inauguration and the Deans wear robes at least twice a year. Interestingly, as the students would wish to ‘be special’ at their graduation, the heads of (state) universities regarded gowning the graduates as inappropriate and a return to an authoritarian education system. However, solemn celebrations were becoming more popular, e.g. at the three state universities in Berlin.

Reading the account by H. H. Smith on German academical dress, published shortly after the student revolt in 1970, one might have the feeling that the use of robes and gowns at German universities was alive and well.³⁰ A reference to the then recent events of the late 1960s cannot be found anywhere in the three-volume work, nor does Smith give proper sources for the styles and drawings he presents of various garments for a number of German universities. He states:

²⁸ G. Oberkofler; ‘[...] Besonders beliebt sind Promotionen mit englischen Professoren mit ihren farbenprächtigen Talaren. [...]’

²⁹ A. Burchard.

³⁰ H. H. Smith and K. Sheard, Vol. II, ‘German Federal Republic’ and ‘German Democratic Republic’, pp. 1035 ff.

I must also thank the Diplomatic and Consular representatives in South Africa of the following countries for their assistance: [...] German Federal Republic [...].³¹

There is no explicit reference given for the German Democratic Republic. Nevertheless, assuming the validity of the facts presented, one can draw up statistics on the use of various faculty colours (see Table 1). The colours most frequently used would be violet for Theology (6 out of 8), red for Law (6/7), green for Medicine (6/9) and blue for Philosophy (6/9).

Table 1. Faculty colours at various universities in Germany, as given by H. H. Smith and K. Sheard, Vol. II

	Heidelberg	Mainz	Cologne	Munich LMU	Würzburg	Münster	Kiel	Rostock	Greifswald
Theology	violet	violet	-	black	violet	violet	violet	black	dark violet
Law	red	flame red	ruby	red	bright red	red	vermillion red	-	-
Medicine	green	lime green	carmine red	green	green	green	green	crimson	scarlet
Philosophy	blue	navy blue	lilac	violet	blue	dark blue	blue	violet	prussian blue
Economic Science	-	flame red	-	carmine	-	-	-	grey	-
Social Science	-	-	green	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natural Science	yellow	cornflower blue	royal blue	violet	orange-yellow	bright blue	orange	yellow-brown	-

The only colour which did not change over the centuries was that for Law. Violet seems to have emerged as the colour for Theology. Looking at the ecclesiastical habits, violet may have been adopted in a similar move as the liturgical colour of Lent and Advent. It replaces black as traditional colour of mourning and death and is also a symbol of penitence.

A. Crumley notes the following on the problem of producing a black garment:³²

³¹ Ibid., Vol. I, p. xi, 'Acknowledgements'.

³² This article by the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales gives an interesting account of liturgical colours and their production and application throughout European history.

Until the introduction of chemical dyes in the nineteenth century, it was very difficult to produce a real black. Black was in reality a very dark shade of blue or green or brown. At the Catholic church in Croydon there is (or was some years ago) a set of ‘black’ velvet vestments which date from the earlier years of the nineteenth century when vegetable dyes were still in use. When the priest stands at the altar wearing them the vestments look black, but laid out on the vestment press in the sacristy with the light shining on them from a different angle it is clear they are a very dark navy blue.

For this reason, the Oxford proctors’ velvet has changed in colour from black to blue over time.³³ This is, in my opinion, exactly what happened to the faculty colour of Philosophy: it moved to the spectrally closest colour, which is blue. I further assume that due to a change in dyeing technology the colour blue, which used to be the colour for Medicine, could now be replaced. The closest colour in the visible spectrum is green, which might have been assigned for that very reason. Law kept its colour over the centuries—just as the ‘classical’ doctorate colours, purple and scarlet, have not changed—because shades of red could be produced from a very early date.

Interestingly in this context, the dye on a modern Oxford DPhil robe gradually oxidizes and goes from dark blue to purple after about twenty years and turns into a pale lavender violet after another thirty years or so.³⁴

However, the colours mentioned above will form the basic scheme for the proposed new faculty colours in Germany.

To investigate further the existence of German academical dress in recent times, I asked four British robemakers, Ryder & Amies, Shepherd & Woodward, Wm. Northam & Co., and Ede & Ravenscroft, to answer four questions: is your company the official robemaker for any German university now, or was it in the past? if yes, of which universities, and which design/colours did you choose and why? have you received any order from a German academic in the past? do you know of any other UK robemaker being involved in the making of German academical dress?

It turned out that only Ede & Ravenscroft had received requests from Germany for the manufacturing of academical dress. I quote their letter:

Dear Sir,

We are not (and have never been) officially appointed robemakers to German institutions, mainly on the basis that academic regalia is (as I understand it) infrequently worn by German institutions. We have occasionally been asked to make to specifications or copy examples brought in by individual customers, though this

³³ My thanks are due to Nicholas Groves for this useful note.

³⁴ My thanks are due to Bruce Christianson for this interesting detail.

has never been on a large scale, and as such, the entry would be listed by customer name rather than institution. The only information I have is as follows:

- We did make a PhD robe in July 1907 for a graduate of Rostock (?) university to an amended UK bachelor's shape of purple cloth trimmed with purple velvet.³⁵
- Another was cut in 1913 in black cloth to a similar shape and trimmed with purple velvet.
- In 1899 a PhD gown was made in black silk and trimmed with crimson and white (no materials specified).³⁶
- The colours we have in our records: Theology: White. Medicine: Red. Law: Blue. PhD: Purple. Engineering: Brown.³⁷
- A later record for the University of Wurtzberg³⁸ in 1903 states - Theology: Black. Medicine: Green. Law: Red.³⁹
- 'Doctors' mantles & hats formerly worn, have not been worn for very many years.' A letter from Heidelberg in 1901.⁴⁰
- 'PhD's. Do not have any gowns, such gowns & hoods do not exist at the German Universities at all.' A letter from Leipzig 22/11/1911.

This is all the information I have, based on the information collated from our sales ledgers. These are isolated incidents where we have been asked to work on a specific brief or copy an existing garment.

Yours faithfully,

Duncan Simms

The next step was to conduct a survey among twelve of the oldest universities in Germany. The use of academical dress after 1968 was investigated as well as the

³⁵ Foreign No. 1 (Consolidated Ledger) (Ede & Ravenscroft Ltd., Chancery Lane, London), No. 15 (true for all bullet points without further citation number).

³⁶ Foreign No. 1 (Consolidated Ledger) (Ede & Ravenscroft Ltd), No. 55.

³⁷ Unfortunately, there is only an entry stating these colours. No further descriptions are present. (email correspondence with D. Simms, Ede & Ravenscroft Ltd., Chancery Lane).

³⁸ University of Würzburg.

³⁹ Foreign No. 1 (Consolidated Ledger) (Ede & Ravenscroft Ltd, Chancery Lane), No. 59/4

⁴⁰ Foreign No. 1 (Consolidated Ledger) (Ede & Ravenscroft Ltd, Chancery Lane), No. 57. D. Simms later added (email correspondence, 7 October 2004):

'The letter from the University of Heidelberg was received in October 1898 but not entered up until 1901. In 1901 we made a red Oxford BA gown for a Heidelberg Ph.B. This was "made to the customer's own idea". The letter no longer exists and the phrase that I quoted is taken directly from Foreign No. 1.'

current practice and possible plans for the future re-introduction of robes and/or gowns for graduates. Seven universities replied.⁴¹ In Mainz there are no robes at all.⁴² At the Universities of Munich (*Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität*, founded as University of Ingolstadt in 1472), Rostock (1419), Cologne (1388) and Würzburg (1402),⁴³ the principal (*Präsident* or *Rektor*) wears a robe and/or a chain of office for certain graduation events, transfer of office or duties abroad. The robes of office for the *Rektor* and the Deans at the University of Leipzig (founded in 1409) were destroyed by fire during World War II.⁴⁴

New robes have been introduced at the University of Würzburg for the graduates on their international MBA degree (see below).⁴⁵

At the University of Heidelberg, the university administrators and Deans of several faculties use robes at the annual celebration, doctorate graduations, receptions for international visitors and other academic festivities.⁴⁶

The first private university in Germany, Witten/Herdecke, achieved university status in 1982.⁴⁷ Some of the private higher education institutions (HEIs) are completely independent, but some are joint ventures or enterprises of state universities. Five private HEIs were contacted. In contrast to the state universities, a number of them have graduation ceremonies similar to those in the UK.⁴⁸ The main reason for this is the international nature of their degrees and the demand among the students, many of whom are from abroad. They are provided with gowns and hoods from Talaris, a small company in Bremen. Customers include the Northern Institute of Technology, Hamburg (NIT), the International University Bremen (IUB), the European Business School (EBS) and the Stuttgart Institute of Management and Technology (SIMT).⁴⁹

⁴¹ No reply was received from Freiburg, Göttingen, Greifswald, Munich (TU), and Tübingen.

⁴² This is in contrast to H. H. Smith and K. Sheard, Vol. II, p. 1063, who describe a set of robes for Mainz.

⁴³ W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, pp. 154, 158, gives the wrong dates of foundation for Cologne and Würzburg.

⁴⁴ Private email correspondence with the Universities of Mainz, Rostock, Cologne, Leipzig, and Würzburg.

⁴⁵ <http://www.businessintegration.de/index1_eng.html>

⁴⁶ Private email correspondence with the University of Heidelberg.

⁴⁷ <<http://notesweb.uni-wh.de/wg/orga/wgorganisation.nsf/name/history-EN>>

⁴⁸ Private email correspondence with Northern Institute of Technology, Hamburg.

⁴⁹ The different designs currently in place at German HEIs will be considered in a subsequent article, 'Academical Dress in Germany: Part 3—Robes and Hoods at Private Higher Education Institutions', in preparation.

4 A systematic scheme of academical dress for the first degree at German state universities

The new scheme of academical dress which I am proposing provides for distinctive colours for the four ancient faculties and three modern ones. These seven ‘faculties’—reminiscent of the seven liberal arts—are not to be considered restrictive; some subjects may be counted in one or another (as indicated by italics in Table 2, below). The system also may be adjusted in the case of interdisciplinary subjects. However, there should be agreement on these matters among the universities in order to avoid confusion.

In this scheme no distinction is made between academic degrees which are conferred on the basis of the academic examinations mentioned above (*Diplom*, MA, Master) and those for which state or ecclesiastical examinations are necessary (*Erstes Staatsexamen*).

Table 2. Proposed ‘faculties’ and related subject areas

Ancient Order	Theology First	Law Second	Medicine Third	Philosophy Lower
Subject Areas	Theology	Law	Human/Dental/Veterinary Medicine Pharmacy Nursing <i>Sports Sciences</i> <i>Psychology</i>	Philosophy <i>History</i>

New ‘Faculties’	Science and Engineering	Humanities	Social Sciences and Business Studies
Subject Areas	Natural Sciences Mathematics Informatics Engineering	Humanities Cultural Studies Arts <i>History</i>	Social Sciences Politics Business Economy Education <i>Sports Sciences</i> <i>Psychology</i>

At most ancient universities, this system nowadays is split into a wide variety of departments, faculties or schools. Examples of present structures which are close to the medieval scheme can be found at the Universities of Edinburgh (three Colleges) and Oxford (five Divisions) and at Imperial College London (four Faculties). In Heidelberg, the Faculties still exist but are supplemented by seven new ones.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ See <<http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/faculties.html>>

5 Designs and Colours

There is a movement towards the introduction of a scheme for doctors at one German university and a full documentation will be presented in a later article. However, an outline scheme for the first degree at German state universities is given here, which may serve as a basis for further discussions and developments.

As the early texts quoted above show, the original dress was meant to be very simple and it remained this way for centuries. Taking this into account, a possible dress might look like this:

- A black silk or stuff gown with long square-ended glove sleeves, in a cut similar to the Oxon MA gown, but with inverted-T armholes just above the elbows, the vertical slit being 10 cm in length. On the outer edge of this vertical slit two buttons are placed horizontally, joined by a cord 3 cm in length in the faculty colour.⁵¹ The gown has a flap collar and broad facings at the front, the inner half of which is in the faculty colour.⁵² A suit or similar formal dress is worn under the gown.
- The hood can be:
 - Either (a) a black, very simply shaped hood, based on the monk's dress, in the spirit of the Dean Burgon hood (Heidelberg shape). It has a neckband in the faculty colour and a lining in the university colour(s), which should neither overlap nor clash.
 - Or (b) a 'flat hood': one layer of cloth, lying on the back like a hood and held in place by a neckband in the faculty colour, shape and colour(s) to be chosen by each individual university, seals may be used.⁵³
- The hat for first-degree graduates is a trencher or mortar-board, with button and tassel in the faculty colour.⁵⁴

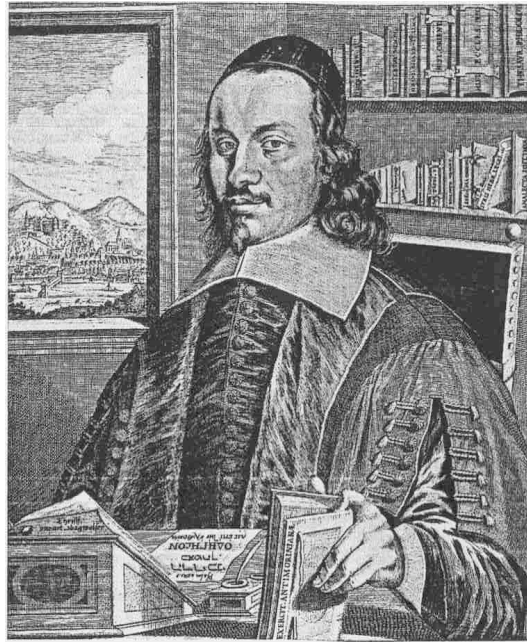
⁵¹ This feature is reminiscent of a gown worn by J. H. Hottinger of Heidelberg (see Fig. 4, below).

⁵² I observed on various occasions that gowns worn without hood tend to be dragged backwards and downwards. On enquiring the reason for this I was told that in general, gowns are fabricated with fixed shoulder width. Clearly, this will be an issue to be discussed in detail with the tailor.

⁵³ Bearing in mind the once close links with Oxford, as well as the fact that a similar type of hood, adopted by the University of Kent, was met with dislike, I personally strongly support option (a).

⁵⁴ This form and shape derive from a cap worn by masters at medieval German universities (see *biretta* in the Terminology section at the end of this article).

Fig. 4. Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–67), Professor of Theology at Heidelberg (1655–61), engraving from c. 1660



I chose the design of the gown based on the following considerations. The similarity to a standard English cut is mainly for a close resemblance to German sixteenth-century academical dress, as shown in Figs 2, 3 and 4. The standard English cut (e.g. the Oxford MA gown) is a Tudor design and therefore contemporary with these illustrations. Choosing this rather than the medieval throw-like garment (the *cappa*) seemed much more appropriate for modern academia. The flap collar and the cords can be seen in Fig. 4. The facing is a modern addition to replace the fur and, for consistency, the faculty should be recognizable from the front and the university/degree from the back.

Furthermore, this shape would allow production to be reasonably priced, should German universities wish to use British expertise. Of course, this design is merely a proposal, which might be altered in the course of negotiations with both German universities and tailors.

It seems reasonable to introduce a consistent colour scheme for the whole country to make for easy identification. As proposed above, subject areas should be allocated to one of seven faculties to keep down the number of different colours. The proposed colours are as follows (old faculty colours as discussed in Section 3, above):

Theology <i>violet</i>	Law <i>red</i>	Medicine <i>green</i>	Philosophy <i>blue</i>
Science and Engineering <i>maroon</i>	Humanities <i>yellow</i> <i>(intense but</i> <i>not bright)</i>	Social Sciences and Business Studies <i>orange</i>	

The colours for the ‘new’ faculties are chosen from the remaining natural colours whereas in the case of Science and Engineering, maroon is preferred to the colours frequently observed in the UK for these subjects, which are grey and brown. For interdisciplinary subjects or in cases of doubt, shades of the proposed colours may be used. In line with a worldwide tendency, the colour crimson will be reserved for the doctorate dress and not be used as a faculty colour.

Illustrative examples, using the author’s Physics degree (*Diplom*) in the Faculty of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Heidelberg, are shown in Plates 1 and 2, below. As soon as an agreed scheme is in place a prototype will be produced.

Terminology

biretta/bireta [Latin]. Medieval liturgical or clerical, and (from the fifteenth century) academic, head-wear;⁵⁵ in the early Heidelberg sources also referred to as *pileus*. This was a soft cap, probably round, which developed into the two most common forms still in use nowadays:

1) the (round) bonnet, which was worn as a doctor's cap in the sixteenth century in Germany (cf. Fig. 3) and is still in use in the same function at some UK universities today;

2) a rigid, four-cornered and square shaped cap, apparently worn by masters at medieval German universities and known in its modern form as a trencher-cap⁵⁶ or mortar-board, the British manifestation of this cap.

cappa clausa [Latin]. Closed cape with one or two armslits (drawing in W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 191).⁵⁷ From the early sixteenth century onwards replaced by the *Schaube* as the outer dress.

cappucia [Latin]. Originally a monk's cowl and part of the monk's habit; the modern hood.

Gugel [German]. The same as *cappucia*.

habitus [Latin]. Essentially the same as *cappa*, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

pileus [Latin]. An early form of academical head dress; see *biretta*.

Schaube [German]. Undress costume, first introduced in Italy as the *zimarra*, and secular dress since the end of the fifteenth century; the long black form was the garment of the Reformation. It was adopted as the academic gown throughout Europe.

vestitus [Latin]. Synonymous with *habitus*, academic dress.

⁵⁵ The *OED*, second edition, 1989, states: '[a. It. *berretta* and Sp. *birreta* (= Pr. *berreta*, *barreta*, F. *barette*), found beside the masc. forms Pr. *birret*, Béarn. *berreto*, Catalan *baret*, F. *béret*: late L. *birretum* cap, f. *birrus* (*byrrhus*) a cloak or cape of silk or wool, prob. ad. Gr. *πυρρός* flame-coloured, yellow.] The square cap worn by clerics of the Roman Catholic Church; that of priests being black, of bishops purple, of cardinals red.'

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 'A popular name for the academic or college cap, "in shape thought to resemble an inverted trencher with a basin upon it" (Farmer and Henley); a "mortar-board".'

⁵⁷ M. Bringemeier, p. 126, mistakenly states that the *cappa clausa* was originally a clerical tunic or *supertunica*, to be worn in undress.

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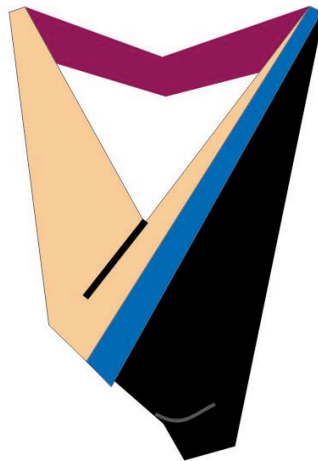
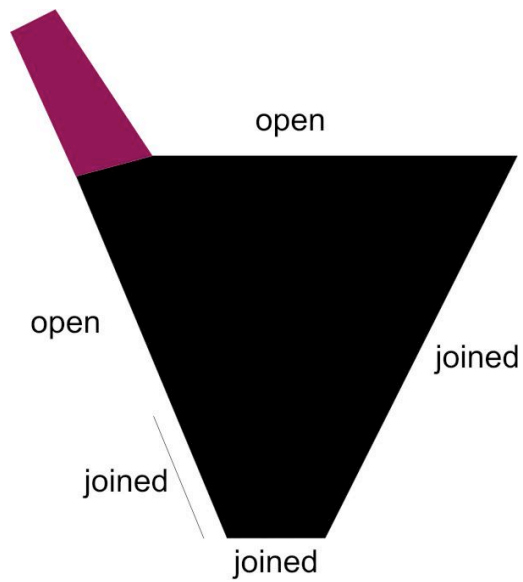


Plate 1. Proposed hood (option 1) for the Faculty of Science and Engineering, University of Heidelberg

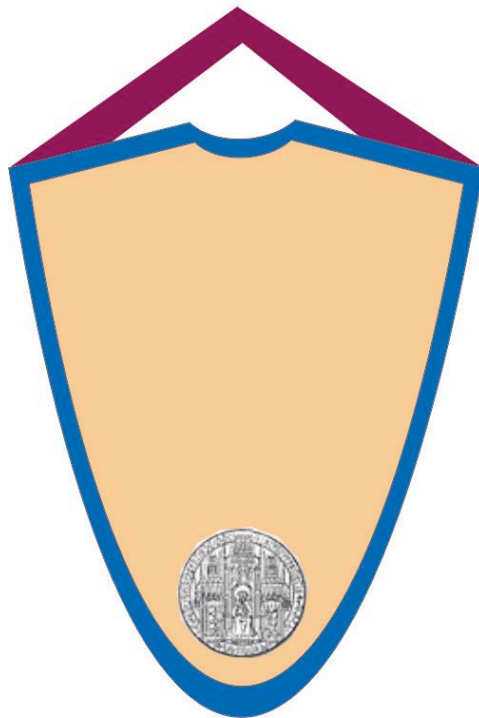
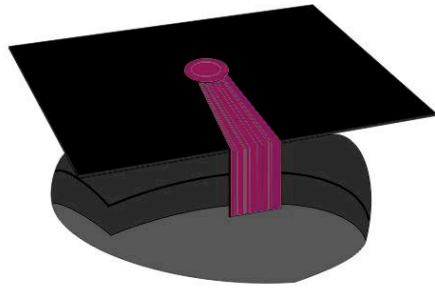


Plate 2. Proposed hood (option 2) and cap for the Faculty of Science and Engineering, University of Heidelberg