

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN.

17TH AND 18TH CENTURY FRENCH AND ENGLISH SHOES.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N.

This is a Thesis about shoes as it would be impossible to cover all aspects of shoe fashions as it is far too extensive a subject, I am therefore, concentrating my efforts on 17th and 18th Century English and French shoes. I will discuss the differences and similarities of shoe fashions and trends in both countries.

In early centuries it was the kings and queens, emperors, philosophers and courtesans of Rome who set the styles, in later centuries the styles were set by great ladies, Royal favourites and mistresses or even a country such as France which even to-day holds the front line of fashion trends. In days gone by it was the people who were wealthy and from the top of society who influenced and followed fashion, where as to-day almost anyone, whether they be rich or poor can be a fashion follower and there is very little differences in fashion trends in different countries to-day due mainly to better communications.

Shoes of every period tend to echo the fashion of that period in both colour and shape this can be seen when there are fussy cloths covered with rosettes, ribbons, embroidery, pearls etc., the shoes follow the same trend and are usually decorated in the same manner.

Architecture, too, influences fashion and a great example of this is the Plantagenet years of the mid 1100's to the end of the 1300's when there were huge towering steeples on churches and cathedrals all over Europe, the fashions also followed, especially in France, where the women wore tall head-dresses. This type of head-dress was called a hennin and was later modestly accepted by English women. Men too, wore clothes that echoed the shapes of the steeples.

The shoes worn by the men and women became very long and slender and continued to grow longer and yet more pointed throughout the period until they became so ridiculous that they died a natural death and fashion once again took another turn.

In this Thesis I will discuss shoes, why a certain type of shoe was worn, how or who changed the trend and the followers of the trend. I will be touching briefly on the subject of social and enviromental conditions of the countries involved as this is a very important factor in the style of shoes that were worn.

In years gone by and even today some countries rise above the rest and become fashion leaders, this can be due to social circumstances, industrial development or even attitudes towards design, rather than dictatorship. The French were the fashion leaders in the seventeenth century when Louis XIV became the first absolute ruler in Europe. He was a man who seems to have known that he would live a long time, most of his plans and laws were long term ones, they ripened slowly and he confided in nobody.

It was a prosperous time for clothing and footwear, indeed there was much progress and development in everything connected with the arts and crafts. In 1648 the Acadamy of Sculpture and Painting was founded and in 1663 it received royal recognition from Louis and this was followed by the Academy of Architecture and the establishment of the Academy of Science and the foundation of the Observatory in 1667.¹

In the first half of the century the main influences were on manners, the style of clothing and shoe fashions came from the boroughs of Holland but this soon passed and the later half of the century for the first time since the early Gothic period, the French once again took the lead in art and costume.

From as early as the 1660's, Louis' Court began to lay down laws of fashion, laws which determined the type of cloths that everyone would wear, differentiating between nobles and peasants. These laws were seldom broken by anyone, they covered everything from who would wear a wig down to the type of shoes and boots that people

were permitted to wear. The French fashions unified the dress of the ruling classes of most of the European countries and also influenced the dress of the ordinary people. There was such a degree of uniformity that the 'SUN KING's Court at Versailles became considered for the first time in History as the fashion centre of the world and strenuously publicised this by sending each month life-sized dolls dressed in the latest fashions, these went first to London and later to the other capital cities of Europe.

At this time in the Royal Court women were the centre of attention. The attraction was not focused on the ladies of high and noble birth but rather on the mistresses. For to be the King's mistress was considered as the greatest distinction and it was such women who became the leaders of fashion. The style of footwear that was made popular by such women as the King's mistress (Mme de Montespen who held this position until about 1684) was shoes having high tongued uppers,^{2.} pointed toes and high 'Louis heels' so called because they originated during the reign of Louis XIV. The sole of the shoe continues up under the arch and down the front of the heel, this name applies to any shape or height of heel where the same method is used. The womens shoes were made of kid leathers, silks, satins or velvets. There was the occasional use of pleated silks or satins. Illustrations I (a) and (b). The shoes were decorated with silk embroidery, silk bindings, taffeta, an abundance of lace frills or silk rosettes, all of varying colours. Heels were sometimes covered in the same decorative brocade. In a number of cases the shoes were left raw in the inside, the more expensive shoes were lined with linen or kid leathers. Expensive fabrics were used in womens dresses and their shoes, embroidery often making these two essential parts

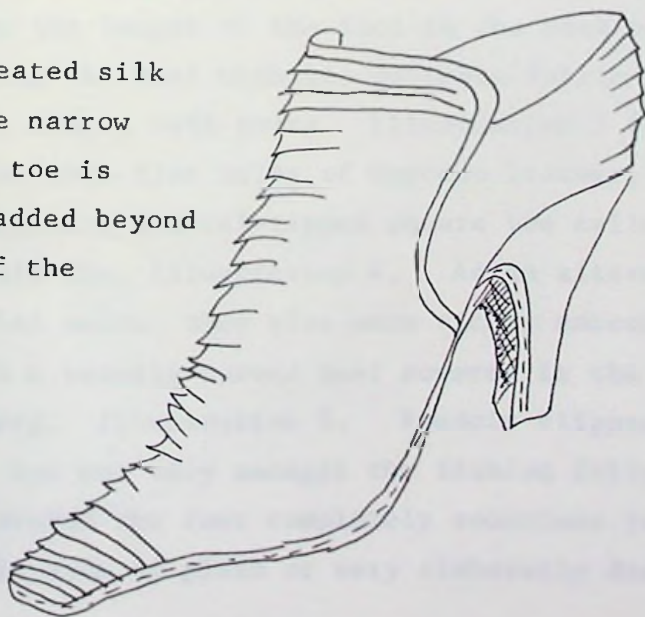
ILLUSTRATION NO. I (A).

Ladies pleated silk shoe.



ILLUSTRATION NO. I (b).

Ladies pleated silk shoe. The narrow 'Spatula' toe is lightly padded beyond the end of the toes.



of dress very heavy and uncomfortable. It was fashionable for women to have small feet, so women who valued their appearance bound their feet with waxed linen tapes, often so tight that it caused them to faint with the pain. This was a practise which in veying forms continued to the end of the nineteenth century.

Due to the expensive delicate fabrics such as satins and silks or even the tougher fabrics such as velvet or heavy brocade which were equally as difficult to maintain in good condition these shoes were often worn inside a protective outer shoe made of a less expensive fabric. This protective covering was suited to the almost flat shoe, that was popular in the early half of the seventeenth century. Illustration 2 (a). However, within a short period a higher heel was in vogue and this type of shoe covering was no longer suitable, yet the problem of protecting the shoe fabric still existed. Their solution was the double-soled shoe, that is a shoe with a strip of strong leather often double thickness, Illustration 3 (a), was attached at the tip of the toe and that ran the length of the foot to the back of the heel thus preventing the heel with its delicate fabric from sinking into any mud or soft grass. Illustration 3 (a) and (b). They also wore flat mules of Morocco leather, silk or velvet sometimes with a metal-tipped square toe called the Manolin or Spatula Toe, Illustration 4. As an alternative, to the plain flat mules, they also wore richly embroidered mules, but with a heavily curved heel covered in the same decorative embroidery. Illustration 5. Boudoir slippers were very popular but not only amongst the fashion followers. These shoes covered the foot completely sometimes reaching the ankle, they were made of plain or very elaboratly decorated fabrics

ILLUSTRATION NO. 2 (a)

French silk slipper with neat silk
rosette worn with cork-soled
Pantoffle.

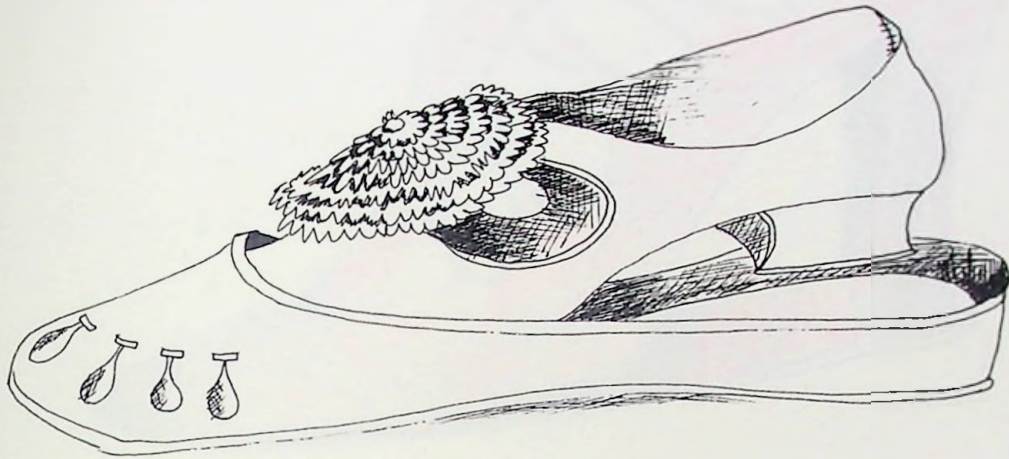


ILLUSTRATION NO. 2 (b)

Ladies shoe. French 1630.

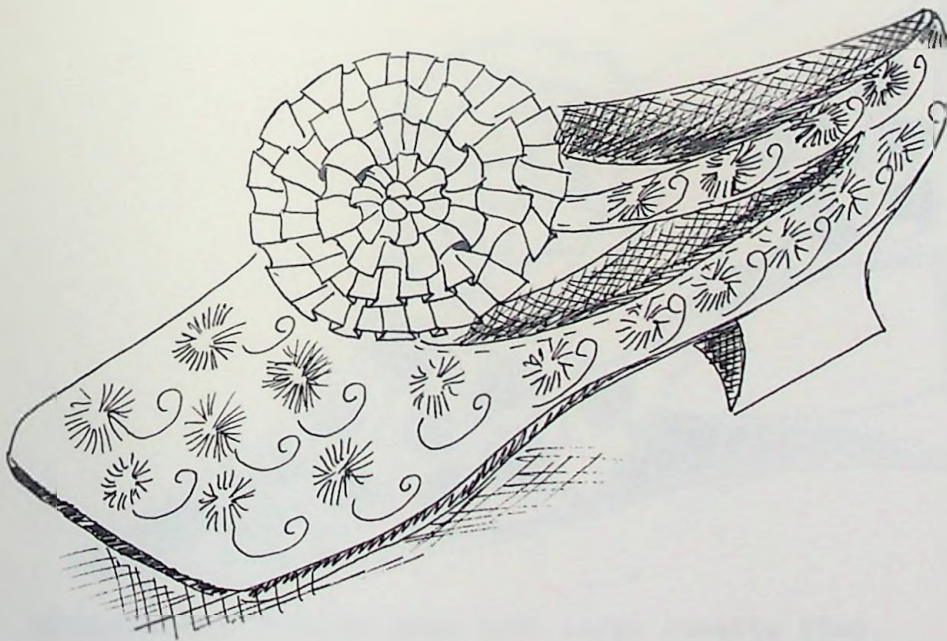


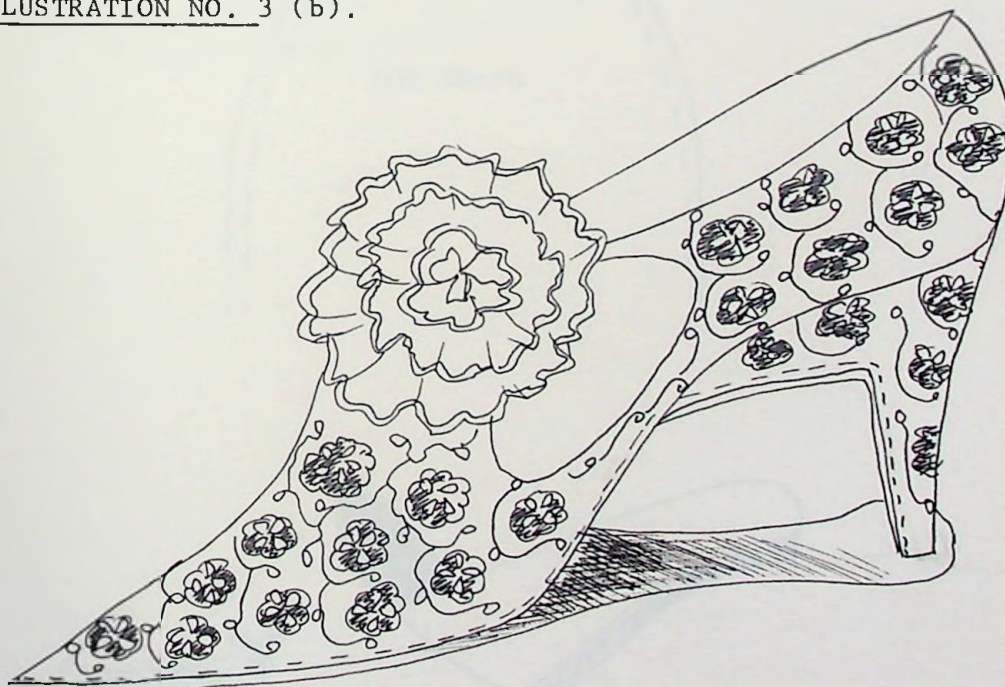
ILLUSTRATION NO. 3 (a).



DOUBLE-SOLED SHOE 1630.

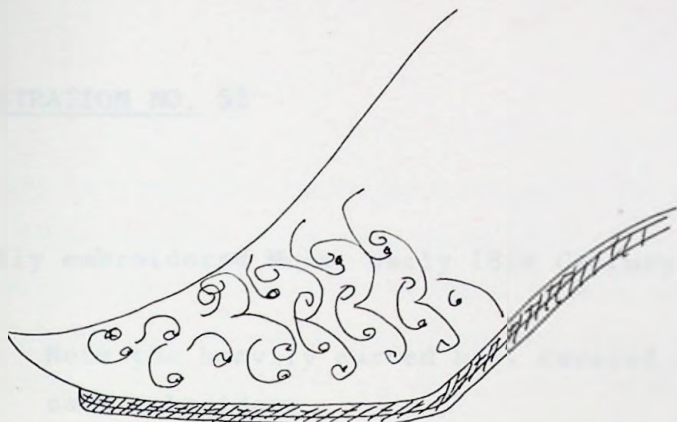
Fastened with jewel through crude button hole.
Shoe made of red kid leather.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 3 (b).

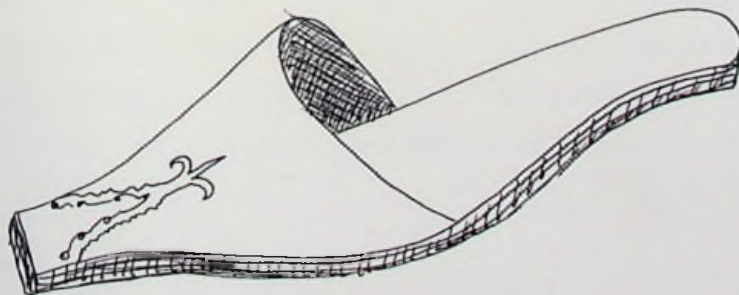
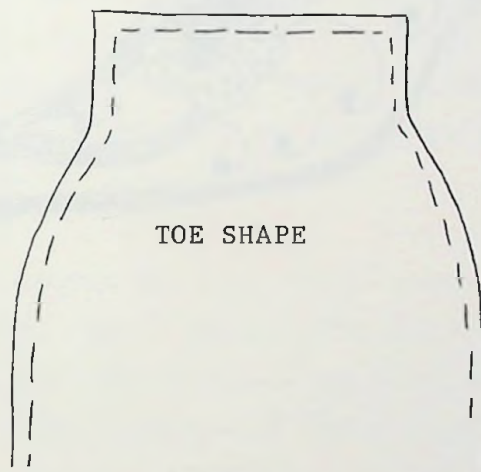
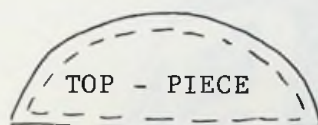


DOUBLE-SOLED brocade shoe with large rosette 1940.

ILLUSTRATION NO. A.



Tapered spatula toe which is typical of many shoes.

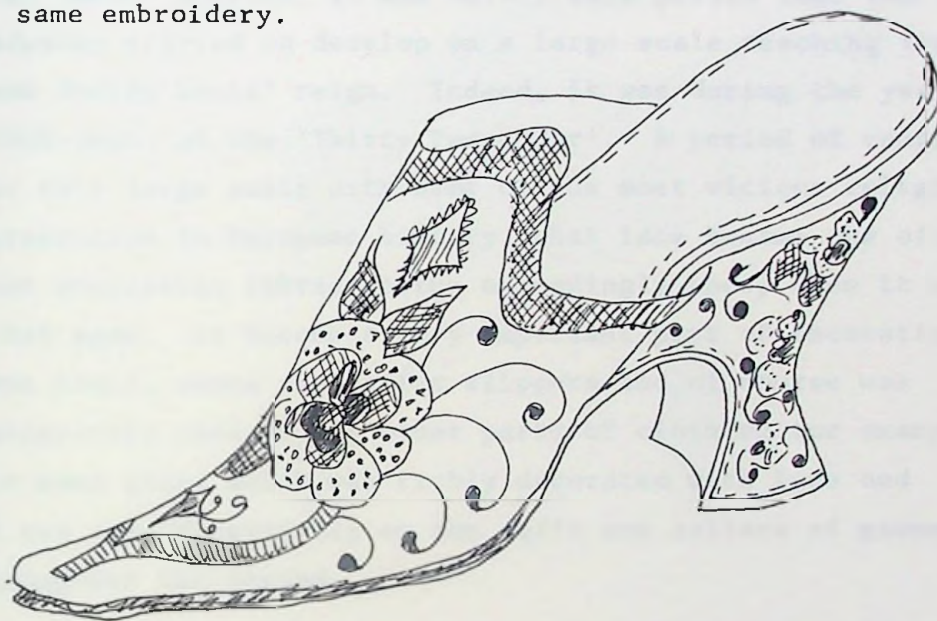


Flat mule in leather, silk or velvet, metal-tipped square toe. Called Mandolin or Spatula toe.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 5.

Heavily embroidered Mule, early 18th Century.

NOTE: Note the heavily curved heel covered in the same embroidery.



and had gathered lace fall collars, Illustration 6 or as in Illustration 7 they were made with very elaborate lace rosettes which were detachable. Indeed almost every style of footwear for men and women at the time was decorated to some extent with lace. However, it was before this period that the lace industry started to develop on a large scale reaching its peak during Louis' reign. Indeed, it was during the years (1618-1648) of the 'Thirty Years War'. A period of continental war on a large scale with some of the most vicious religious persecution in European history, that lace became one of the most accessible fabrics being exceedingly cheap when it was first made. It became a very important part of decorating mens boots, shoes and ladies slippers and of course was extensively used on all other parts of clothing for example the mans shirt which was richly decorated with lace and it was used extensively on the cuffs and collars of garments throughout the period.

There was almost the same basic shape to men's and women's shoes alike. Men's shoes being made of leather they wore high heels and the same rosettes as those on the womens shoes but there are many examples of their shoe rosettes being larger and more colourful than those of the womens. Indeed, mens shoes were very decorative. They wore breeches called 'Rhinegrave Breeches' named after Rhinegrave of Salin who launched them in Paris in the first half of the seventeenth century. The breeches, which only came as far as the knees were decorated at the edges with expensive lace and from the waistline came bunches of ribbon loops which hung low on the hips. The same

ILLUSTRATION NO. 6.

Lady's boudoir slipper in plain on embroidered silk, with gathered lace fall collar.



ILLUSTRATION No. 7.

Satin slipper with deep lace frill and lace rosette.



ribbon would be made into large rosettes to decorate the shoes. They wore embroidered silk stockings, mens legs were indeed very decorative, their heels on their shoes were very curved and set well in under the foot as seen in Illustration No. 8. The heels on mens shoes varied from being very heavy and curved in early part of the seventeenth century then developing into a straighter well set heel as shown in Illustration No. 9 (a) and in the later half of the century, the heels then once again became curved. Illustration 9 (b). Both men and women alike wore the same silk Pantoffles these were usually made of silk or very heavily embroidered brocade, the heels were high and curved and they were covered in the same fabric as that of the shoe. Illustration No. 10.

Mens boots were very spectacular, they were in general use at the beginning of the century and most men wore them. From 1610 onwards they were worn indoors sometimes with an overshoe. Inside the top of the boot which was enormous and heavily decorated with lace, Illustration 11 (a) were pockets where small objects could be stored. The set of pocket linings were detachable and could be replaced. The "Bastard" boot as in Illustration 11 (b) also had the same hidden pockets.

By mid 1600's the width of the leg increased and the toes got broader. As the shape of men's feet broadened women shoes became narrower and the toes more pointed. It was at this time that Louis did not allow boots to be worn indoors without an overshoe. The boot as in Illustration No. 12 was commonly worn by all men at that period, they were either knee-high or thigh-high made of

ILLUSTRATION NO. 8.

Embroidered silk stockings, an important leg-wear fashion held with a garter under the knee. Very large coloured Rosettes decorating the side of the leg and the shoe.

NOTE: The heel of the shoe is set well under the foot.

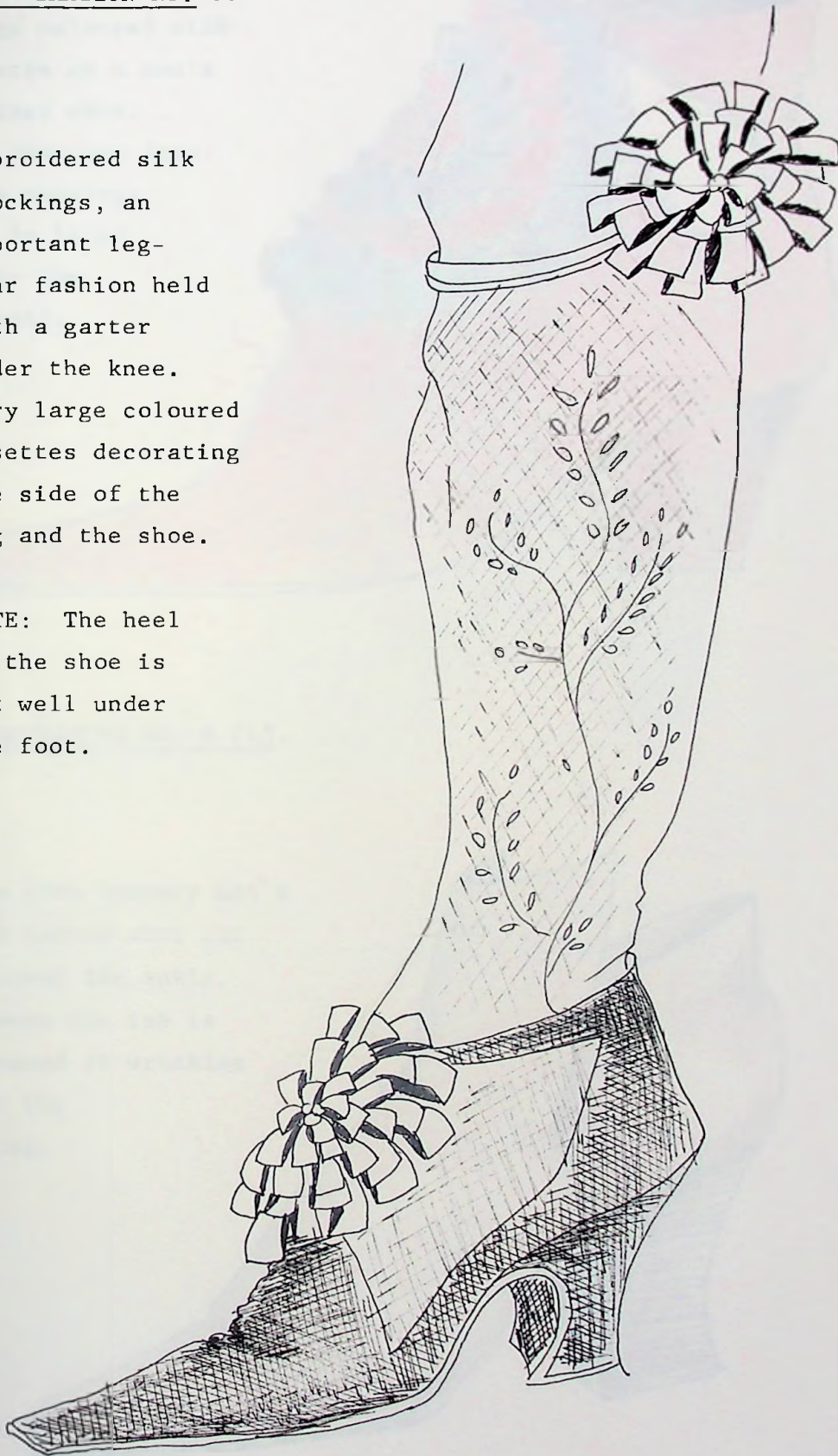


ILLUSTRATION NO. 9 (a).

Large coloured silk
Rosette on a man's
leather shoe.
The shoe has deep
side openings
and is laced
under the
Rosette.

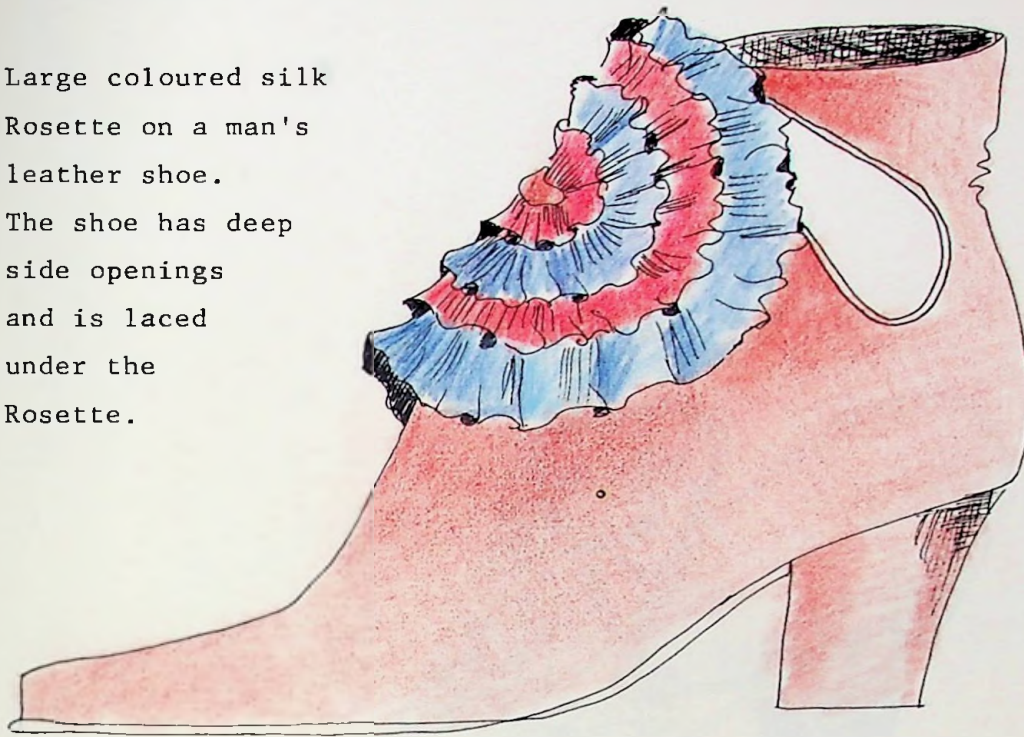


ILLUSTRATION NO. 9 (b).

Late 17th Century man's
high tabbed shoe cut
to cover the ankle.
Because the tab is
unseamed it wrinkles
over the
instep.

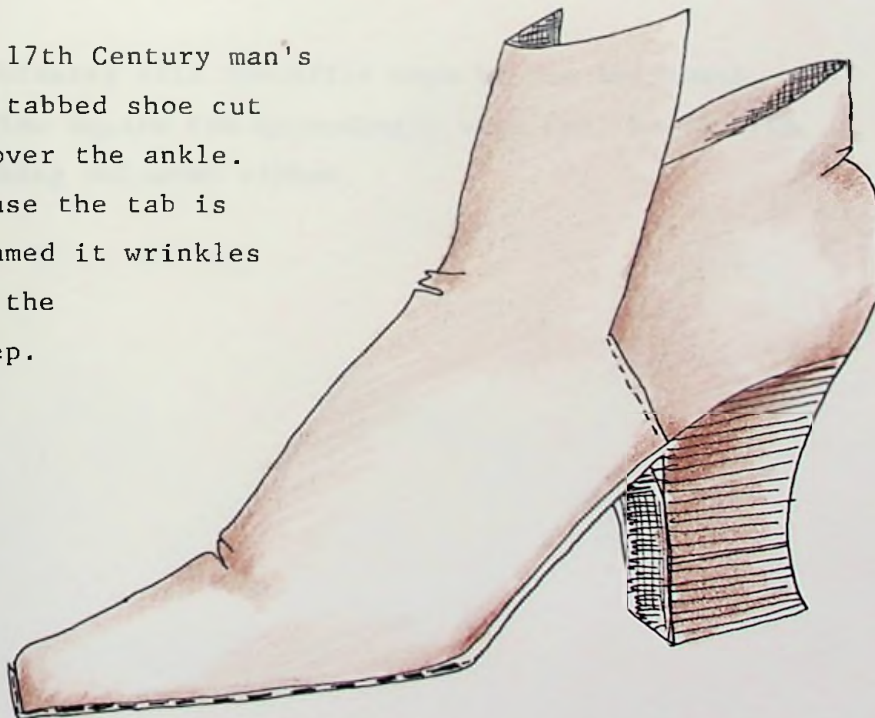


ILLUSTRATION NO. 10.



Embroidered silk Pantoffle worn by men and women.
Shallow square toe exceedingly high tab, bound with
matching coloured ribbon.



Bastard boot with lace decorated bucket top.



Frilly Bastard boot, which had various widths.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 12.



Brown buff boot, plain in contrast with the clothes
with the same deep top of the period and a wide leather
stirrup - leather guard.

tough leathers, fitted to the leg, then fanning out at the top so that they would be turned over. Most mens boots had heavy blocked toes. The boots were made of stiff leather , they had a rough finish on the inside and to protect the foot a small linen slipper or shoe was sometimes worn. Women too, wore a type of leather riding boot which was not well developed at this time. Their boot was laced well above the ankle and tied in a neat bow, Illustration No. 13.

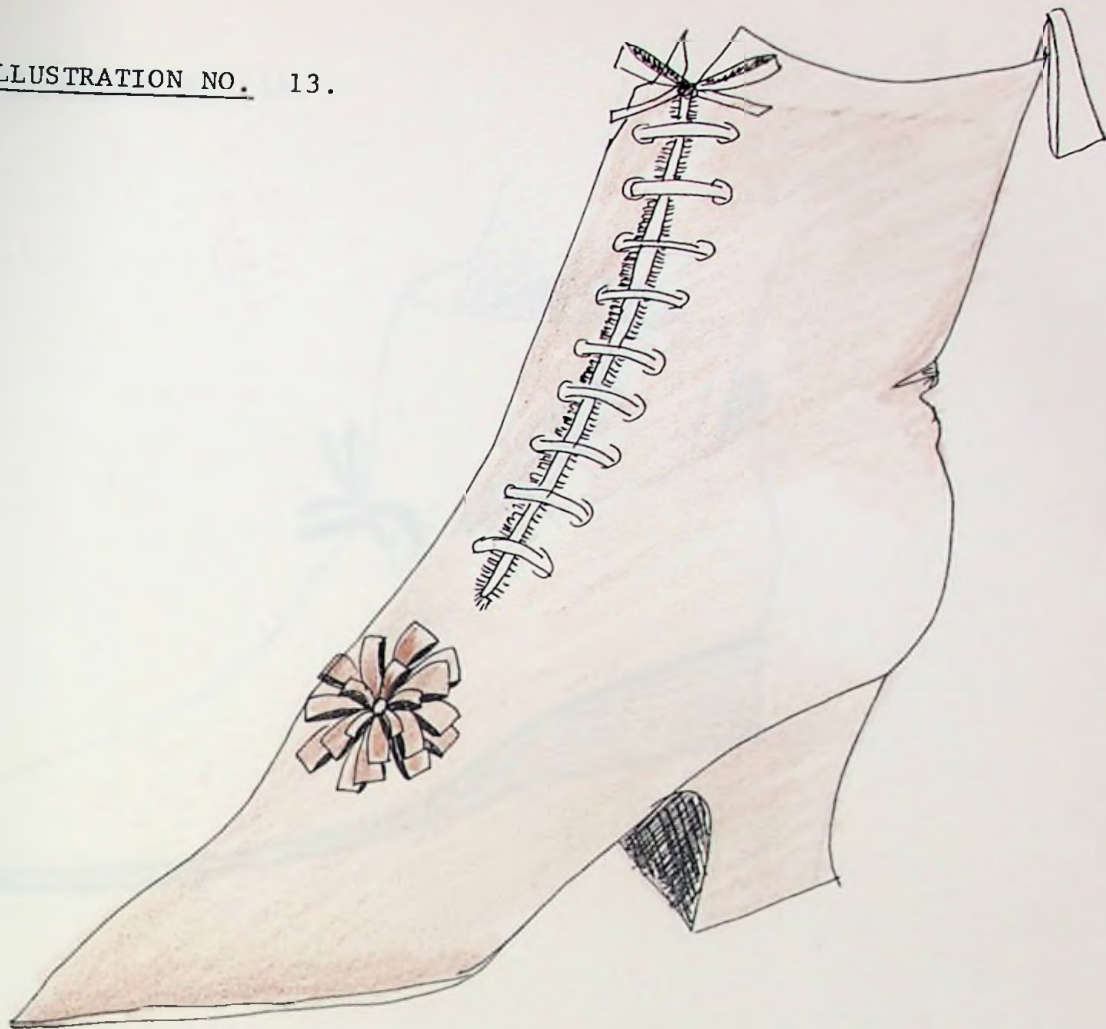
The shoes of commoners and people of less noble birth were basically the same shape as those in court at this time. Their shoes were stripped of all the lavish and expensive decorations and were made of poorer quality and less expensive fabrics. Peasants and farm workers wore a very simple leather shoe, usually in black with a high tongue and tied with a leather ribbon. Illustration No. 14. Leather strips extending the full length of the shoe to form a wedge sometimes coloured red.

Footnotes:

¹ Henry J. Sharpe, Art History and Appreciation
(Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976), p. 85.

² The upper part of the shoe which is like a tongue in shape.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 13.



French leather riding boot. Laced well above the ankle and tied in a neat bow.



Leather shoe, usually black, with high tongue,
tied with leather strap. The leather sole
extends full length of the sole and forms
a wedge.

C H A P T E R I I .

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH SHOES.

In the last few years of Louis XIV's life Court ceremonies had become even more formal and there were greater distinctions between the rich and the poor. Men's boots both for the rich and poor were now becoming purely functional and were not worn indoors again until the end of the eighteenth century. It was becoming acceptable and very popular for men to wear shoes and silk stocking, usually in red or pink. The popularity for the silk stocking began in 1672 when a technical school was founded by Colbert in order that the trade could be learned properly. For the production of the silk stockings a Royal Workshop near Paris was started and had some two hundred workers.³.

The fashion for open-sided shoes for both sexes disappears. The shoes were now more dainty than before, especially women's shoes and they formed the transition to the buckled shoes of the Rococo. (1730-1789).

The men's shoes were low-cut, neatly square-toed and had high heels in a different colour from that of the shoes, usually red. Illustration No. 15 shows a man's high tabbed shoe cut to cover the ankle. The high wood heel covered in red leather was very common in the early day of the eighteenth century. The shoes were then decorated with high-set square buckles, made to match the square toes of the shoes. When they first appeared the buckles were small, setting off the decorative shapes of the tops of the high tongues, which were often turned over to show the red lining to match the red heels. The buckles became quite large in the 1740's and enormous in the 70's until the French Revolution abolished them in France.

The square buckles were decorated and set with semi precious and precious stones, sometimes representing the fortunes of their

ILLUSTRATION NO. 15.

Men's high tabbed
shoe cut to cover
the ankle with
red heels and
red lining of
tab.



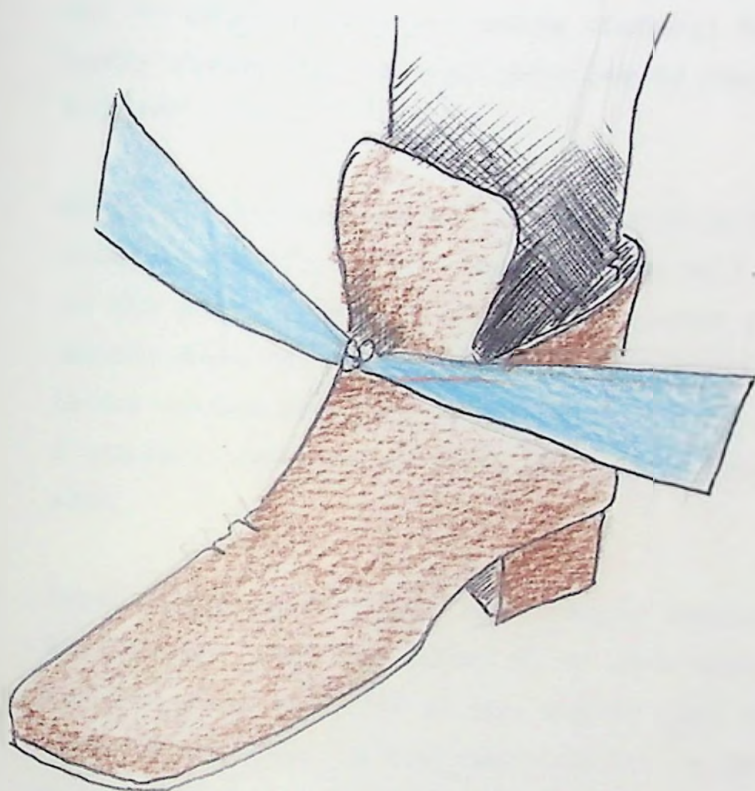
ILLUSTRATION NO. 16.



Man's shoe with red heels and tall turned down tab
revealing red lining to match heels.

Can be seen in the painting of the Grand Dauphin
with his wife and children
by Pierre Mignard dated 1697.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 17.



Man's hearly eighteenth century shoe with windmill
bow tie.

From Painting by Jean Etienne Label.

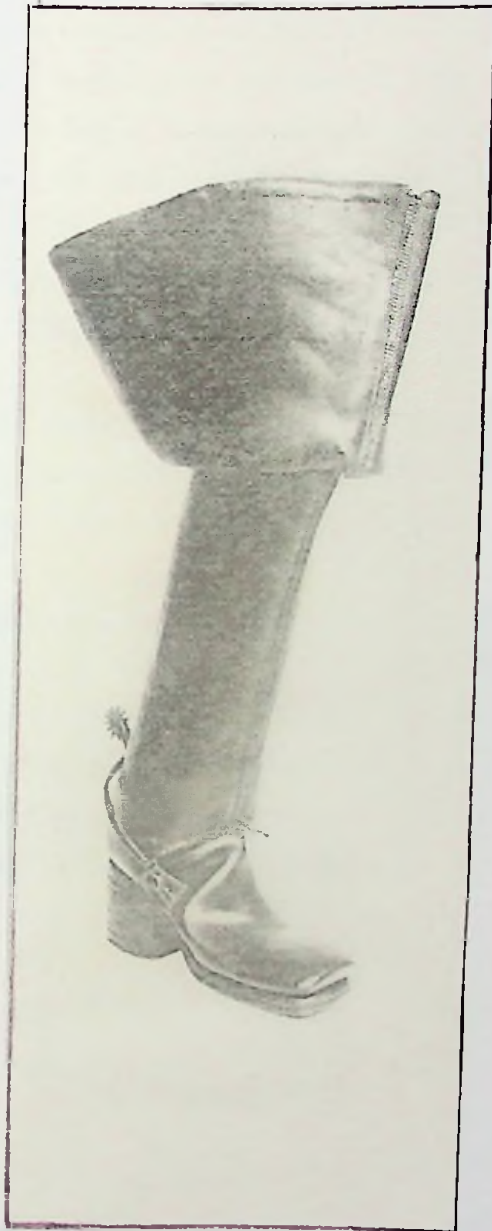
owner and for those who could afford them diamonds were used because they were the most highly esteemed gem of the period. At first the small buckles were worn along side the multiple ribbon rosettes and butterfly bows, they were detachable like any other piece of jewelary, Illustration No. 16, No. 17 shows a wide spreading windmill bow as seen in an early eighteenth century painting by the French artist Jean Etienne Label.

With inspiration channelled into buckle design, men's shoes from the 1720's to 90's became very dull because the designs of the shoes changed little during this period and they were mainly made of black leather. They had blocked toes and the heels varied from one to three inches in height. There was a gradual tendancy to push the buckle nearer the toe of the shoe.

Even though men's boots were purely functional with the French Revolutionn, they continued to be made with very stiff leather causing less wrinkles at the ankles they were thigh-high with huge bucket tops in the same leather as that of the boot Illustration No. 18. The boots were still worn with spurs and leather stirrup guards.

Red and black laquers were to give furniture a Chinese feeling this was also reflected in men's shoes. The walls of houses were decorated with Chinese landscapes and the soft colours of Chinese silks characterised the clothes of both sexes. Indeed from 1730 the clothes were rather more practical and easier to wear. The silhouette of dress for both sexes spread quickly over the whole of Europe. The French ideas of clothes and shoes penetrated even into such independent places as Venice, Rome, Vienna and Berlin, so much so that the wealthy of each country were almost identical in appearance.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 18.



"JACK" boot of black leather with blocked toe and three inch heels.

Similar boot may be seen in a painting of Louis XIV on horseback by Rene Antoine Houasse.

Women shoes reflected though rarely matched the elaborate patterns of their dress, although they had similar embroidery and the uses of silver lace trims. Women's shoes continued to be made of fabrics such as silks, satins, brocade and velvet. The only introduction of leather at this time was in the sole of the shoe or as a heel covering because they too wore red leather heels as well as other colours such as yellow. The heels once again tended to sit well under the arch of the foot. Illustration No. 19. It was as though all the years of experiment to find the correct position had been wasted.

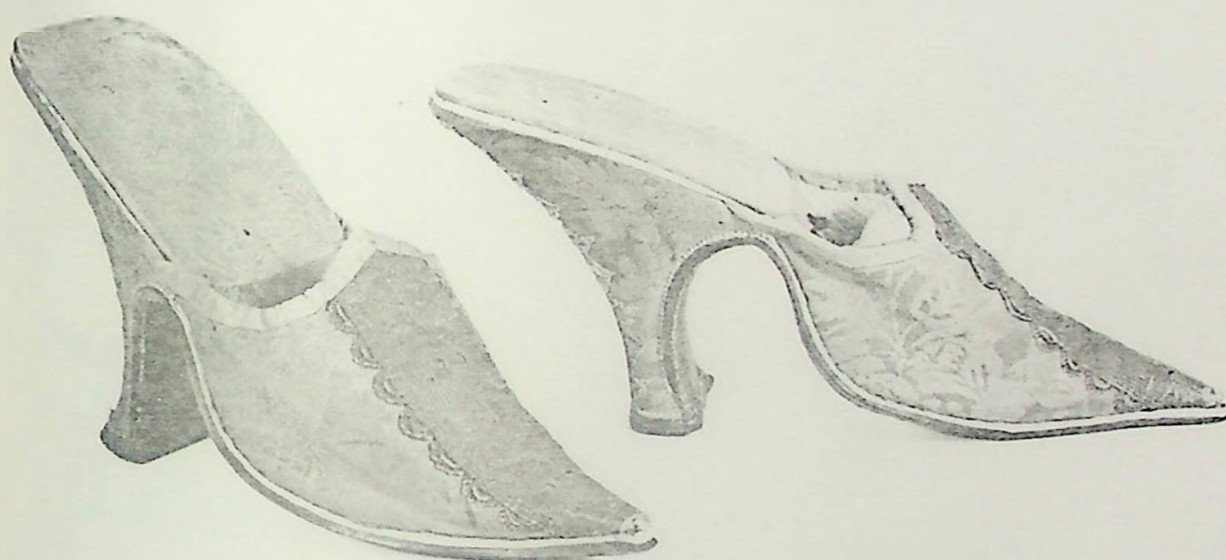
The heels on women's shoes were heavy and very curved until the 1730's. The more delicate shoes were worn along with a protective patten. Illustration No. 20.

By mid eighteenth century the heels of the shoes began to get higher but still sat under the arch of the foot and retaining the same curve as previous years. Illustration No. 21. However, by the end of the century the buckles were once again replaced by bow ties and small ribbon rosettes and a lower heel became more popular, Illustration No. 22.

Footnotes:

³ Ludmila Kybalová, Olaga Herbenová, Milena Lamarová, The Pictorial Encyclopedia of Fashion, Claudia Rosoux. (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., 1972), p. 190.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 19.



Pair of lady's rust silk brocade mules, trimmed with silver braid, white kid rand.

DATED 1720.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 20.

TOP SHOE: Cream embroidered shoe in red, blue, green and yellow.
Heel covered with yellow kid.



BOTTOM SHOE: Green and pink brocade shoe, red leather heel.
Detachable matching patten with raised instep.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 21.

Lady's shoe with high curved stitched heel.

Note the curved buckle matching the curved tab of the shoe.

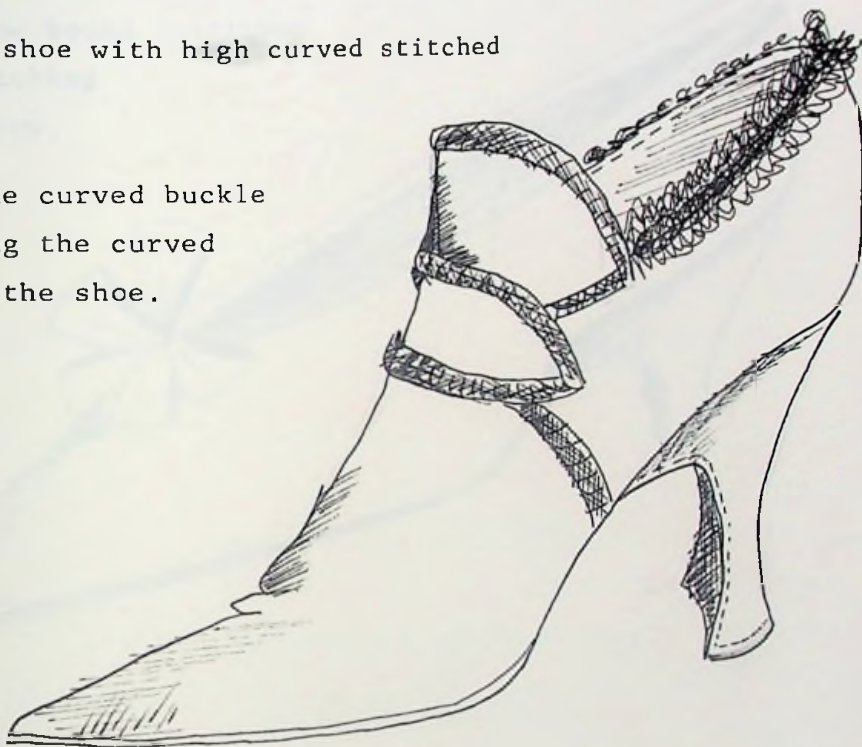
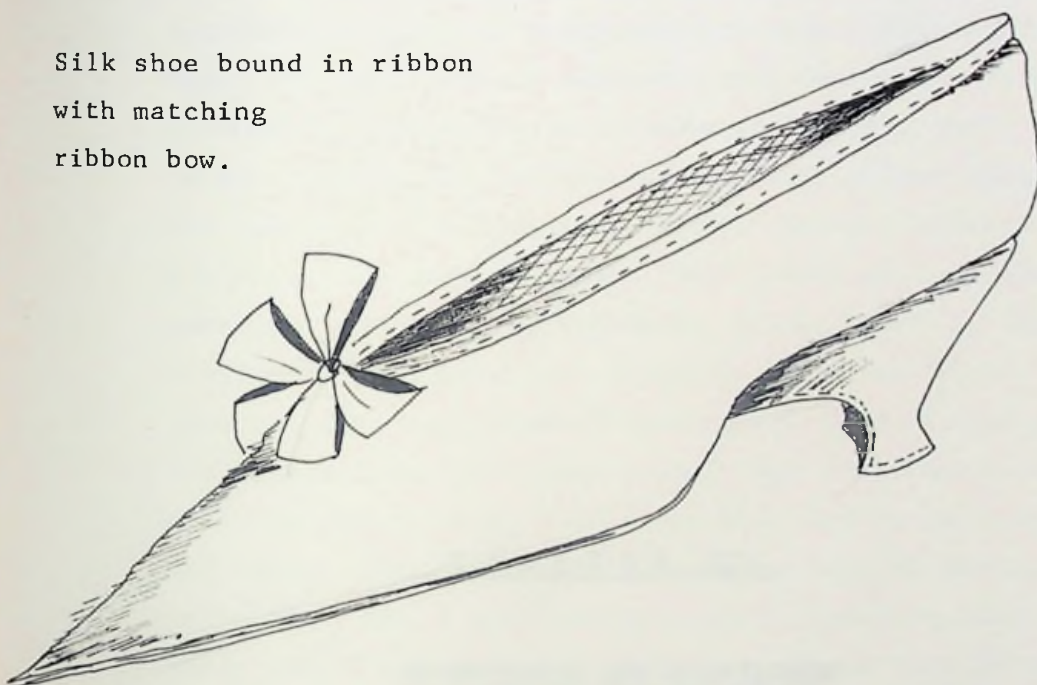


ILLUSTRATION NO. 22.

Silk shoe bound in ribbon
with matching
ribbon bow.



In England during the reign of James I (1603-1625) clothes and customs were very strict, as appeared in Queen Elizabeth's reign, which was a time that was very changeable in dress fashion, but not in shoe fashion. It was a very important and colorful period, the clothes were made of extravagantly rich fabrics and were very tight, closely to the body, and very decorative. In the early seventeenth century the calico stripes and patterns could possibly have been the result of the war with the Dutch Republic. England was defeated in that war. Both men and women wore very much of the beginning of the century, the distinction between men and women. Also the French the time was also interested in decoration in shoes and dress. The women the early years were better, this was connected with the use of heavy fabric and the padding of clothes and shoes. The

CHAPTER III.

SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH

CENTURY ENGLISH SHOES.

From the early 1600's shoe makers were establishing themselves in their own shops, there were apprenticeship working with masters, although, like the fashion design and the of decoration about the padding of the shoes. There are examples of heels placed under the arch of the foot to give would even like a non-slippery sole, the shoes are also good examples of the heel and sole. The shoe makers were experimenting and working about their shoes, they were away from the market, with the design of the shoes and the result of their labor. (Parker, 1964, p. 127)

In England during the reign of James I (1603-1625) clothes and colours were very calm, as opposed to Queen Elizabeth's reign, which was a time that saw many changes in dress fashions, but not in shoe fashions. It was a very prosperous and colourful period, the clothes were made of extravagantly rich fabrics and money was spent freely on jewellery, embroidery and ornaments. In the early seventeenth century the calmer clothes and colours could possibly have been the result of the continual border battles between England and Scotland at that time. Both men and women wore lace ruffs at the beginning of the century, then developing into wide lace collars. Like the French the lace was also reflected as decoration on boots and shoes. The clothes for both sexes were bulky, this was achieved with the use of heavy fabric and the padding of clothes and boots. The padding was used as a form of protection in battle. Men's breeches were decorated with lace and heavy embroidery and also strips of velvet ribbons and they were thickly padded down the legs. The shape of the breeches diverted attention from the hips, focusing on legs and feet.

From the early 1600's shoe makers were establishing themselves in their own shops, there were apprentices experimenting with heels, although, like the French there was a lot of indecision about the placing of the heels. There are examples of heels placed under the arch of the foot in what would seem like a most uncomfortable position, but there are also good examples of the heel set well back. The shoe makers were experimenting and making shoes that could be seen in every town in the country, with the height of the heels sometimes reaching to four inches. Illustration No. 23 (a).

ILLUSTRATION NO. 23 (a).

Women's shoe. The heel is under-set and is continued under the instep and sole as a continuous piece of leather.

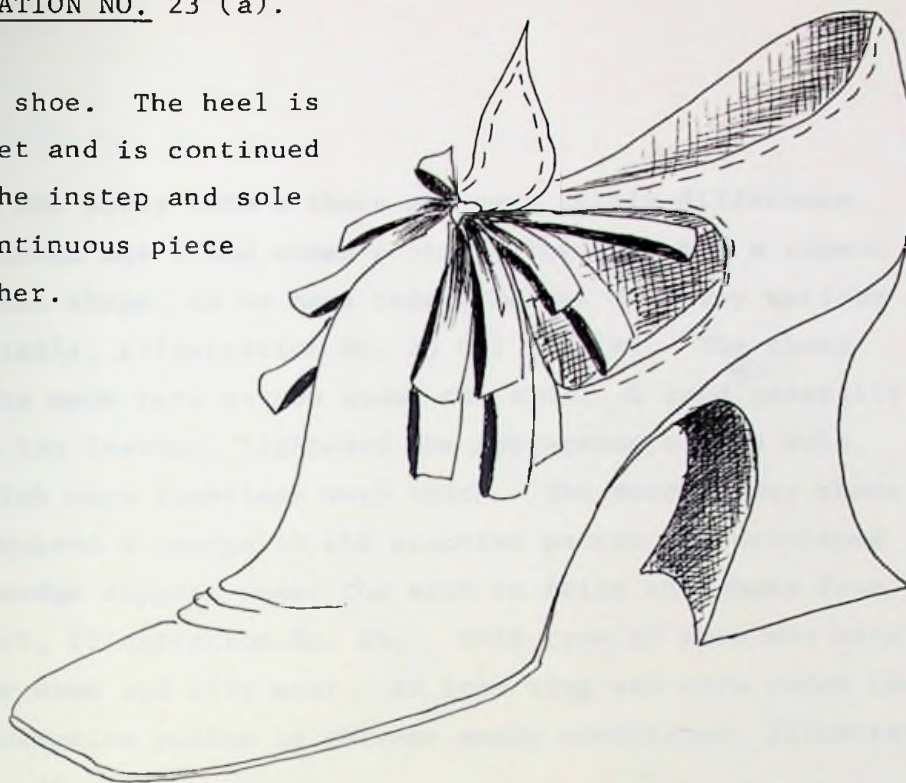
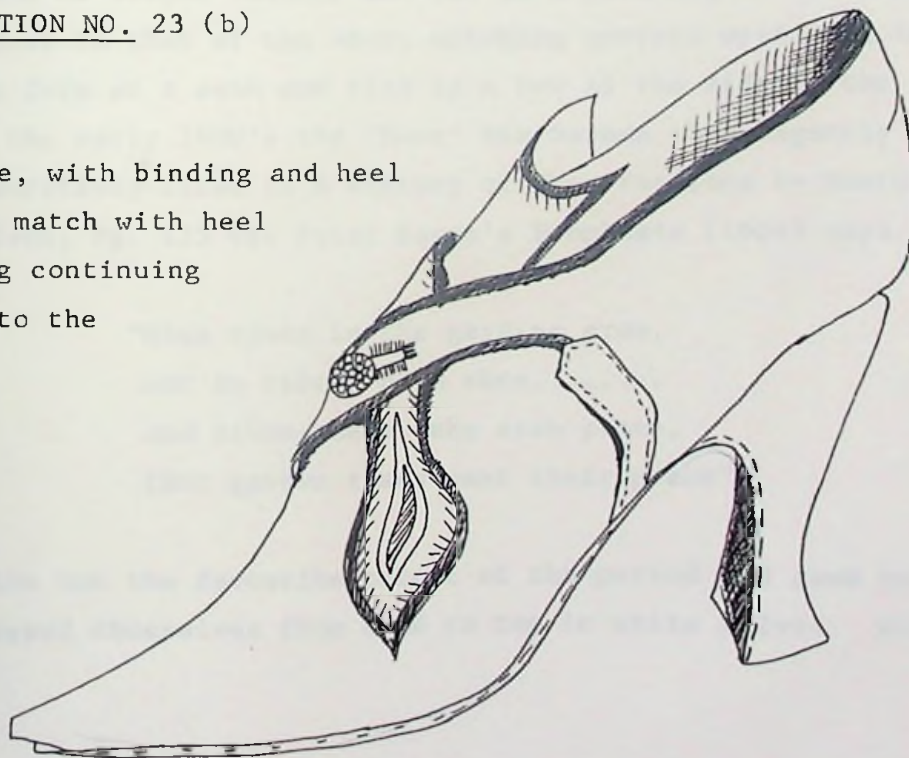


ILLUSTRATION NO. 23 (b)

Silk shoe, with binding and heel cover to match with heel stitching continuing through to the toe.



In the early 1600's there was very little difference between men's and women's shoes, the shoe had a common basic shape, as we have today, but it had many various details, Illustration No. 23 (a) and (b). The shoes were made very narrow under the arch. A rand⁴ generally in tan leather, lightened the appearance of the sole, which were sometimes very thick. The more flimsy shoes required a change in the protective patten, it developed a wedge support under the arch to raise the shoes from dirt, Illustration No. 24. This type of shoe was mainly for town and city wear. An iron ring was worn under the protective patten in extreme muddy conditions, Illustration No. 25.

The 'Rose' decoration was a common feature to most shoes, like the French the decorations were made of looped ribbons, laces or looped leather and was in a matching or contrasting colour to that of the shoe; matching garters were worn in the form of a sash and tied in a bow at the side of the leg. In the early 1600's the 'Rose' tie became extravagantly decorative; cited in A History of Shoe Fashions by Eunice Wilson, Pg. 125 was Friar Bacon's Prophetie (1604) says:-

"When roses in the gardins grow,
not in ribons on a shoe.....
and ribon-roses take such place,
that garden roses want their grace".

White was the favourite colour of the period and some men dressed themselves from head to toe in white velvet. White

ILLUSTRATION NO. 24.

Double-soled shoe in
striped silk with
thick sole of
covered wood
or cork.

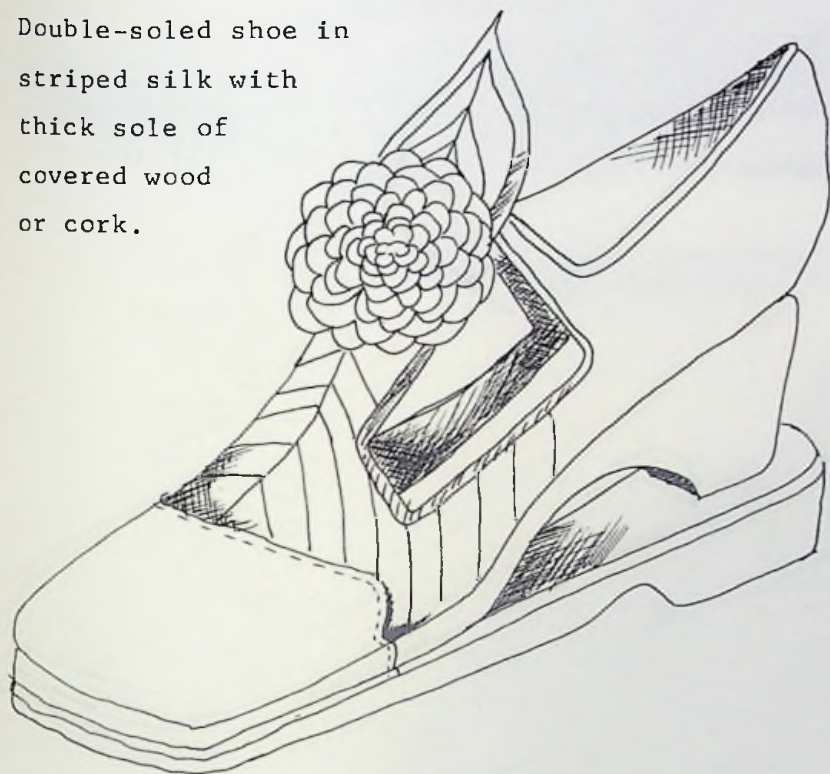
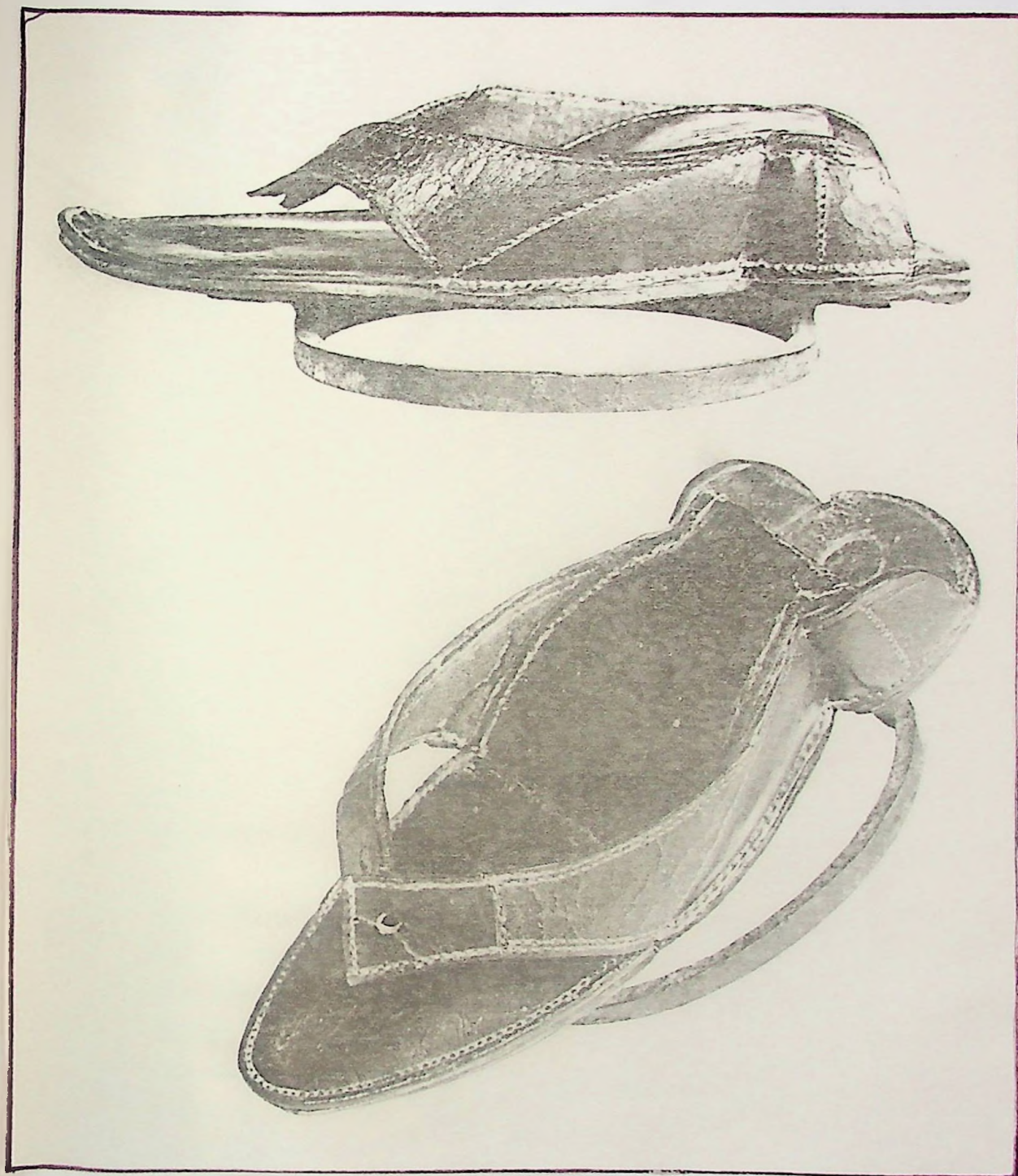


ILLUSTRATION NO. 25.

Pair of lady's black leather and wooden pattens, with raised instep and iron ring, from farm in Wiltshire.



White leather was used for the sword belt, white silk embroidered stockings pulled over white hose and rolled at the knee, even the shoes would be white and decorated with white rosettes. Red heels which were now becoming very popular, would be the only suggestion of colour in such a costume.

It was the knee-high 'Bucket' boot, which was a dominant feature in the reign of Charles I (1625-1649). The 'Bucket' boot encased the foot and leg in a wide funnel shape. They developed flamboyant tops cut in the same stiff leather as that of the boot. The tops were lined with beige or white linen. Stirrup leathers fastened large leather plaque over the front of the instep of the boot, this was a fashion that can be found in boots up to the Georgian period. The soles of the boots were heavily welted and the toes were deep and square, sometimes slightly pointed. Illustration No. 26 and Illustration No. 27. This was the basic shape of boots throughout the period but the fashions changed so did the size of the 'Bucket' top, its lace trimmings and other ornaments.

With the popularity of white in clothes, a great deal of white lace was used inside the top of the boots, which often contained secret pockets, where a man could conceal his letters, his gloves, a perfume pad or possibly even a pistol. The heel which was well established, remained more or less the same thickness but developed higher as time progressed and the leather stirrup plaque varied in width and size.

Fashions were slimmer and more elegant during the reign of Charles I, womens shoes continued to be made of fabric with

ILLUSTRATION NO. 26.

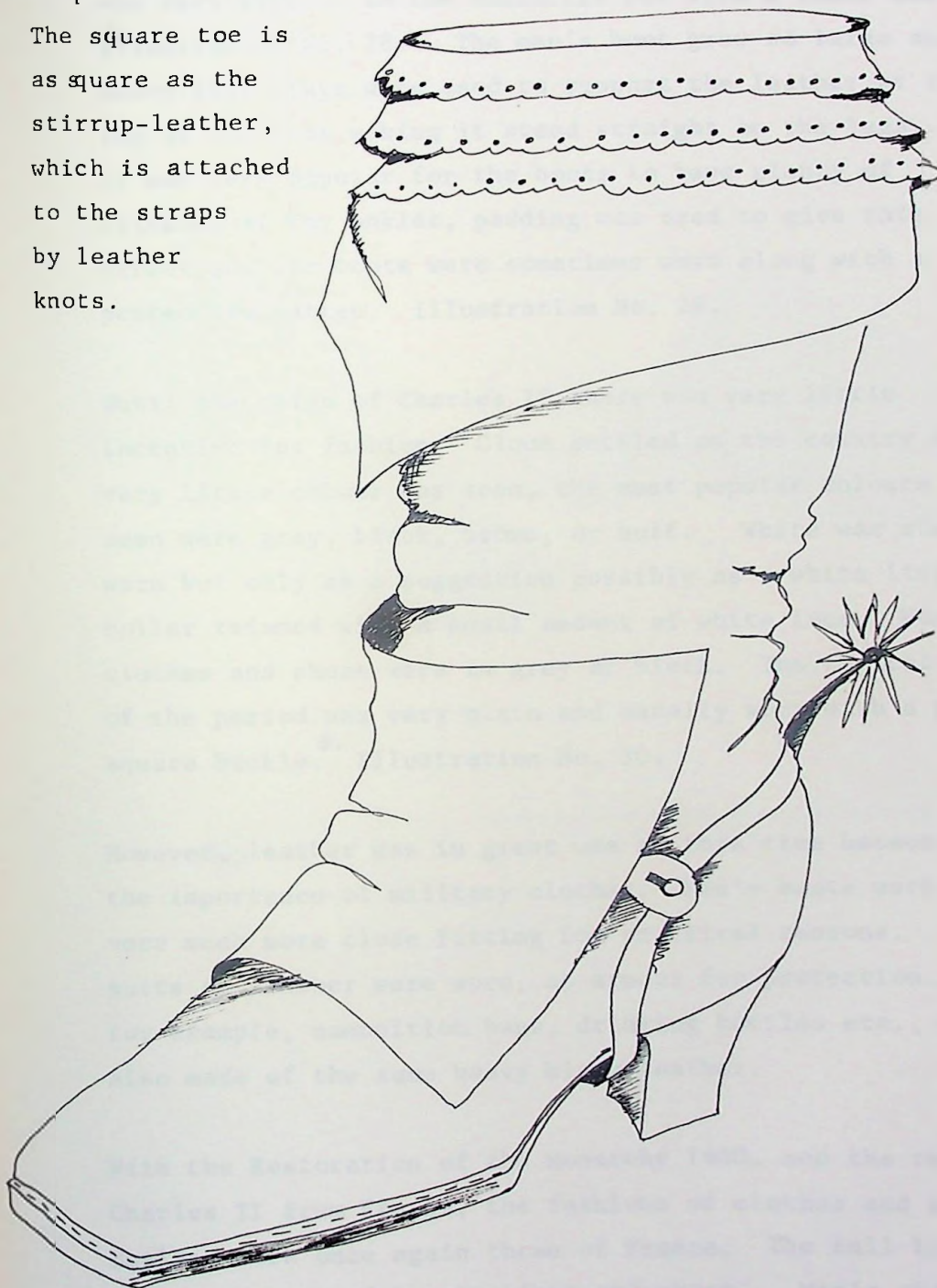
Boot of buff leather with polished turn-down top; slightly pointed toe, as fashionable until 1640; no spur block.



ILLUSTRATION NO. 27.

Buff leather boot with
triple lace frill.

The square toe is
as square as the
stirrup-leather,
which is attached
to the straps
by leather
knots.



decorative embroidery and brocades while mens shoes were made of leather except for the mans slipper which was very similar to the Pantoffle but with a lower heel. Illustration No. 28. The man's boot grew so large and heavy that stays were used to support the leather at the top of the boot making it stand straight on the legs. It was very popular for the boots to have plenty of wrinkles at the ankles, padding was used to give this effect and the boots were sometimes worn along with a protective patten. Illustration No. 29.

Until the reign of Charles II there was very little incentive for fashion. Gloom settled on the country and very little colour was seen, the most popular colours seen were grey, black, brown, or buff. White was also worn but only as a suggestion possibly as a white linen collar trimmed with a small amount of white lace. Womens clothes and shoes were in grey or black. The typical shoe of the period was very plain and usually worn with a plain square buckle.⁵ Illustration No. 30.

However, leather was in great use at this time because of the importance of military clothes. Men's boots were made very much more close fitting for practical reasons. Complete suits of leather were worn, as armour for protection. Equipments, for example, ammunition bags, drinking bottles etc., were also made of the same heavy black leather.

With the Restoration of the Monarchy 1660, and the return of Charles II from France, the fashions of clothes and shoes in England were once again those of France. The tall boots for men were replaced by stockings and shoes. Men's shoes were

ILLUSTRATION NO. 28.

Pair of men's mule slippers of blue sation with silver lace trim,
tan rand lightening the appearance of the sole which is edged with
red.

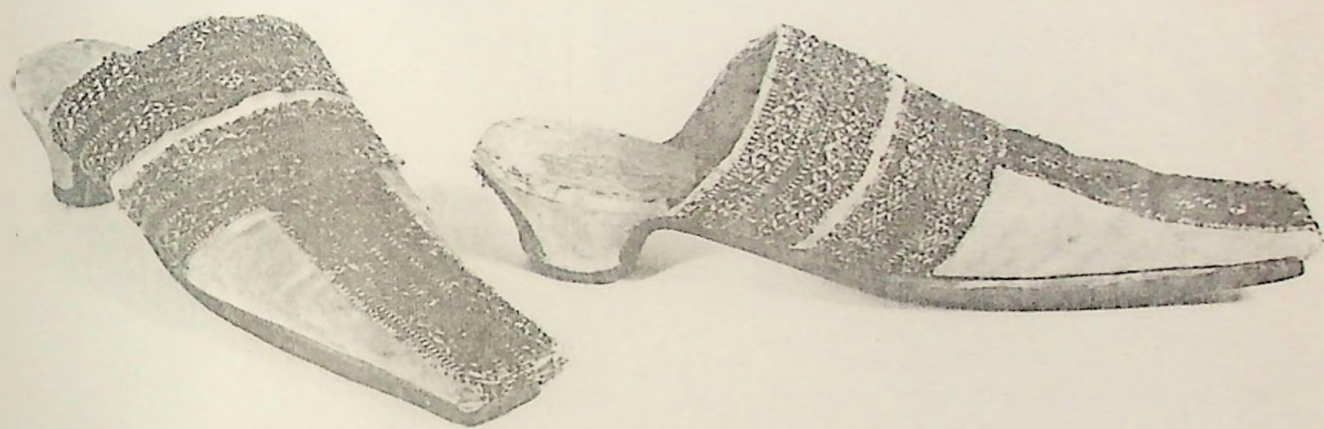


ILLUSTRATION NO. 29.

Boot worn over a loose-
fitting linen
stocking, known
as boot hose.

Boot worn with leather
protective patten.

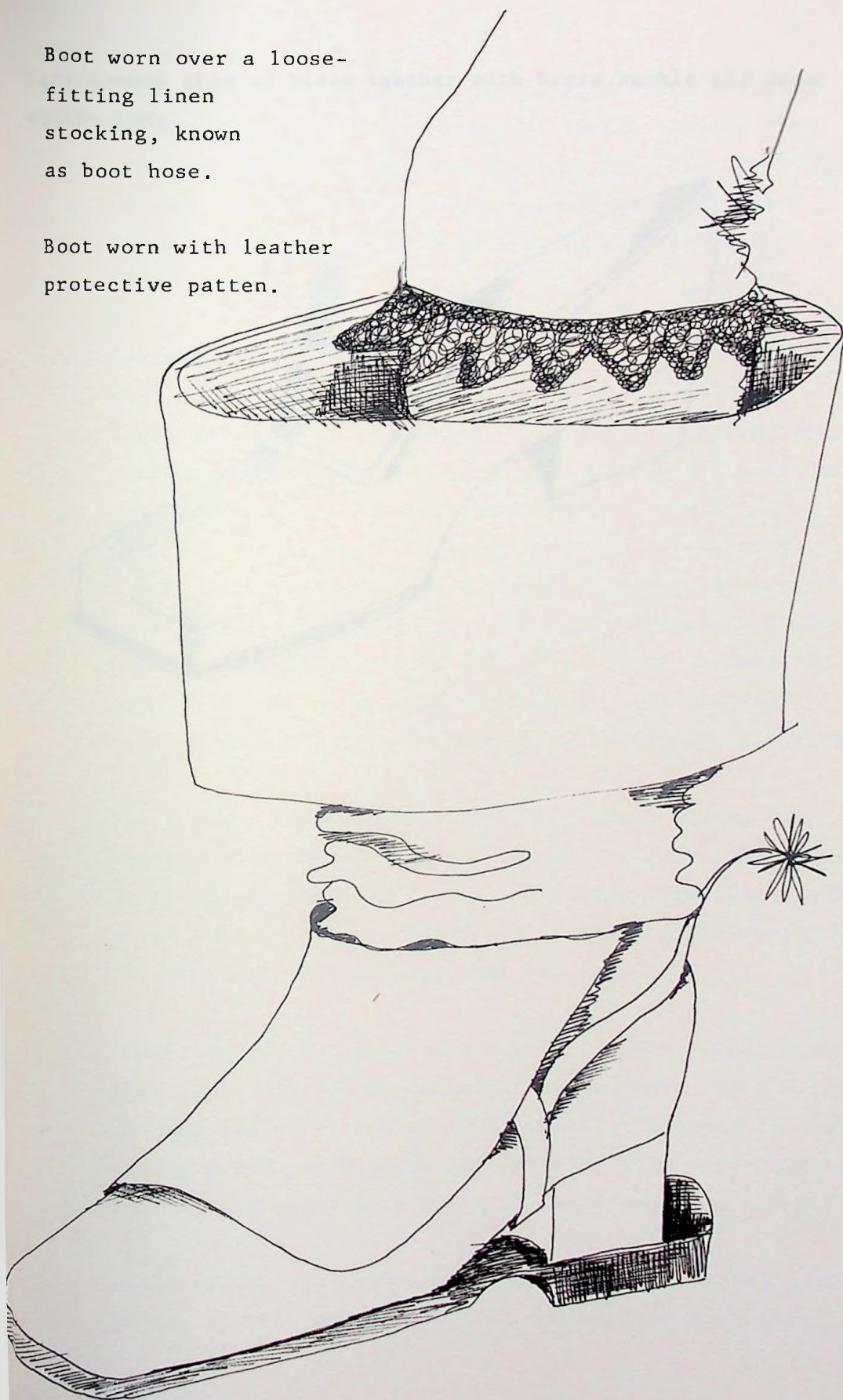
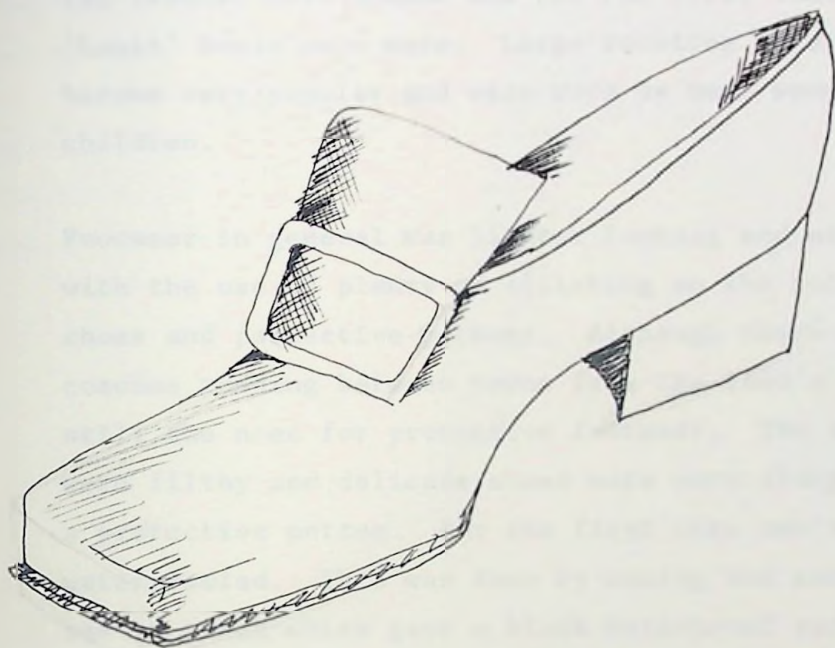


ILLUSTRATION NO. 30.

Very common shoe of black leather with brass buckle and deep square toe.



long and narrow and had neatly squared toes, while womens shoes became more pointed. Heels covered with red leather were common and for the first time in England 'Louis' heels were worn. Large rosettes once again became very popular and were worn by men, women and children.

Footwear in general was lighter looking and more delicate with the use of plenty of stitching on the soles of the shoes and protective pattens. Although there were stage coaches running between towns from the 1640's there was still the need for protective footwear. The streets were filthy and delicate shoes were worn along with a protective patten. For the first time men's boots were waterproofed. This was done by waxing and coating with tar or pitch which gave a black waterproof surface and was generally done on horsehide. This was the elementary beginnings for patent leather which developed much later.

Men's boots remained functional but horse riding for women was an outdoor pastime and also a means of travelling. There was no distinctive type of riding dress for women until the end of the eighteenth century; Illustration No. 31 shows the type of boot that was worn.

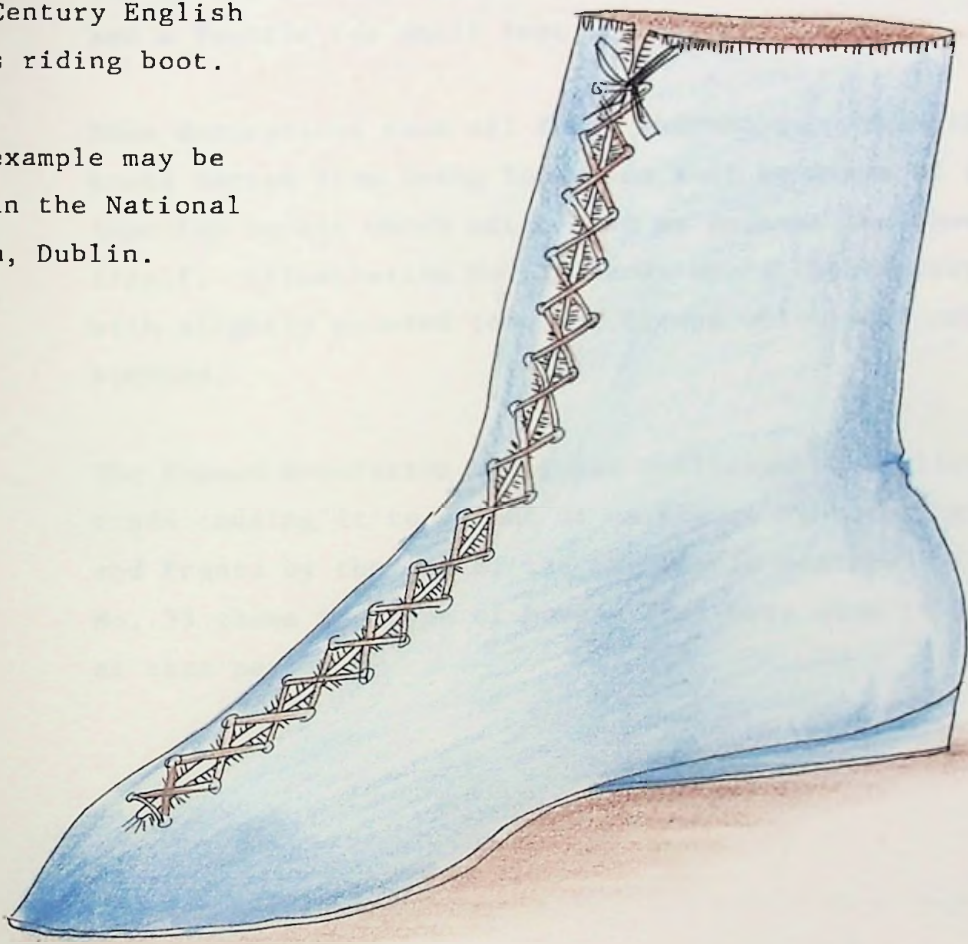
Samual Pepys, the best know diarist of that time recorded 11th June 1666 as "an odd sight and a sight did not please me" the ladies of honour at Whitehall, "dressed in their riding garbs, with coats and doublets with very deep skirts, just for all the world like mine..... with periwigs and with hats".

As in France the fashion for small feet for women came to England in the eighteenth century. The Duchess of York was famed for

ILLUSTRATION NO. 31.

18th Century English
lady's riding boot.

This example may be
seen in the National
Museum, Dublin.



the smallness of her feet and in 1791 Foret published a coloured print of the exact size of her foot. It measured $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length and across the sole at the instep her shoe measured $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches.⁶ This, of course set a fashion for small feet in England.

Shoe decorations took all forms and shapes. The ribbon knots varied from being loose and soft by means of a jewelled buckle which often cost as much as the shoe itself. Illustration No. 32 shows men's 18th Century with slightly pointed toes and straps which were originally buckled.

The French Revolution had great influence on English buckle trade causing it to go out of existence in both England and France by the end of the Eighteenth century. Illustration No. 33 shows the type of buckle that were made in England at that period.

Footnotes:

⁴A strip of leather which is slipped beneath the heel of the shoe.

⁵Eunice Wilson, A History of Shoe Fashion (London: Pitman Publishing 1974) p. 146.

⁶Ibid, p. 184.

Illustration No. 32.

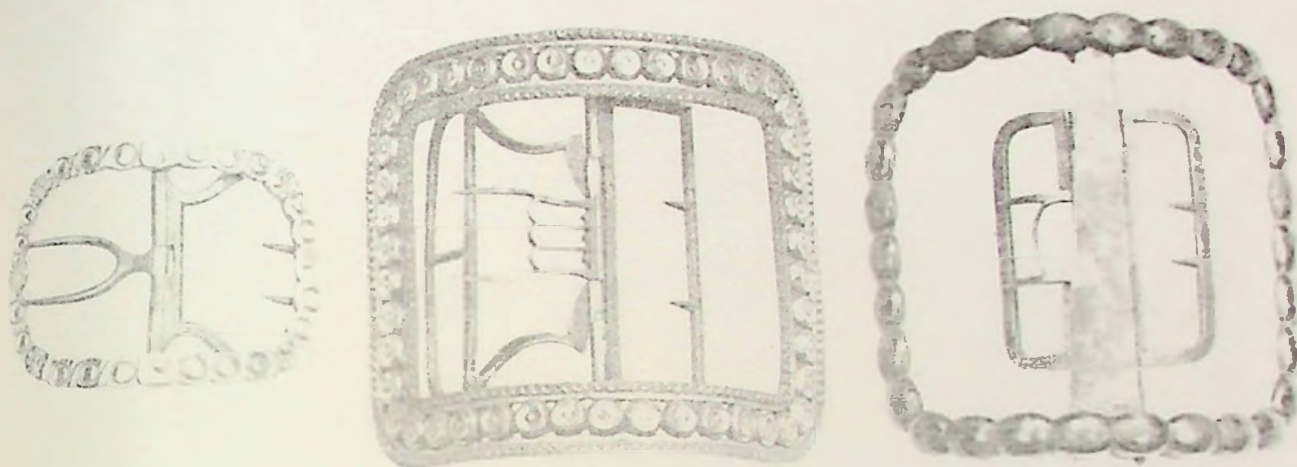
18th century men's shoes. Left: of brown buff leather, the straps originally buckled, but have been converted to "button" and button-hole, from Norfolk, 1730-1780.

Right: of brown leather, with straps for buckle from Northamptonshire 1780.



Illustration No. 33.

18th century shoe buckles made of silver, with London hallmark of 1733.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

In the course of this study it has become evident that fashion can change within a few years, this is not only applicable to 17th and 18th century French and English fashions but to the present day. For fashion has a tendency to recur, however it is always interpreted differently, an example of this modernization of previous fashions is the shoe rosette decoration which was very popular in both France and England in the 17th century and then came back at the end of the 18th century in the form of a more refined design whilst mens thigh-high boots of the 17th century are currently a fashion statement in women's wear to-day.

Many of the present day influences that act on and change fashion existed 17th and 18th century France and England. First and foremost footwear was then and is now a reflection on the style of clothing being worn, whether it be the shoe that is created to suit the garment or vice versa. Thus it is not surprising that the lace that was so lavishly ornating the collars and cuffs of shirts should very soon be decorating boots and shoes. Fashions in footwear are largely affected by the clothing that is in vogue, thus when men's breeches were padded down the legs so too were the boots and toes of shoes.

Also like to-day, it is the life style of the people that directs fashion, and footwear is eternally adapting itself to the social conditions of each age. This is evident in the 17th and 18th century in France and England, when during periods of war and social unrest, lavish fashions were no

longer practicable and decorative footwear rapidly changed becoming less complicated in design and embellishment.

Another parallel between our times and the 17th and 18th century England and France is that the influence the French exerted on fashion then still exists in a powerful form to-day. During this period France developed a fashion centre towards which the world is still looking.

For a large part, this period in both England and France was one of absolute rulers and the strong powers of the French and English Kings incorporated fashion into their regimes, just as they governed the financial, religious, agricultural and social lives of their people, they also laid down laws restricting the clothing that was to be worn at the time. Although, in the England and France of to-day a great freedom of expression is enjoyed this did not exist in the 17th and 18th century, when, in order to wear the fashionable footwear of the time, women had to bind and thus damage their feet.

Yet, does this government of fashion not still exist to-day, in for example Russia and China, where powerful authoritarian governments restrict the dress of their people?

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