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A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DOUBLET FROM SCOTLAND

By Susan Payne, David Wilcox, Tuula Pardoe and Ninya Mikhaila.

In December 2004 a local family donated a cream silk slashed doublet to Perth Museum and Art Gallery. Stylistically the doublet is given a date between 1620 and 1630 but the family story is that it was a gift to one of their ancestors about the time of the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689. The donation stimulated a programme of investigation centred on the doublet's conservation, curatorial research, the production of two replica suits and the mounting of an exhibition. This project won the United Kingdom Award for Conservation 2007. The Institute of Conservation, the Museums, Archives & Libraries Council and the National Preservation Office support this nationwide award. This essay reflects four different specialists' engagement with the doublet: historical context, tailoring, conservation and reconstruction.

THE STORY OF THE DOUBLET by Susan Payne

To begin with the evidence from the garment; the doublet is a unique survivor from the first half of the seventeenth century (Figures 1 and 2). It is part of a man's costume and the satin used to make it was imported and expensive so the original owner was a wealthy man. From the inside measurement of the doublet we know he was a chest size thirty-eight inches and, from the greater wear on the right hand sleeve, he was probably right-handed. The full suit, doublet and breeches or trunk hose, would probably have been

worn with a decorative ruff or band and cuffs. Under this outfit he would wear a fine linen shirt and drawers. His lower legs would be covered with fine stockings tied at the knee with wide garters. The wearer might have worn gloves, along with a cloak and a high-crowned hat. He would also have worn a slim sword, a rapier, held by a strap around the waist. On his feet he could have worn leather shoes with heels, perhaps decorated with rosettes or, at other times, boots and boot hose especially when outdoors. He probably did not wear any jewellery or very little. If our man was as fashionable as his doublet suggests, he probably had a pointed beard and a moustache.

The family who owned the doublet has a story passed down through the generations. The doublet was apparently given to their ancestors, who came from the Killiecrankie area, by the family who lived in Urrard House, Killiecrankie, whom they served. The donor family thinks the gift was made about the time of the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689. ii If the doublet originally belonged to the family at Urrard House, and if it dates to about 1620, then it was owned by the Stewarts of Urrard. From papers that are kept in the National Archives of Scotland, the men of the family at that time were Alexander, the father, who died in 1641 and his three sons, Robert, Neil and John, and maybe a fourth son, George, but there are no records of George's dates. iii Of the sons, John married in 1631, Neil in 1629 and Robert in 1620. Alexander himself married again about 1625. The family owned land in Little Dalmarnock (three and a half miles northwest of Dunkeld), Orchillmore (north of Killiecrankie), Cluny (five miles southwest of Blairgowrie), Laittoch (north of Urrard House) and Urrard itself (two and a half miles southeast of Blair Atholl), all in Perthshire. At the time the doublet was made, the Stewart family lived at Urrard Mor, a mile west of Blair Castle, Blair Atholl. They later moved to

VW23 August 2010

Urrard, Killiecrankie (originally called Raon Ruaridh). iv There are no portraits of these men in existence so we do not know what they looked like. This period was only just witnessing the beginning of portrait painting in Scotland. Of the Stewart of Urrard family documents that still exist for the 1600s, there is a marriage contract of 1629, a will of 1628, and a will of 1641. Valuable clothes were usually handed down and sometimes bequeathed to other people but none of these documents mention the doublet. The documents however do suggest that the family had considerable property and livestock and so might have commissioned such a garment. vi The chances of finding a tailor's bill for the doublet were small but that was checked for too – without success. If we are right about the date of the doublet then any of the marriages would be a possible reason for its creation. If it was made for a special occasion, this might help to explain why it is in reasonable condition. It remained special, perhaps only worn occasionally afterwards, and so did not get very dirty, sweaty or greasy. Was the doublet part of a wedding outfit for one of the Stewart men? We may never know. But whoever wore it, he would have looked braw ('handsome', 'splendid'). It is also highly likely that the original owner determined its style and materials. At this time, men took an active role in the selection, purchase and commissioning of textiles, clothing and dress accessories. These might be for their personal use or for members of their family, or be made at the request of friends and acquaintances. When they were travelling away from home, men often sent back news of the latest fashions. vii

HOW FASHIONABLE WAS THE DOUBLET?

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was fashionable to cut slashes into silk. As well as giving the material an interesting appearance, the slashes were an open display of wealth. The fashion may have spread from Switzerland where it was originally used by soldiers. Viii In early seventeenth-century Scotland, taking a roll of expensive imported silk and slashing it all over was surely the ultimate statement in extravagant fashion. The silk itself was not made in Britain. By the late 1600s there was still only one silk dyer and six silk weavers in Edinburgh. As a result, the doublet would have been an expensive item to commission. Clothes like this were a serious investment. The doublet was likely to have been part of a suit with matching trunk-hose. Originally, doublets and trunk-hose were laced together with ribbon points. Then, in the first half of the seventeenth century, metal hooks and eyes, which were easier to handle, came into use. The eyes still remain inside the doublet. These hooks and eyes took a lot of strain, particularly at the back, when the wearer was bending or sitting. The breeches or trunk-hose at this time had become longer, fuller and baggier, reaching almost to the knee.

In contrast, the National Museum of Scotland has a woollen doublet dating between 1650 and 1660 in its collections. It was found in a peat cutting near Wick in Caithness in 1975 on the skeleton of a young man. It was originally cream, checked with red and green, warm, hard wearing and nothing like as frivolous as the silk doublet. It represents a humbler style of clothing that was probably worn by the majority of Scots males. A number of sets of male clothing have been recovered from Scottish peat bogs and several of these are from the late seventeenth century and very early eighteenth century. In cut and construction they are simplified versions of once fashionable shapes, and executed in wool, a much more serviceable material. Fynes Moryson observes in his

Itinerary that 'the Husbandmen in Scotland, the servants, and almost all in the Country did weare course cloth made at home, of gray or skie colour, and flat blew caps very broad. The Merchants in Cities were attired in English or French cloth, of pale colour or mingled black and blew, the Gentlemen did weare English cloth, or silke, or light stuffes, little or nothing adorned with silke lace, much lesse with lace of silver or gold, and all followed at this time the French fashion, especially in Court.'

He was writing of the time shortly before the Union of the Crowns in 1603 but his observations of the non-elite remain true for the seventeenth century; the clothes of 'course cloth made at home' and those 'flat blew caps very broad' have been recovered from peat bogs. The reference to 'blew caps' was sometimes pejorative; Sir John Holles, complaining of the King's tendency to surround himself with Scottish courtiers, claimed that James 'filled every corner of the Court with theis beggarly blew caps'. xiii

While the Jacobean Court undoubtedly influenced the dress of the elite elsewhere in Britain, there were other sources of influence on Scots. The male population was remarkably mobile, with many connections to mainland Europe. While many students at Scottish universities were visitors from Europe, just as many sons of the elite and the professional classes were studying abroad, especially in law and medicine. After a period of study at Glasgow or St. Andrews, they would continue their education at universities in France or the Low Countries. There was established trade between Scotland and the ports of the North Sea and the Baltic, with Scotland exporting coal, fish, and low-grade linen and wool and importing chiefly timber and luxury goods. And disproportionate number of James I and VI's diplomats in Europe were Scots. And

equally, a disproportionate number of Scots served as commanders and soldiers in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648); it is reckoned that some twenty percent of the adult Scottish male population was engaged in the war. xix

Large numbers of Scots also set out as pedlars or chapmen particularly to England and Poland. xx Over the course of the seventeenth century they became increasingly important distributors of newly imported goods from India and the Americas and of textiles produced by the domestic (Scottish) linen industry. xxi Their trade was often seasonal; on their return home to Scotland they brought information on new styles and new fashions, thus invigorating the appetite for change and novelty. However, it seems unlikely that the wearer of so fine a garment as the Perthshire doublet completed his outfit with goods bought from a chapman.

WHO MADE THE DOUBLET?

A tailor made the doublet, but we do not know who he was. Only three tailoring manuals are known to have been published by the early seventeenth century. All were Spanish in origin. **xiii** There was very little written down about the manufacture of clothes at the time; perhaps the tailors wanted to keep their skills to themselves, along with their profits.

Tailoring was learned by apprenticeship and membership of the guilds or incorporations of tailors. Perth certainly had a Tailor Incorporation, although the Perth tailors were less numerous and influential than those in Edinburgh where they were the second largest group of tradesmen in the late 1600s. **xxiii** Yet, even with their skill learned by years in apprenticeship, the cost of the materials amounted to far more than the cost of the labour. Witness the account books of two undergraduate students in London between 1618 and

1621 where three yards of silk cost fifteen shillings but employing a tailor for three days only cost one shilling and sixpence. xxiv This may be one reason why many tailors, especially rural tailors, had more than one job. This complicates the statistical picture. Some of the tailors had prosperous businesses, others may have been poor. Some may have traded from stalls in streets or market places. For many, their home was their work place. Journeymen tailors travelled around the countryside, going from customer to customer. The tailor who made our doublet may have stayed at Urrard while he made the outfit. Tailors who made high quality or luxury clothing for wealthy customers would have had a reasonable living. We can probably say that our tailor was not a small operator. We can probably also say that he was based in Edinburgh, the most important centre for clothing manufacture in Scotland at the time. Edinburgh also had close connections with King James's court in London, so fashions from England and France arrived there reasonably quickly. It is worth noting that, over the course of the seventeenth century, Edinburgh's craftsmen grew rapidly in number and influence, especially in trades such as glove-making, tailoring and goldsmithing, suggesting a growing appetite for luxury parallel to that developing in London through this period. xxv The number of tailors more than doubled over the century. xxvi Tax records for the first half of the seventeenth century show that while most of Edinburgh's tailors earned a modest income, there was an elite group of businesses in the fashionable area opposite St. Giles. Their high incomes suggest that they were catering to a wealthier and more fashionable clientele. xxvii Perhaps the doublet was made at one of these businesses.

ARE THERE ANY OTHERS LIKE IT?

Surviving garments from the early seventeenth century are relatively rare and so there are few comparative examples. The closest seems to be a suit of doublet and trunk-hose in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. xxviii This suit of 1618 is also made of cream satin with a similar shape, construction and decoration to the Perthshire doublet but it is backed with blue silk and decorated by pinking as well as slashing. The exciting discovery made by Janet Arnold in connection with the suit was to find a portrait of it being worn. This suit and its related portrait were central to the effective interpretation of the Perthshire doublet; in the painting Sir John Cotton wears the full suit with all the fashionable accessories: ruff, cuffs, gloves, hat, sword belt and cape. There is a doublet of similar cut, but not design, in the Lord Middleton Collection, on loan to Nottingham City Museums and Galleries. xxix The Victoria and Albert collection also contains another, plainer, doublet made of black serge which, although lacking the slashing of the silk doublets, has many structural and stylistic points in common with the Perthshire doublet. xxx There are also several suits of similar style in the Royal Armoury in Stockholm, Sweden, owned by King Gustavus Adolphus in the 1620s. xxxi By coincidence, Gustavus Adolphus was married in 1620, the same year Robert Stewart was married. There is also a black silk satin doublet of about 1630 in the National Museum of Scotland. xxxii It is not in good condition, but because its silk has rotted away, the materials and construction methods are visible. Like the Perthshire garment, this doublet is a sandwich of silk satin lined with heavy linen. Inside each front panel there is a belly piece, a double layer of triangular cardboard with whalebone stiffening. To stiffen the collar, glue paste has been applied to pasteboard then covered with linen. More recently, the Elizabethan House Museum in Great Yarmouth has acquired a doublet similar to this in cut and date (c. 1630), but executed in linen with a highly decorative surface of whitework embroidery. xxxiii Linen doublets like this seem to have been

fashionable for summer weather while satin was preferred for winter. xxxiv These doublets from 1630 differ from the Perthshire doublet in that they have a higher waistline and fewer, deeper skirt tabs.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN PERTH AND SCOTLAND AT THAT TIME?

In 1617, King James VI (and I of England since 1603) made his only visit back to Scotland, the country of his birth. He began a tour of the Scottish towns that were royal burghs. It was an important event for the nation. The Chronicle of Perth says he came to 'perth, Dundee striwiling brechene Glasgow linlytgow dumfreis couper of fyffe [...]and stayit in kynnaird x dayis athis sport in hunting'. **xxv** Perth had even put 2,000 merks aside the year before to make sure that the town put on a good show 'and may mak the strangeris that arto accompany his majestie persaune and sie that this countrie is nocht sa barrine of farmalitie ordour and civilitie as they ignorantlie apprehend'. **xxxv**

Perth was determined to impress. The King's arms were set up on the main gates of the town. James arrived in Perth on 5 July and was met by the fifty most important townspeople dressed in their best clothes. If they had not appeared they would have been fined one hundred pounds. The town's officers and serjeants wore new red outfits. Beggars and vagabonds were banned from the streets and there were speeches and dances. Maybe the Stewart family of Urrard were part of the King's following. If the doublet existed this early, it would have been very fashionable indeed and given its wearer a certain status on what was an incredibly important occasion.

Despite a far more precarious life than today and numerous natural disasters, such as the terrible flood in Perth which swept away the bridge over the Tay on October 1621,

times were relatively peaceful in Scotland. Although James moved to London with his court when he became King of England in 1603, his new wealth and status meant that the crown remained the dominant power in Scotland. With a stable society there was also wider interest in reading and studying. Historians think that most nobles and lairds could read and write at this time and certainly towns such as Perth had a Grammar School. It is likely that the original owner of the doublet was an educated man.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DOUBLET by David Wilcox

The outer silk satin surface, the interlining and the lining of the main body part: The outer silk satin is patterned with regularly spaced, short diagonal slashes (Figure 5). Under this outer layer is another of white silk taffeta which can be seen where the slashes gape apart. This under-layer of silk is not cut to exactly the same pattern as the outer silk since the orientation of the grain, as seen through the surface slashes, varies from place to place suggesting that it is pieced together (but from large rather than small pieces of taffeta). The body of the doublet is cut from three panels of silk satin: two front pieces and one back piece. This back panel is cut as one piece, without a centre back seam. There are two strips of silk braid sewn down the centre back, but these do not conceal a seam. These silk panels, with their slashes and silk taffeta under-layer have been mounted onto interlining of unbleached linen (Figure 6). In another example from this period, a doublet in the Hessischen Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, Arnold observed that the decorative pinking on the doublet was matched by accidental cuts to the silk under-layer, but there were no traces of such correspondences in the Perthshire doublet. xxxvii This, along with the patchwork nature of the silk under-layer and the fact that its joins are not

seen through the slashes, suggest that the silk was slashed before setting it on top of both silk under-layer and linen foundation.

The doublet body lining is of white fustian and this is seamed together in slightly different places from the outer silk satin. Examination of the doublet and the lining reveal that at some stage in the doublet's existence, the side-back seams of the doublet have been let out; there are pinprick traces of the original sewing lines near the present side-seams. Additional strips of fustian were needed to increase the lining in these areas. The shoulder area also has been widened by the addition of narrow strips of satin, interlining and fustian (Figure 7). The seams joining these shoulder strips to the doublet are largely concealed by braiding. It is not clear when these alterations were made, but the additional materials are consistent with the main body of the doublet. It is possible that the original owner put on weight and had it let out, or that the garment was passed on to a larger man and needed alteration to fit.

Set in the waist seam of the lining is a folded strip of white linen (approximately one centimetre deep) to which are sewn thirteen metal eyes, now badly corroded. The breeches would fasten to these with corresponding metal hooks. Before the use of hooks, breeches were tied to the doublet by laces (points). But around 1620 large hooks began to be used, sewn onto the waistband and connecting to eyelets, rings, or straps inside the doublet waistline. xxxviii

Inside the Perthshire doublet, there are also two small tabs of silk-covered unbleached linen, each with a worked eyelet, set near the front, one on each side, on the waistline, stitched through the lining to connect to the belly pieces. These tabs would be laced together to draw the fronts in line, taking the strain and making the fastening of the front

buttons much easier. This is a feature shared with the doublet it most resembles (V&A: T.28-1938).

There appears to be no additional interlining, such as a layer of wool, around the chest and shoulder area, although Arnold found evidence of this in some doublets, notably the Cotton doublet, the Middleton doublet and the Darmstadt doublet. In this case the absence is fairly certain as the front lining has become detached and allows access to this area of the interlining. However, there is a small pad of wool wadding attached by small pad stitches to the fustian lining around the upper side-back seams, just below each armhole.

The belly pieces at centre front:

On both sides, the fustian lining has a facing strip of white silk, while on the left-hand side, the line of buttonholes is reinforced with an additional strip of unbleached linen interlining. On the left, the fustian lining is set approximately one centimetre back from the front edge, allowing some clearance for the buttonholes to function. This lining is held down to the bodice by a line of stitches sewn along the ends of the buttonholes and concealed on the outside by a line of braid. Effectively, a long narrow pouch is formed by the lining, partly covering the buttonholes, but allowing sufficient access and ease to fasten the buttons. Both front areas of the doublet have additional pieces of buckram attached – the belly pieces (Figure 6). These are each formed from a doubled piece of unbleached linen buckram, in the fold of which is trapped a strip of whalebone to help stiffen the centre front. On the left-hand side this buckram piece extends to the neckline, while on the right the buckram piece ends short of the neckline; there is damage in this

area and the upper part may have become detached over time. The lower area of each of these front pieces has additional triangles of buckram pad stitched in place to give extra stiffness. Possibly there are three or four extra layers of buckram though it is not really possible to be sure; each belly piece is very thick in this area. These belly pieces are attached by a line of coarse stitching through all layers (this stitching is concealed on the outside of the doublet by a line of braid). These belly pieces function to keep the pointed front of the doublet taut and uncreased; it would otherwise buckle across the waistline.

The skirt tabs:

To the doublet, along the waist seam, is attached a skirt composed of eight large tabs of slashed white silk satin. These have an under-layer of white silk taffeta, like the main body, but are mounted onto an interlining of yellow linen buckram. Each tab has been lined in white silk taffeta. The tabs are set in an overlapping pattern around the waist. The two centre back tabs have almost certainly swapped positions at some time, probably when the side back seams were let out. The slashing pattern on these two tabs is the reverse of that expected from the pattern of symmetry shown by all the other tabs. The two centre front tabs each have a small eyelet hole worked in buttonhole stitch just below the waist seam where they join the body section. In addition to the slashing pattern, the tabs are trimmed with double lines of silk braid (see diagram, Figure 5).

Buttons and buttonholes:

The left-hand side front has thirty-one buttons and the collar has a further five buttons.

These buttons are formed from wooden beads over which a herringbone pattern has been

worked in white thread. They are attached by a long shank, worked from linen thread. Some of these buttons are now breaking apart, exposing the wooden core, and four buttons are now completely missing with only a stump marking their original position. On the right-hand side front, all thirty-one corresponding buttonholes are functional. The collar has five ribbon loops of white silk on the right front, corresponding to the five buttons on the left front. This ribbon is similar to the binding used for finishing outer edges of the garment. The loops are necessary because the collar is so heavily interlined; buttonholes would be impossible to sew in such dense material.

Additional surface detail on the main body part of the doublet:

On the pointed centre front of the doublet, there are two eyelets, one on each side, below the buttons and buttonholes. These are worked with buttonhole stitch and are paired with similar eyelets worked on the two front skirt tabs. These eyelets were used to tie the doublet's pointed fronts together. As well as the silk slash patterning, the doublet is ornamented with a narrow white silk braid which runs in double lines concealing the seams and outlining the edges of all pieces (see diagram, Figure 5). In addition, the front edges of the doublet and the collar edge and the cuff edges have all been bound with a narrow, finely ribbed ribbon. On the outer edges, this ribbon is covered in places by a line of braid (on the front buttonhole edge and cuff edges), but left exposed elsewhere (on the right front edge and the collar edge). On both front sections, above the waist seam, there is a vertical loop of white silk braid. These loops are cut from the same decorative braid that trims the doublet generally and emerge from stiletto cuts in the silk. Next to these loops are short lengths of stitching, similar to a bar tack. There are two further loops of

braid on the side back left, near the seam. These loops also emerge from stiletto cuts through the silk. The absence of braid trimming on the waist seam and the presence of these braid loops suggests that a belt or sword-belt was at one time worn with this doublet. *Ii

The collar:

The collar has a foundation of at least three layers of coarse unbleached buckram padstitched together. There may be more, but it was not possible to be sure without damaging the outer silk layers. Arnold noted three layers of buckram as the foundation of the collar of the Cotton suit. The resulting collar is thick and stout, yet flexible. On the inside it is lined with white linen. On the outside, five buttons are sewn to the right-hand side front and five ribbon loops are sewn to the left. In addition to the slashing pattern on the outer silk satin layer, the collar is trimmed with double lines of braid (see diagram, Figure 5). The thick outer edge is bound with a narrow, finely ribbed silk ribbon. A number of styles of lace collar might be worn with this collar. In the Cotton portrait that Arnold relates to the V&A suit, a lace-edged ruff is worn; in other portraits of the same period, a cutwork standing band is seen.

The sleeves:

The sleeves are similarly of slashed silk satin, underpinned by another layer of silk taffeta showing through the surface cuts. Unlike the main body, there is no further interlining; only a lining of white linen serves to support the silk. The sleeves are each cut from two pieces. These are of similar shape, marked by a strong curve at the elbow, but differ

where they join the armhole seam. As has been noted by Peitsch, the concave curve in the back upper arm seam is not accidental but is a deliberate part of the shaping of the garment. The cuffs are open at the wrist and each fastens with twelve pairs of buttons and buttonholes. As with the centre front fastenings, not all of the cuff buttons survive intact. The cuff buttons are the same as those on the doublet front and all sleeve buttonholes are functional. The sleeve lining is also faced with white silk around this area. The edge around each cuff has been bound with a narrow ribbon and overlaid with a layer of braid. The sleeves have the general braiding pattern seen elsewhere.

The shoulder wings:

Around the shoulder seams are set projecting shoulder wings, each made of eight small pieces of silk mounted on yellow linen and lined with white linen. These tabs seem to have been formed from scraps of the silk satin. Each tab has been edged with braid and a further two strands have been sewn to the centre of each piece. The tabs are linked together by short bar tacks with additional decorative bar tacks sewn to the central strands of braid. When assembled into a shoulder wing, the linked tabs have been lined with a strip of white linen similar to that used for the sleeve lining.

The pattern diagrams illustrated here were established by direct measurement from the original doublet after its stabilisation by the conservator. From these it was possible to construct a toile copy of the original garment for use by the costume display stand manufacturer, thereby ensuring a bespoke fit for the fragile original. An exhibition, entitled *A Stitch in Time*, displaying the conserved doublet and referencing its historical

context, along with facsimile doublet and breeches, was presented by Perth Museum and Art Gallery in 2007.

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Appendix I

CONSERVATION DECISIONS AND TREATMENT by Tuula Pardoe

The aim of the conservation work was to establish and carry out an ethical conservation treatment for the rare doublet through an analysis of its construction and condition. The doublet required stabilization for handling, study and possible display. Stabilizing the doublet, improving it aesthetically, and yet allowing access to the doublet's structure and materials for future research were all factors that had to be considered. A decision had to be made as to whether conservation work was going to make a doublet in such a poor condition robust enough for display on a mannequin. The seventeenth-century garment had to be protected from the perils of display in the twenty-first century. In order to respect the integrity of this old and rare garment, a balance had to be struck between the major conservation needs of the doublet and the ethical conservation aspiration to keep interference to the barest essential. Discussions with costume historians highlighted the need for researchers to be able to study the internal structures and materials of the doublet

in the future. It was possible to access many of these through areas of loss on the inside of the doublet. Access was therefore preserved by only protecting the remains of the damaged linings and avoiding all cosmetic attempts to camouflage the losses.

Condition of doublet before conservation:

Wear and staining on the doublet proved that it had been worn in the past. The doublet had been kept in a cardboard box for decades, and it had not undergone previous conservation or restoration attempts. It had suffered from being crushed and unsupported in its past storage but the storage had also protected it from excessive exposure to light. The 400-year-old silk fabrics of the doublet had innumerable splits, tears and missing areas (Figures 3 & 4). Without conservation, handling and mounting the doublet on a display figure, plus the action of gravity when on display, would have torn the garment apart. The outer silk was weak. There were areas where the hair-like fine warp silk threads of its satin-weave surface were on the brink of falling off whenever the surface was touched. In many places such threads had already fallen off thus exposing the underlying weft threads of the satin weave. These weft threads were especially vulnerable to further damage through handling. As many of the threads in the damaged areas had disintegrated, the doublet had a range of areas of loss. The fabric was also fraying in many places. However, despite its poor-looking condition, over much of its surface the satin-weave outer fabric remained flexible and did not immediately fall apart at the slightest touch or movement as textiles in an even more advanced state of deterioration would have done. This flexibility of the outer fabric allowed for stitching, which proved the key in deciding to support the doublet's damage through stitched, not

adhesive-based, support techniques. Reversibility of the treatment was a priority in the treatment selection criteria; with this degree of silk degradation it would be possible and easier to reverse stitched rather than adhesive-based conservation work in the future. In areas of least past wear, a small number of the decorative slashes were as unharmed and pristine as if they had been cut yesterday. In other areas many of the slash ends had joined together with varying degrees of splits and damage in the silk between them, apparently because of past wear.

Notable pieces of the silk were missing, such as from the back left front shoulder. The skirt tabs had become randomly folded over from past storage, and their fine silk lining was incredibly weak and in tatters. These remains of the silk lining were in the greatest danger of falling off the doublet when it was moved. The outside of the collar was barely holding together.

Conservation treatment:

The use of nylon net as a protective layer to contain damaged areas would have been far too visible on the lustrous silk satin outer layer of the doublet. Protective layers were used in areas of the outer silk only where other textile conservation materials and techniques were impossible to apply. In this way the visual interference of netting was kept to the barest minimum. Fine nylon net was used to cover the damaged silk lining; it stabilized the weak silk remains and yet allowed visual access to materials and structures under it.

Treatment to provide support:

Medium-weight satin-weave silk, of a structure and weight that closely resembled that of the original, was dyed to tone in with the colour of the outer silk as far as possible. On the outer silk, the largest areas of loss and the worst, longest splits were supported by inserting patches of the dyed silk satin under the damaged areas and by stitching the supports in place in laid-and-couched stitch. In numerous areas small folds and twists in the doublet fabric were first relaxed with a fine mist of de-ionised water in order to make them lie sufficiently flat for stitching them onto the support patches. Owing to the relative overall weakness of the original satin-weave silk of the doublet, the overriding aim of the work was to support the seriously damaged areas, but leave minor loss or fraying that did not threaten the stability of the doublet.

Whilst the conservation stitching held the damaged areas of the doublet onto the supportive patches of new fabric, the long laid-and-couched stitches particularly helped to keep down the long exposed warp threads of the original silk fabric. The aim of the stitching was to achieve maximum coverage with protective and supportive stitch lines and yet keep the number of new stitch holes down to the minimum on the weak fabric. In the largest areas of loss, whilst it might have been desirable to replicate decorative slashes in the support fabric in order to reproduce those that would have been there originally, cutting them would have weakened any support the replacement fabric offered to the original silk.

Protective treatment work between the buttonholes of the centre front:

Since a few of the centre front buttons of the doublet were going to be fastened for display, it was decided that an attempt to keep the already damaged silk satin between the

buttonholes from becoming worse was necessary. Lines of laid-and-couched stitch in dyed silk thread were stitched over the long loose warp threads of the damaged outer silk satin. This stitching offered a degree of protection to the silk but these areas of silk were still going to require care and consideration when the doublet was handled in the future.

Protective work on the outside of the collar:

The outside of the collar was so badly damaged that, rather than attempting to patch it up with new silk from underneath and potentially cause further damage, its fragmented and split fabric was contained by covering it with a layer of dyed nylon net. The edge of the net also protected the edge of the unravelling and partially detached braid on the outer edge of the collar.

Skirt tabs:

The small missing pieces of the edges of the skirt tabs were camouflaged with the dyed silk fabric and stitched in place. The folds of the tabs and those of the distorted remains of their taffeta lining were relaxed with moisture and straightened by drying them flat. The remains of the lining were then protected with a layer of dyed nylon net, stitching a line of running stitch along the perimeter of the remains to the coarse interlining in order to keep the lining remains in place. Where the edges of the outer silk of the tabs were worn, the net protecting the tab lining was turned over these edges to the outer face of the tabs. The edges were stitched down in running stitch close to the edge of the outer braid of the skirts, protecting the weakened edges.

Buttons:

One button out of the ten remaining buttons on the left sleeve, eight out of the ten from the right sleeve, and thirteen out of the thirty-one buttons down the centre front were covered with a layer of dyed nylon net in order to contain their damage. Three of these buttons had lost their wooden cores and varying amounts of their decorative stitched covers. No attempt was made to replace the missing cores due to the extreme weakness of the remnants of the stitched decorative covers. The net was wrapped round the buttons and fixed in place with fine nylon thread around the shanks of the buttons.

Loose braids:

The braids of the doublet were too weak to be stitched through. For this reason the loose braids of the left shoulder were re-stitched in place by laying a long stitch over the braid at intervals. Another four-and-a-half centimetre long disintegrating section of the braid, on the right edge of the centre back skirt, was first protected by a piece of dyed nylon net and then stitched in place in the same fashion. Another unravelling braid length, of similar measurement, on the top of the centre left front edge, immediately below the collar, was also covered with a layer of the dyed net for protection.

Sleeve silk lining:

The silk lining of the ends of the sleeves was protected with a layer of dyed nylon net, extending its edges to also protect the unravelling braid of the sleeve ends where possible. The net had to be extended over the backs of the button-holes thus, unfortunately, making the button-holes redundant.

VW23 August 2010

Silk lining of the centre front edges of the body:

The folds in the remains of the silk lining of the centre front edges of the body were relaxed with moisture and dried flat. These remains were then covered with a layer of dyed nylon net for protection. The net was attached in running stitch along the perimeter of the silk remains and along the outer edges of the silk-lined areas to the underlying layer.

Display:

The toile made it possible for a display mannequin company to make a made-to-measure mannequin for the doublet without handling the actual garment. The doublet itself was displayed in a purpose-built display case under fibre-optic lighting in the part of the exhibition room with the lowest levels of general lighting. After being on public display for nearly a year, the doublet is now kept in storage, being brought out for special study requests only, in order to protect it for the future.

Appendix II

RECONSTRUCTION OF A 1620s DOUBLET by Ninya Mikhaila

The Commission:

I first examined the original doublet in the Perth Museum and Art Gallery during the spring of 2005 as part of my research for writing *The Tudor Tailor*. Sue Payne, Principal Officer for History at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, planned to have the doublet conserved and also to have two accurate reconstructions made, along with the

23

conjectured pair of breeches which might have been worn with the doublet; one set was to show how the suit might have appeared when new (Figure 8), and the other was for the museum's visitors to examine and handle. I was invited to carry out this reconstruction work once funding was secured.

Study of the Original:

Once it had been stabilized, the doublet was examined in more detail in January 2006. An exhaustive set of measurements were taken and a pattern drawn up. The conservation work, which had been carried out by Tuula Pardoe at The Scottish Conservation Centre, made the fragile doublet much easier to handle without damaging it. There were still areas where both the top fabric and the lining were damaged or missing, and this enabled the underlying interlinings and stitches to be examined. Careful study revealed the way in which the various parts of the doublet had been constructed and made it possible to establish the order in which they were put together. The reconstruction could then be made in exactly the same way. Thread counts were taken from the original materials so that suitable fabrics for the reconstruction could be sourced. Samples of modern materials were also compared with the originals to find the closest matches. The new buttons, binding ribbon and lace were to be reconstructed by Gina Barrett who had supplied a range of prototypes to compare with the originals.

Sourcing the Materials:

The top fabric used for the original doublet was a glossy silk satin in a cream colour.

Since silk darkens and yellows with age the original shade had to be conjectured and a

brighter, whiter cream colour was agreed upon. The underlying silk taffeta which could be viewed through the slashes, lined the skirts and faced the edges of the doublet was of a lighter shade than the satin and so a bright ivory was selected. Both of these modern fabrics were 100% silk and were purchased from Henry Bertrand in London. A range of linen fabrics had been used for the original interlinings. A medium-weight unbleached canvas was used for interlining the main body panels and collar. A narrow strip of the same canvas was used to reinforce the front edges of the doublet. The modern canvas chosen to represent this quality was hand-woven by Thistle Hill weavers in the USA. The front edges of the original doublet were further stiffened with strips of whalebone. Steel bones were used for this purpose in the reconstruction.

The collar and belly of the 1620s doublet was stiffened with several layers of heavy, though loosely-woven, linen canvas which had been coated with some kind of glue or size. This is probably what was referred to in contemporary accounts as 'paste buckram'. **A close modern equivalent was found in a heavy linen buckram bought from Whaleys of Bradford. A thick paste of corn starch was painted onto the buckram to further stiffen it.

The skirts around the waist of the doublet, and the small tabs over the shoulders were interlined in a heavy canvas, dyed yellow, and more closely woven than the paste buckram. Dyed canvas used for interlinings can be found in various colours in several other extant doublets from both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Janet Arnold describes the interlining of a padded doublet c. 1610 at the Germanisches

Nationalmuseum, Nurnberg as 'pale yellow linen'. xlvii There is also an entry in the 1600 inventory of the clothing and materials in Queen Elizabeth I's wardrobe for 'one piece of strawe colour india canvas'. xlviii It may be conjectured that canvas and buckram intended for interlinings were sold in different colours to help the tailor distinguish the varying weights and qualities. For the reconstruction a suitable weight of partially bleached linen was bought from Whaleys of Bradford and dyed yellow to match the original.

The body and sleeves of the original doublet were lined with fustian. A perfect match could not be found, nor a weaver able to reproduce it. An Indian linen and cotton mix of a similar weight, without the raised nap of the original was found in a small retail shop in London.

Whilst most of the modern fabrics used were commercially available machine-made qualities, the intricate buttons, ribbon and lace had to be specially commissioned and made by hand as there was nothing even remotely similar available 'off the shelf'. The maker was Gina Barrett who has supplied carefully researched, high quality, handmade buttons and laces to a number of museums and individuals in the heritage sector. The replica buttons were worked in silk thread over a wooden base, as the originals evidently had been (Figure 9). The silk lace was tablet woven and the silk ribbon also woven by hand.

The original doublet featured a folded strip of linen sewn around the waist on the inside, onto which were sewn large steel loops, or 'eyes'. These eyes would have been paired

with hooks sewn onto the waistband of the matching breeches. The hooks and eyes were handmade in steel by Dave Hodgson of Bodgeramour in Norfolk. Since the matching breeches no longer exist the hooks for the reconstructed breeches were based on examples found on another extant pair of breeches illustrated in Janet Arnold's *Patterns of Fashion*. **Iix**

The construction:

The two reconstructed doublets (and matching pairs of breeches) were constructed entirely by hand, following the same techniques and sequences observed in the original. The slashing was carried out on the silk satin using a rotary blade after the pattern pieces had been cut out. The original slashing was probably worked using a punch. The slashed satin was then tacked onto the silk taffeta. The prepared silk skirt and tab pieces were tacked onto the yellow linen canvas before the lace was sewn on by hand using a small spaced back stitch along both sides in silk thread. The hems were turned in and secured with herringbone stitch in silk thread before being pressed with an iron. The taffeta lining was pinned into the skirt pieces and sewn into place with silk thread using small running stitches.

A strip of the medium-weight canvas interlining was tacked to the inside of the front edges of the doublet and bound off with the hand-woven silk ribbon. The buttonholes were outlined with small running stitches, cut with a punch and worked with silk thread. The silk lace was sewn alongside the buttonholes on the left front and in the same position on the right front.

The paste buckram collar and belly pieces were tacked to the canvas interlinings for the body fronts and collar using unbleached linen thread. The prepared canvas interlining was then tacked to the silk body pieces. The main seams of the body were then joined using backstitch.

The sleeves were completed with buttonholes and lace before the prepared wings were tacked on. They were then sewn into the armhole with backstitch and the sleeve lining bought up to cover the seam allowances.

The buttons were sewn on to the edges of the cuff openings and the front of the doublet with silk thread. A buttonhole stitch bar was worked on the top of each button and the shanks wrapped with silk thread.¹

Conclusion:

The Perth doublet was made by a very skilled tailor from materials of the best quality. It is comparable in both the method of construction and quality of materials and workmanship with the finest examples at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and in the Lord Middleton Collection, on loan to Nottingham City Museums and Galleries. It is hoped that the completed suits will help to illustrate the enormous skills of the makers of the original materials and the tailor himself by demonstrating how it would have appeared when new. Because the materials of the reconstructions have not been affected by the rigours of age and decay over 400 years, they appear startling in their bright

pristine condition, as indeed the Perth doublet would have been when first delivered by the tailor to his client.

ⁱ Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland, is a registered museum, its collections are designated of National Significance and it is administered by Perth and Kinross Council. The doublet has object registration number 2004.107.

ⁱⁱ The Battle of Killiecrankie, July 27, 1689. A Jacobite victory during the Glorious Revolution, with highland clansmen (supporting James II & VII) routing the troops of William of Orange. This victory was short lived as the Jacobites lost their leader, Viscount Dundee, in the battle and a month later were defeated at the battle of Dunkeld.

iii National Archives of Scotland, H M General Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY: Ref No GB234/GD1/394 Stewart of Urrard Papers, 1539-1890.

^{iv} The Marchioness of Tullibardine (ed.), *A Military History of Perthshire*, 1660-1902 (Perth: R A & J Hay, 1908), p.260, note 5.

The unique reasons for the doublet's survival are unknown. The doublet could have had a special significance for the wearer and his relatives. Grieving and sentimental attachment could have played a part in the doublet's initial preservation, while later in the chain, its exchange value may have been significant.

vi National Archives of Scotland, H M General Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY: Ref No GB234/GD1/394/9 & 12 Stewart of Urrard Papers, 1539-1890.

vii Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp.103-108.

viii Lena Rangström, *Modelejon, Manligt Mode 1500-tal 1600-tal 1700-tal* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), p.292.

ix Helen M. Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth-Century Edinburgh, A Demographic Study* (Aldershot; Scolar Press, c1994), p.292.

^x Naomi Tarrant, 'The 17th-Century Doublet from Keiss, near Wick, Caithness', *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, vol. 131 (2001), pp. 319-326.

xi R.C.Turner & R.G.Scaife (ed.), Bog Bodies: New Discoveries and New Perspectives (London: British

Museum Press, 1995), pp.217-9.

- xii Fynes Moryson, *An ItineraryWritten by Fynes Moryson Gent*. (First published, London: J.Beale, 1617); (Reprinted, Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1908), vol. IV, p.235.
- xiii Keith M. Brown, 'The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 3 (1993), p.552.
- xiv Keith M. Brown, 'The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 3 (1993), p.552, 559. James 1 and VI surrounded himself with Scottish noblemen, especially in the important offices of the bedchamber, the privy chamber, the queen's household and the households of Princes Henry and Charles. This high proportion of Scots continued in the reign of Charles 1. Scots serving at Court usually left their wives at home, but were charged, while in London, with making purchases of fabrics and luxury items on their behalf.
- xv T.C.Smout (ed.), Scotland and Europe 1200-1850 (Edinburgh: John Donald, c1986), pp. 19, 56.
- xvi Keith M. Brown, 'The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 3 (1993), p.550; T.C.Smout (ed.), *Scotland and Europe 1200-1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, c1986), pp. 19-33; Grant G. Simpson (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries: 1124-1994*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1996), p 122-135.
- xvii T.C. Smout (ed.), Scotland and Europe 1200-1850 (Edinburgh; John Donald, c1986), p.32.
- xviii Ian D. Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution: an economic and social history, c.1050-c.1750*, (London; New York: Longman, 1995), pp. 272-3.
- xix Steve Murdoch, *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War 1618-1648* (Leiden; Boston; Köln:Brill, 2001), p.18.
- xx Roger Leitch, 'Here chapman billies tak their stand': a pilot study of Scottish chapmen, packmen and pedlars', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 120 (1990), pp. 173-188; H. Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their wares in the seventeenth century* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), p. 26. In 1621 the number of Scots in Poland was estimated at 30,000.
- xxi H. Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their wares in the seventeenth century* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), p.22; Elizabeth Foyster and Christopher A. Whatley (ed.), *A history of everyday life in Scotland, 1600 to 1800* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University

Press, 2010), p.282.

- xxii Lena Rangström, *Modelejon, Manligt Mode 1500-tal 1600-tal 1700-tal* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), p.308.
- xxiii Helen M. Dingwall, *Late seventeenth-century Edinburgh: a demographic study* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), pp.133-6.
- xxiv Vivienne Larminie (ed.), 'The Undergraduate Account Book of John and Richard Newdigate, 1618-1621', *Camden Miscellany*, XXX, 4th Series, vol. 39 (1990), pp.149-269.
- xxv Ian D. Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution: an economic and social history, c.1050-c.1750* (London, New York: Longman, 1995), p.200.
- xxvi Helen M.Dingwall, *Late seventeenth-century Edinburgh: a demographic study* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), p136.
- xxvii Michael Lynch (ed.), The Early modern town in Scotland (London: Croom Helm, c1987), p. 211.
- Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion, The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women c1560-1620* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp.28 and 88-9. On these pages are detailed the cut and construction of Sir John Cotton's silk slashed doublet and trunk-hose (T.28&A-1938) Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- xxix Ibid., pp. 84-5. At the time of writing, the Lord Middleton Collection along with Nottingham's Costume and Textile Collection were being moved to storage at Newstead Abbey, one of Nottingham City Council's Museums and Galleries.
- xxx Victoria and Albert Museum, London: Man's serge doublet and breeches (T.29&A-1938).
- xxxi Lena Rangström, *Modelejon, Manligt Mode 1500-tal 1600-tal 1700-tal* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), pp.72-5.
- xxxii Naomi Tarrant, *The Development of Costume* (London and Edinburgh: Routledge and National Museums of Scotland, 1994), pp.109-10. There is a photograph of the belly piece.
- xxxiii Acceptance in Lieu Report 2007/08, Museums Libraries Archives Council, London , p.26. (see also www.mla.gov.uk)
- xxxiv Linda Levy Peck, Consuming Splendor: society and culture in seventeenth-century England

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2005), p. 40.

- xxxv Jonathan Eagles (ed.), *The Chronicle of Perth* c1590-1668 (printer: James Maidment for The Maitland Club, publisher LLanerch, 1996), p.38.
- xxxvi Ref B59/17/1 Index to Perth Town Council Minutes (1617), pp. 281-287.
- xxxviii Janet Arnold, Patterns of Fashion, The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women c1560-1620 (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 85.
- xxxviii Norah Waugh, The Cut of Men's Clothes 1600-1900 (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p.15.
- Expanded information about this doublet can be found in Johannes Pietsch und Karen Stolleis, *Kölner Patrizier- und Bürgerkleidung des 17. Jahrhunderts, translation of Chapters I III* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung,, 2008), pp. 42-5.
- xl Johannes Pietsch und Karen Stolleis, *Kölner Patrizier- und Bürgerkleidung des 17. Jahrhunderts,* translation of Chapters I III (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung,, 2008), p.44.
- xli Johannes Pietsch und Karen Stolleis, *Kölner Patrizier- und Bürgerkleidung des 17. Jahrhunderts*, translation of Chapters I III (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung,, 2008), p.62
- xlii Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion, The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women c1560-1620* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 89.
- Women c1560-1620 (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 26, plate 190; Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion, The cut and construction of linen shirts, smocks, neckwear, headwear and accessories for men and women c.1540-1660* (London: Macmillan, 2008), p. 39, plate 36A and for a falling layered ruff, p.28, plates 19A, 19D; see also Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction: Dress in Art and Literature in Stuart England* (Yale University Press, 2005), p.43, plate 19. By the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century, the late Elizabethan style ruff survived only among the elderly, clerics and lawyers.
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xlviii Janet Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd (Leeds: Maney, 1988), p.322.

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¹ Ninya Mikhaila & Jane Malcolm-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor: Reconstructing sixteenth century dress* (London: Batsford, 2006), pp. 50-3.