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## **Altered Fashions: Eighteenth-Century Quilted Petticoats in a Finnish Context**

By ANNI SHEPHERD

*Quilted petticoats were a common garment in the wardrobes of many women in eighteenth-century Finland. Both fashionable and practical, these items were passed on from one generation to the next and often altered and refashioned by their later owners. This article examines three such petticoats in the collections of the Porvoo Museum in Finland and places the garments within the sociocultural and historical contexts of their time. Through the study of these petticoats and the use of inventory deed records, this article discusses the value of textiles in eighteenth-century Finland and how such garments can be used as historical sources.*

**Keywords:** quilted petticoat, eighteenth-century fashion, eighteenth-century Finland, alterations, refashioning, reuse

### INTRODUCTION

On the seventh of October 1800 a fourteen-year-old girl living at the Elimäki manor house in eastern Finland was busy updating her wardrobe. A keen diarist, she wrote a short passage about her day, which, translated from the original Swedish, includes the following lines:

Today I have placed lace on sweet mother's nettlecloth cloth, after which I began making myself a linen skirt from both of grandmother's aprons...<sup>1</sup>

At the time Jacobina Charlotta Munsterhjelm (1786-1842) wrote these lines, the practice of altering and refashioning older garments into new ones was a well-established part of sartorial culture. Garments were passed on from one generation to the next within families, but they were also given to servants as a means of payment

or purchased second-hand from various sellers. The aprons Munsterhjelm mentions in her diary belonged to her late grandmother who had passed away earlier in the year and whose textile belongings had clearly been divided amongst the family members she had left behind. Second-hand and even third or fourth-hand clothes and textiles were common in the everyday lives of people from all social classes and on many occasions, textiles were used until they became rags or raw materials for other industries.

Munsterhjelm's diary is a rare surviving source describing the life of a teenager and her family at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fires in both archives and private residences have destroyed a significant portion of Finnish written sources from the early modern period including the eighteenth century. Luckily the surviving extant garments in museum collections can help complete the picture of how and why textiles were altered and refashioned by both their original and their subsequent owners.

It is not unusual to encounter altered and refashioned garments in museum collections and it has been estimated that the vast majority of surviving eighteenth-century women's clothes in British museum collections for example have been altered from their original state.<sup>2</sup> In this article I will use quilted petticoats as examples of altered eighteenth-century garments in Finnish museum collections and as sources for historical study. Through the study and analysis of these garments I will demonstrate that they have undergone significant changes since their manufacture and that reusing old textiles was an integral part of people's lives in Swedish ruled Finland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I will link these objects with written sources and demonstrate that studying them contributes

meaningfully to wider research about eighteenth-century politics, commerce, and culture.

The skirts mentioned in Munsterhjelm's diary were linen and presumably made of a single layer of fabric. Quilted petticoats on the other hand were more structurally complex and were made from a combination of fabrics including silk, cotton and linen. Though the designs of the quilted patterns vary between countries and can even be region-specific, extant quilted petticoats in British, American and European museums all share a similar structure. *The Dictionary of Fashion History* defines the process of quilting as 'Lines of running stitches made in any material threefold in thickness, i.e. the outer or right side of good material, the under often of wadding, and the third a lining. The stitches made diagonally to form diamonds or a fanciful design, very common in the 18th century but also later'.<sup>3</sup> This definition describes the general making process for all quilted petticoats throughout the eighteenth century.

The lining of a quilted petticoat was often plain since the fabric would not be seen by anyone. A middle layer of wadding, normally made from carded sheep's wool which had not been woven into a thread, provided the petticoat's wearer with warmth and gave the petticoat an added stiffness. The top layer of the petticoat could be made from cotton, but many extant quilted petticoats feature a layer of monochrome silk fabric as the top fabric. The three case studies discussed in this article are all composed in this way and none of them were made with cording sandwiched between the layers.

Examples of quilted petticoats in international museum collections appear in several online collections databases such as those of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the Metropolitan Museum and the Digitalt Museum (a combined online

database of over four million objects from the collections of Swedish and Norwegian museums). They are also discussed in seminal works on eighteenth century women's fashion such as Anne Buck's *Dress in Eighteenth Century England*, where the author makes a point of their usefulness in the chilly rooms of eighteenth-century English houses.<sup>4</sup> Without a doubt the wool wadding of the petticoats would have been equally useful and appreciated in the harsh winter climate of Finland.

That quilted petticoats were often altered and refashioned has been noted by several fashion historians. In *Patterns of Fashion 1*, Janet Arnold presented the patterns and her notes on a two-piece quilted ensemble from the Snowhill Collection that Nancy Bradfield also featured in her book.<sup>5</sup> Arnold suggests that the jacket of the ensemble had been cut and constructed from a quilted petticoat. She likens this to two examples in the V&A: 'One is a man's suit in white quilted silk dating from c. 1640 (Accession number T.347.1905). The other is a yellow quilted redingote of c.1785, made from earlier quilting, possibly of the 1730s (accession number T.106.1834).' The warmth-giving properties and visual look of older quilted garments were clearly appreciated from one century to the next and these objects were altered and reused in very much the same manner as other textiles.

The petticoats featured in this article are part of the collections of the Museum of Porvoo in Finland and represent only a small sample of surviving eighteenth-century quilted petticoats in Finnish museum collections. They share the same structural elements as their international counterparts and are a part of the same shared fashion for quilted garments.

#### THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE QUILTED PETTICOAT IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FINLAND

Eighteenth-century Finland was not an independent nation but a part of the kingdom of Sweden. During the period of Swedish rule in Finland from the Middle Ages until 1809, most inhabitants of the area were subject to the laws of the Swedish crown. For centuries Finland was the eastern frontier of Sweden and on many occasions a hotly contested borderland. The border between Sweden and Russia moved several times as the result of armed conflicts and their subsequent peace treaties. In the eighteenth century after the Great Northern War (1700-1721) Sweden lost several of its eastern areas including a part of eastern Finland to Russia. After the Russo-Swedish War (1741-3) further areas of eastern Finland were lost and finally in 1809 Finland became an autonomous grand duchy of the Russian Empire before gaining independence in 1917. The eighteenth-century conflicts also included periods of Russian occupation in Finland during which many people were forced to relocate and both domestic and international trade were severely disrupted.

During the time of Swedish rule good trade routes to mainland Sweden were essential. Cities and towns with ports became economic hubs from which both domestic and international trade could be conducted. One of the many types of commodities traded out of these ports were textiles, which were imported from as far away as China. Textiles were some of the most heavily regulated and restricted luxury goods in eighteenth-century Finland. Access to fabrics was regulated through a series of sumptuary laws, which among other things aimed to control the types of fabrics which could be worn by members of varying social classes.<sup>6</sup> Over the course of the century importing silk from other countries was restricted and eventually entirely forbidden, and the colours and types of silk that could be worn by the majority of Swedish citizens was very limited.

The social hierarchy of the time meant that the inhabitants of Sweden were divided into four groups known as the four estates: the nobility who sat at the top of the social hierarchy, the clergy, the bourgeoisie, and the peasants.<sup>7</sup> The mercantilist economic policies of the nation were focused on safeguarding the development of domestic manufacturing including Swedish textile production. Several silk mills had been established in Sweden by the 1750s with most of them operating in the vicinity of Stockholm.<sup>8</sup> From 1760-8 there was even a silk mill in Turku, Finland where various types of silks including atlas, damask and taffeta were all woven.<sup>9</sup> These commercial endeavours were both regulated and protected by Swedish law. In 1766 for example the sumptuary laws forbade the domestic trading of all foreign silks, eventually including even those brought to Sweden by the Swedish East India Company (referred to as SEIC from here onwards). The laws were regularly flaunted and despite fines being issued to offenders, sumptuary laws could be difficult to enforce. The existence of sumptuary laws also led to an increase of smuggling in both Sweden and Finland with pedlars and shopkeepers alike trading in illegal goods in both urban areas and in the countryside.<sup>10</sup>

The sumptuary laws were not created purely out of an economic necessity, but also contained a moral note. How people dressed and what goods they consumed were seen as clear indicators of which estate any given person belonged to. The purpose of the sumptuary laws was to preserve the visible differences between the estates, to prioritise the use of domestically produced items and to discourage Swedish citizens from 'fashionable excess'.<sup>11</sup> This excess was seen not just as unpatriotic, but as immoral and wasteful.<sup>12</sup>[\[quite a lot of repetition in these paragraphs, which could be removed, as currently the word count is overlong\]](#)

Despite never necessarily even visiting the Swedish court, let alone the French, the style, customs, and fashionable aspirations of upper-class gentry in Swedish-ruled Finland was modelled after the style and fashionable aspirations of court life. The culture at the Swedish court was heavily influenced by that of the French court, the impact of which could be seen in everything from interior design to gardening and court etiquette.<sup>13</sup> French fashions were being emulated by citizens of larger Finnish cities and notably at the fortress island of Sveaborg just off the coast of Helsinki.<sup>14</sup> During his reign King Gustav III (1771-1792) sought to alter fashionable dress to a more unique and distinctly Swedish style, and eventually introduced his designs for a national dress for both men and women.<sup>15</sup> Despite being an otherwise avid follower of French court culture, the King wanted to emphasise Swedishness through new sartorial ideas, which were also in line with the nation's mercantilist policies.<sup>16</sup> Despite promoting what were considered Swedish ideals, the national dress was introduced in 1778 via fashion prints and pamphlets, which was similar to the way new fashions were introduced in France.<sup>17</sup> Even a conscious effort to make fashion more Swedish in nature could not distance the kingdom from international fashions.

The love for fashionable goods was not limited exclusively to members of the nobility as Dr. Seija Johnson's research into the clothing of women in eighteenth-century Kokkola, a port town in western Finland, shows.<sup>18</sup> Kokkola was the centre of a bustling import and export trade, and its citizens were able to purchase the newest fashions brought to them from Europe and further afield by merchant vessels. Fabrics available to Kokkola's wealthy inhabitants included silks from as far afield as France, Pomerania and even East India.<sup>19</sup> As well as fashionable textiles 'the merchants who kept abreast of the times traded in not only the most

important imported product, salt, but also, for example lemons, French wines, Dutch tobacco, oil, tamarind, coffee beans, rice, liquorice and all kinds of spices and dyestuffs.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the moralising sumptuary laws, those who could afford fashionable garments such as elaborate quilted petticoats both owned and wore them. The upper-class citizens of Swedish-ruled Finland were clearly resolved to live fashionable lives to the best of their ability regardless of rules and regulations to the contrary. Crucially the sumptuary laws of 1739 and 1766 which restricted and eventually entirely forbade the importing of foreign silks to Sweden did not forbid the use of imported fabrics which already existed in people's wardrobes. As long as the silk textiles and garments had been appropriately declared by their owners and stamped by government officials, they could still be worn and could also be passed down to later generations to be altered and refashioned as they saw fit. Proof of the value of textiles and of the practice of altering them can be found in written records as well as in the existing extant garments in Finnish museum collections. Quilted petticoats survive both as a concept on the pages of probate and estate inventory deeds as well as objects in museums therefore making them an excellent case study through which these themes can be explored.

According to dress historian Riitta Pylkkänen whose seminal work *Säätyläisnaisten pukeutuminen Suomessa 1700-luvulla* (Dress of Gentlewomen in Finland in the Eighteenth-century) was published in 1982, the quilted petticoats worn in Swedish-ruled Finland can be divided into roughly two categories: fashionable garments that were worn under various open front *robe*-designs and simpler quilted petticoats which were worn solely under other garments.<sup>21</sup> Quilted petticoats fitting the first category were visible to others and the sumptuous fabrics

along with complex ornamental quilted designs were used to convey ideas of fashion, wealth and status. Those in the second category were strictly undergarments and were worn for practical reasons to provide warmth for their wearers. Both the outwardly visible and undergarment versions of quilted petticoats also aided in creating a fashionable silhouette and would function as a supportive structure for anything worn on top of them.

This division is not however as simple as Pylkkänen states and can create confusion when examining both the surviving garments themselves and the written sources mentioning them. The original eighteenth-century definition for the garments in Swedish is similar to the English term ‘quilted petticoat’, which was and still is used to refer to both visible petticoats under *robe*-type gowns as well as the undergarment versions of the skirts. In Swedish both types of garments were referred to as a ‘*stubb*’ in estate inventory deeds and the term is still used by both Swedish and Finnish museums today to describe them. Since the term can refer to both types, just reading the word ‘*stubb*’ in an estate inventory deed does not tell the reader whether the item being referred to is an undergarment or a visible petticoat. The biggest clue to the intended use of the garment is the material it was made of and the monetary value assigned to it.

Probate and estate inventory deeds were usually written up after the death of a person and listed everything they owned from buttons, jewellery and clothing to silverware and furniture. The seventy-two inventory deeds Pylkkänen cites in her work appear in their transcribed form in the appendices of her book.<sup>22</sup> The deeds date from 1731-1807 and provide a good overview of the types of clothing owned by women across Finland during this time period. The transcribed deeds include

examples ranging from merchant's and clergymen's wives as well as noblewomen and therefore represent women from differing levels of income and social status.

In these deeds an item described as a '*stubb*' is mentioned 281 times.<sup>23</sup> According to Pylkkänen half of them were mentioned as being made from linen or '*cattun*' (a type of printed cotton fabric and mostly synonymous with the English term *calico*), forty-three as being made from wool and fifty-two as being made from silk.<sup>24</sup> What is apparent from the transcribed deeds is that these '*stubb*' garments were ubiquitous and appeared in the wardrobes of many women from different backgrounds and of different ages. The fanciest silk '*stubs*' are usually found in noblewomen's inventory deeds, but also appear in the deeds of bourgeois women and wives of clergymen.

For example, the Baroness Ebba Elisabet Ugglas (1696-1758) deed from 1760 lists four different *stubs* including one of multicoloured or motley silk with a matching nightgown and a one of blue silk with white knot-work.<sup>25</sup> The weaves of the quilted petticoat fabrics are sadly not mentioned, and they are referred to as being made from '*silktygg*' which simply translates to silk fabric. Other garments, such as several damask gowns, are identified by weave alone and do not mention the fibre. Since Ugglas was a baroness and therefore a member of the highest-ranking estate, her wardrobe contained several items of clothing which were made from various silk fabrics. The deed also mentions more everyday garments made from cotton and nettlecloth, which were most likely her everyday clothes.

The inventory deed of Master bookbinder's wife Elisabetha Frestadia (dates unknown) from 1763 also includes several silk garments such as one *stubb* of red silk damask and one of red and yellow watered silk.<sup>26</sup> The inventory deed of Brita Ahla (1717-1790), a twice married widow who was a member of the bourgeoisie and

died at the age of 73 in 1790, has been meticulously researched by Seija Johnson and includes three different quilted petticoats of varying fabrics.<sup>27</sup>

Despite these deeds representing three different women from differing financial and social backgrounds, Uggla, Frestadia and Ahla owned similar items, and all three clearly had access to the expensive textiles that these items could be manufactured from. The price of silk varied and not all silk was equally expensive but was generally always more costly than plain cotton or nettlecloth fabrics. The style of the garments was another consideration: even if two gowns are of the same cut and construction, they would not necessarily have the same value. The weave of the fabric, the fibre it was made of, its age and its condition all affected the value placed on the garments mentioned in the estate inventory deeds. The simplest way to understand something of the value of the items listed in the deeds is to compare them with other items on the list.

Pylkkänen has included a transcription of the jewellery listed in Uggla's deed alongside the list of her clothing. The most expensive piece of jewellery listed is a gold bracelet with ten jewels and ten agates, which was given the value of six hundred riksdaler. A pair of silver earrings with thirteen jewels is valued at a hundred and eighty riksdaler. A gold bracelet with black enamel and a green stone is valued at ninety riksdaler. The blue damask night gown with a matching quilted petticoat is valued at a hundred riksdaler, so a little more than the enamelled bracelet but significantly less than the most expensive jewellery. The quilted petticoat with knot work has a value of forty-eight riksdaler and the quilted petticoat of white calico only nine riksdaler. To further put the value of textiles in perspective it is worth noting that the annual salary for a maid- servant was only six riksdaler and they would have been paid partially in textiles, food and lodging. The spending

power of peasants and ordinary paid labourers was low so several of the items listed in the probate and inventory deeds would have been out of their reach. Their status also meant that even had they been fortunate enough to receive used good quality or luxury garments as a part of their salary, they would not have been allowed to wear them but would instead have sold them on to others who could.

Both written sources and extant garments in museum collections tell us that quilted petticoats came in a wide range of colours and styles, which means that consumers in eighteenth-century Finland had a wide range of cottons and silks to choose from to make or have their garments made from. They could have purchased their fabrics from local merchants, travelling pedlars or from larger cities such as Turku or even Stockholm. The exact value of textiles and how they were used and how their monetary value was realised varied greatly and depended on several factors. Gaining an exact understanding on the monetary value of garments is therefore a complex matter beyond the scope this article.

#### ALTERATIONS THROUGH TIME: CASE STUDIES FROM PORVOO

Approaching historical clothing from a lifecycle perspective takes into account their entire journey from their manufacture to their current existence as museum objects. As Dr Pernilla Rasmussen has explained, this ‘deepens the cultural-historical understanding of the use of clothing over time’.<sup>28</sup> This perspective allows researchers to broaden their approach and consider how the object was utilised over a significant period of time including how it was altered by its potentially numerous owners rather than focusing on when the object was first purchased or when it was at its most fashionable. Rasmussen argues that altering and recycling was an integral part of how wardrobes in Sweden were maintained over time and that clothes were seen as

financial capital for their owners.<sup>29</sup> This is supported by evidence in the probate and estate inventory deeds: textiles in various forms including clothing held significant monetary value and passing them down from one generation to the next proves this.

Several researchers active in both academia and elsewhere have noted that signs of reuse and remaking are ubiquitous in eighteenth-century clothing and that this approach to clothing was purposefully built into how the clothes were originally manufactured.<sup>30</sup> Since the vast majority of clothes were cut on the straight grain of the fabric and most of their shaping was done through clever pleating, very little fabric was wasted in the cutting process.<sup>31</sup> Anyone wanting to alter an eighteenth-century skirt for example would have been working with a significant amount of relatively unspoilt fabric which could be utilised in a number of ways depending only on the maker's imagination.

Quilted petticoats lend themselves well to the process of being altered. Like other skirts of the time, quilted petticoats were made of several panels of fabric cut straight from the bolt without any curved seams and therefore yielded several metres of fabric which could be reused. Unpicking the quilted designs would have been an enormous and impractical undertaking, but the quilted nature of the garments was by no means an obstacle for their reuse. Reusing costly textiles was a financially sound decision and sent a message that the family who owned such textiles also owned considerable wealth, sometimes spanning multiple generations. The warmth provided by quilted garments in the harsh northern climates could not be disregarded so turning an unfashionable petticoat into something else equally warm was a sensible approach.

By unpicking any pleats, removing the waistband and opening a side seam a quilted petticoat could be transformed into a warm blanket or a decorative yet

insulating wall hanging. Setting the petticoat on to a new waistband and altering the depth and width of the pleats could transform the silhouette of the petticoat and make it a serviceable and practical undergarment in later decades or even centuries. Any of these alterations could be performed by the original owner of the item or by those who had inherited or purchased it as a used garment.

Quilted petticoats can be found in several museum collections in Finland, which tells us that this type of garment was popular in its time but also worth preserving over several decades before they were sold or gifted to museums. For the purposes of this article, I will discuss three such garments from the collections of the Porvoo Museum, but it is important to note that similar items survive in for example the National Museum of Finland, the Turku Museum Centre, and even the Maritime Museum of Finland. The Maritime Museum petticoat is in very poor condition due to being discovered from a shipwreck and having been under water in the Baltic Sea for approximately two centuries. A partial recreation of the original was made by a team of volunteer sewers and myself and is currently a part of the museum's collection.<sup>32</sup>

The three petticoats I examined at the Porvoo Museum all date from the eighteenth-century and were either purchased or donated to them soon after the museum's inception in 1896. The petticoats entered the museum in 1897, 1910 and 1935 at a time when the museum did not have a well-defined collections policy. In February 1896 the museum advertised in a local newspaper that they were interested in purchasing 'valuable' old objects and antiques but would also gratefully receive donations.<sup>33</sup> The museum kept collecting objects of interest and their collections grew quickly over the first few decades of the organisation's existence.<sup>34</sup> One of the oldest museums in Finland, the Porvoo Museum also acts as the museum with

regional responsibility for the Eastern Uusimaa area.<sup>35</sup> They have an excellent collection of eighteenth-century objects some of which are on display at the Holm House, an eighteenth-century merchant family's town house in the Old Town of Porvoo. The exhibition space on the second floor of the building has been laid out as the home of the Holm family and shows scenes from their daily life. Machine made copies of two of the petticoats discussed in this article, BM3823 and BM1935004, are displayed in the bedroom of the house. [\[do you have an image of this? I think that people would enjoy seeing it\]](#)

The three petticoats show varying signs of reuse and prove that like their counterparts in British and North American museums, these petticoats have been altered over the course of their lifespan. As explained by dress historian Linda Baumgarten, who is a specialist in quilted petticoats:

Few petticoats survive with their original pleating and waistbands. Some have been picked apart, while others were later recycled and gathered into new waistbands in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when quilted petticoats returned to fashion. Those petticoats that do retain original eighteenth-century waistbands usually have a wide box pleat at centre front and pleats directed toward side openings.<sup>36</sup>

The objects were approached using established textile study and material culture methods including close reading of the objects, study sketches and photography. As described by Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim the close reading process is made up of three steps, observation, reflection, and interpretation.<sup>37</sup> By approaching the petticoats through these steps and documenting my findings carefully, I have performed a thorough investigation of their current state and have

made assessments and interpretations based on both the objects themselves and on the archival sources mentioned in this paper.

The first example I will discuss is Porvoo museum object BM3823, a blue silk bed covering or wall hanging lined in blue linen and dating from the first half of the eighteenth-century (**Figure 1**). It was purchased by the museum in 1912. The museum records describe the object as having possibly been made from a skirt and a closer inspection of its structure and decorative quilted pattern very quickly reveals that it was originally a quilted petticoat. The petticoat was at some point during its lifespan turned into a blanket or wallcovering, but it is impossible to say when these alterations took place. The short sides of the object are bound with a blue silk damask, which judging by its pattern and general style is very likely also from the eighteenth century. It is possible that the major alterations to the petticoat were made in the eighteenth century, or that an old-fashioned fabric was chosen to complement the petticoat's colour and design at a later date.

Though the garment has been significantly altered, there are several hints to its original form. Careful examination reveals the number and dimensions of the original panels of fabric the petticoat was made from (**Figure 2**). The panels were stitched together at the selvedges, utilising the entire width of the woven fabric. The original garment was composed of seven panels which are all nearly the same width. The variation of the panel widths can be explained by the method of quilting used in this case: some of the panels have been stuffed slightly more than others, causing the top layer of silk to rise a little more and to appear less wide than others. Prior to being quilted, each panel would have been the same width as they were all most likely cut from the same bolt of fabric, which was approximately 40 cm wide.

To turn the petticoat in to a rectangular blanket or wall hanging, the waistband was unpicked and judging by the lack of any signs of pleating it is highly likely that the top edge of the petticoat was trimmed away before the top edges were stitched together to form a large rectangle (Figure 3). As shown in the sketch (Figure 2) the panels numbered III and VII have been cut into two to produce two evenly sized large rectangular pieces, which were then stitched together in the centre. The edges were bound with scraps of patterned blue silk damask, which have been stitched together to form a continuous border. The entire object now measures 170cm by 158cm. Various thicker threads have been stitched on the object in multiple places, which indicates that the object has at some stage been hanging on a wall. This theory is supported by photographic evidence from the 1960s in the archives of the Porvoo Museum, where the object can be seen hanging in the background of a display case filled with other examples of eighteenth-century clothes and textiles. It is possible that some of the damage to the silk fabric was created by the object being hung from inadequate supporting structures, which would have caused undue stress to the already centuries old silk.

The object is in a fragile state, with large parts of the silk fabric being completely lost (Figures 3 and 4). The decorative quilted pattern is composed of diagonal lines which form a type of diamond shape along the top two thirds of the petticoat and large quilted acanthus leaves decorating the bottom third of the garment. Judging by the texture and colour of the wadding, which is present in between the silk fabric and the lining, it is presumably made from sheep's wool. Due to the intense fraying and splitting of the silk fabric across the acanthus leaves and even most of the diagonal pattern, the wadding is clearly visible in multiple places (see Figures 4 & 5).<sup>38</sup> It seems that the garment was slightly over-stuffed, which has

led to excess stress on the top layer fabric. It is also likely that some of the wear and tear of the object dates to its original use as a quilted petticoat.

This particular petticoat represents a known and documented way of recycling quilted petticoats. As a blanket it would have been used as a decorative interior design element, which would have kept a person warm and comfortable. Even after falling out of fashion as a wearable piece of clothing, a textile object made of silk and richly decorated by an expert needleworker would have been appreciated and admired in any household.

The second petticoat (BM3279) was rather better preserved, but still showed signs of alteration (Figure 6). It is made of brown silk and has a criss-crossing diamond motif as its base pattern, which covers roughly two thirds of the petticoat. The bottom third is worked in an intricate floral design, which includes both leaves and stylised flower petals. The design is quite complex and is reminiscent of floral designs seen in both dishware and interior designs of the era.<sup>39</sup> All stitches have been worked in a matching brown thread using both a simple running stitch for the diagonal pattern as well as a variety of embroidery stitches for the floral decorations, the most noticeable being satin stitch, French knots and bullion knots (Figure 7). The garment is lined in a coarsely woven cotton or linen on which the reverse side of the decorative stitches are clearly shown (Figure 8). According to museum records, the petticoat belonged to General C.G. Armfelt's wife Lovisa Aminoff [dates?] and came from the Isnäs manor house in Pernaja. It was bequeathed to the museum in 1910.

The petticoat is partially faded with one side of it being a pale earthy green tone. There are also several stains on the garment, which are reminiscent of bleach stains (Figure 4) [- is this fig no. correct? Was this not the blue quilted item? ?fig 8

or 9]. These may be the result of a laundry mishap (e.g. bleaching stains with lemon juice or other acidic substances) though the haphazard placement of the stains suggest they are more likely splash marks. It is impossible to say whether these stains occurred during the garment's original life as a worn piece of clothing or from its time as a museum object.

Though this petticoat has not been turned into a different type of garment or object it is no longer in the same shape and form as it would have been at the time of its manufacture. Several changes have been made to it to modify its shape and waistline in order to suit the fashionable silhouette of a much later date. The first and most immediately apparent alteration is the waistband and yoke (Figure 6), which are made of a different fabric from the original garment and have been added at a later date. The yoke, which would have added extra length to the original garment and changed its silhouette considerably, has been whip stitched to the top edge of the petticoat by hand. The stitches on the waistband however are machine made and together with the shape of the re-pleated petticoat and the dropped waist indicate that the petticoat could have been reworked in the mid nineteenth-century. The petticoat would have provided both warmth and added volume under the fashionable bell-shaped skirts and dresses of the time and it is likely that it would have been worn solely as an undergarment and not as a visible skirt.

The petticoat was worn by a live model in a fashion parade at the Porvoo Museum in 1956, but it is unlikely that the alterations date from this event. Wearing it for the parade would not have necessitated stitching the pocket slits shut or the re-pleating the petticoat since in the parade it was not worn to support another garment or to create a silhouette specific to any particular decade. Black and white photographs of the event show the petticoat being worn with a floral silk jacket,

which covers the top portion of the garment so the waistband and yoke can't be seen. This may or may not have been an intentional choice. The photographs also show that the bleach stains were definitely on the object by the time the fashion parade took place.<sup>40</sup>[\[do you have this picture and could it be included? It would help to give a sense of how the shape of the petticoat had changed over time\]](#)

Closer internal examination of the garment confirms that the petticoat has been re-pleated as older folds in the fabric can be seen in various places indicating the prior existence of original pleats. The original centre-front of the petticoat can be distinguished by marks which are now off to the left-hand side of the petticoat (from the wearer's perspective). One of the original side openings has been stitched shut with a pocket added into the seam (Figure 10). The current centre back seam of the garment shows the second original side-opening, which has also been stitched shut. The petticoat has been cut open at some stage and a new seam has been made, presumably to reduce the fullness of the petticoat, help alter the silhouette or both. It is likely that this alteration took place as a part of the re-pleating process. The petticoat shows signs of wear particularly at the hem where a ribbon (potentially a later addition) binding it has worn away in several places.

The third extant example (BM1935004) is the best preserved out of the three petticoats. It is made from a vibrant yellow silk with both a version of a diagonal diamond shaped decorative pattern and a floral pattern featuring various stylized leaves and flowers (Figure 11). All the quilted patterns have been worked with a matching thread which is clearly visible on the linen lining on the reverse side of the petticoat. The petticoat is made up of four panels, each measuring 67cm in width. It is a heavy garment and structurally sound with very few signs of visible damage to it. The garment retains its shape well and both the top layer of silk fabric and the linen

lining are intact. (Figure 12 – should this actually be Fig 15? And should the current 14 and 15 be renumbered and placed here?]).

Though at first glance the skirt appears unaltered, a closer investigation of the garment reveals visible signs of changes, which have been made at some point during the garment's lifespan. The most visible alteration is the waistband, which is made from a synthetic material and is likely an addition made by a conservator at the Porvoo museum, though no conservation notes exist to prove this. The waistband is quite closely colour-matched to the garment's original fabric but is cooler in tone and the synthetic material it is made from is much thicker than the original silk [(Figure 13 – renumber to 14 in line with above comment)?]. The waistband has been whip-stitched into place by hand and includes loops on the inside, through which a wide dark brown cotton twill ribbon has been inserted. It is possible that these alterations were made to aid in display and costume mounting.

The two original side-openings of the petticoat have been whip-stitched shut, mostly with a thread which matches the thread used for the embroidery on the garment. Some of the stitches have been made with the same thread used to attach the waistband, but these stitches were presumably done to repair the closure at a later date. It seems likely that the side-openings were stitched shut when the garment was still in-use, and the petticoat has had its original waistband removed and has been re-pleated. A new side opening was cut into the garment and was bound using a ribbon, which closely colour-matches the petticoat. The likeliest reason for this alteration is a change in the size of its wearer, though simply removing the waistband and re-pleating the pleats would have adjusted the size without the need of making any cuts to the garment. The original waistband or remnant of it may exist under the

twentieth-century synthetic replacement, but this cannot be proven without removing the existing waistband at least partially.

This petticoat was purchased in 1935 from a Mrs. Anni or Annie Heikel (dates unknown) in the city of Vaasa and according to her, it had belonged to the mother or mother-in-law of estate owner Otto Born (1840-1918) from Espoo.<sup>41</sup> Mrs. Heikel obtained it through her own mother-in-law, Josefina Heikel who had received it from Born as a gift. It seems that the petticoat was treated as a family heirloom for generations prior to being purchased by the Porvoo museum. According to the museum records, it is possible that the object came from Backby manor house in Espoo, which was owned by Born's family until his death in 1918.

Interestingly, there is a mention of a very similar item in one of the Born the family inventory deeds. The deed was written after the death of Born's aunt, Hedvig Elisabeth Born (1795-1839) in 1839 and has been digitised by the Helsinki City Archives. Among her many belongings is listed '1 gul Siden Stubb', a yellow silk quilted petticoat.<sup>42</sup> The petticoat does not appear in Hedvig Elisabeth's mother's inventory deed from 1837 so it would seem the petticoat was passed on to her before her mother's death.<sup>43</sup> Hedvig Elisabeth seemingly died without issue, so her brothers would have inherited her belongings, thus explaining how the petticoat eventually made its way to her brother Erik's son Otto Born (1840-1918).<sup>44</sup> It is plausible that the petticoat noted in the deed is the very same object as the one in the Porvoo museum collection. This would mean that the petticoat did not pass to Born through his mother's family as Mrs Anni Heikel recalled, but through his paternal lineage ending up with his aunt who passed away before Born was born.

It has survived in remarkably good condition and though the altering of one of the side-openings is proof of at least some use, the garment shows minor wear and

tear and has no visible stains or signs of dirt. The hem shows slight evidence of wear, but no heavy damage or soiling which would indicate that the petticoat was not in regular use. The small holes that are apparent in some areas of the petticoat are likely moth damage and reveal that the garment was stuffed with wadding. The wadding is a bright white colour and is more likely to be cotton rather than wool due to its colour and texture, but due to time and budgetary constraints a fibre-analysis of the material could not be completed.

This quilted petticoat was displayed by the museum for several years on multiple occasions. Old photographs from the museum archives show the petticoat being suspended in the air by wires which are attached to the loops of the waistband. This was presumably done for photography purposes only and was not the manner in which the petticoat was displayed in museum exhibitions. The alterations made to this petticoat differ from the two previous examples in that they were not made for the garment to be worn by anyone, but instead in order for it to be displayed. This is an excellent example of the continuation of an object's lifespan: inclusion into a museum collection does not freeze an object's life but continues it and any changes made to it by museum staff contribute to its continuing life story.

The petticoat also features in the 1996 book *Porvoon museon aarteita* (Treasures of the Porvoo Museum) in a colour photograph together with the same eighteenth-century women's jacket and necklace which were worn by the live model in the costume parade of 1956.<sup>45</sup> The machine-made copy of the petticoat currently on display at the Holm House in Porvoo is made from a synthetic material and does not accurately reflect the colour of the garment or the complexity of the quilted design. It is displayed on a mannequin together with an interpretation of the previously mentioned women's jacket.

### **On the potential origins of the Porvoo petticoats**

The Porvoo petticoats are made from fabric panels of varying widths. The width of eighteenth-century textiles does not automatically determine their country of origin, though it can be a useful indicator when considered alongside other factors such as the type of weave and yarn used to make the fabric.<sup>46</sup> The width of European silks varied even within the manufacturing countries since both machinery and manufacturing processes were not yet standardized. Many English dress silks in the mid-eighteenth century were approximately half an ell (the equivalent of 22.5 inches or 57.15 cm) wide, but this measurement was not exact and other widths also existed.<sup>47</sup> The various Chinese silks imported by the SEIC were up to 78cm wide, but their widths also varied according to the types of fabrics available.<sup>48</sup>

The width of the complete panels on the Porvoo petticoats vary. Both the blue and yellow petticoats are made of silk panels that are approximately 40cm wide. The panels in these petticoats have been utilised in what is presumably their full width from selvedge to selvedge, which was the simplest and least wasteful way of making up any skirt or dress. The brown petticoat on the other hand is made up of five panels of different widths: three of the panels measure between 60.5 cm and 61.5cm, one is 71.5, one 76.5 and surprisingly one only 42.5cm. All panels have presumably come from the same bolt of fabric since there is no difference in the weave, colour or quality of them. For whatever reason the panels have been cut to different widths to form the petticoat. It could be that the same fabric was used for another project and that the petticoat was made from whatever was left over, but there is no way of knowing for sure why the petticoat was constructed in this manner. The largest panel is likely to represent the full original width of the fabric, but even this is impossible to verify without opening the seams and finding the

selvedges, which of course cannot be done without damaging the petticoat and is therefore not an option.

The Swedish sumptuary law of 1739 forbade the importation of foreign silk textiles, and the law was enforced from the 18 April 1740 onwards. The SEIC were however exempt from the effects of this law and could still auction their silk goods to buyers until revised sumptuary laws came into effect in 1766. It is possible that the Porvoo petticoats were made from Swedish silk, or in the case of the brown petticoat even Chinese silk, but as explained these theories are difficult to prove. Monochrome satins were imported from China in a variety of colours including brown, but without closer investigation of the yarn used and the selvedges of the fabric widths, the origin of the petticoat material will remain a fascinating point for theorisation.<sup>49</sup>

The purchase price of any quilted petticoat would have depended on the quality of the materials they were made from, and the complexity of the quilted pattern stitched on to them. It is difficult to ascertain what the precise price of any of the examples currently in the Porvoo Museum collection would have been when the original owners of the garments purchased them, because we do not know for certain where the items were made or who made them.

Due to their popularity and high survival rate in museums, it is highly likely that quilted petticoats would have been manufactured in several countries and thus the Porvoo museum examples can't at this stage be traced to any specific manufacturer.

It is unlikely, though not impossible, that the garments were made in Finland. Sweden did have its own silk mills, and very briefly in the 1760s there was even a silk mill in Turku in Finland. [\[is this \(and other matter above\) not mentioned already](#)

in earlier chapter – perhaps this material should be placed there, helping to reduce repetition?]) Could the petticoats therefore be made from Swedish silk? Or is it possible perhaps that the silk was made elsewhere but the quilting work and assembly was completed in Stockholm or another larger Swedish city? A lack of written sources particularly in Finland makes it challenging to estimate how long it would take for a professional or an amateur quilter to complete a petticoat, particularly since this would have depended on the complexity of the quilted pattern on which they were working. Judging by the quality of the stitching work and the complicated decorative patterns on each of the three garments, all of them were made by an accomplished and skilled maker with experience. This **does not** rule out that the items were homemade as many women, even in aristocratic circles, were highly skilled with a needle.<sup>50</sup> [see reviewer 2's point about whether done at home]

Pylkkänen also describes some of the quilted petticoat examples in her book, including the yellow petticoat from Porvoo, as being clumsily made with regards to the quilting work itself.<sup>51</sup> This description is odd considering the complexity of the floral patterns and the general neatness of the stitches I have observed. Both the neatness of the quilting work and the construction indicate to me, that these petticoats were made by a professional or by an otherwise highly skilled maker. By law tailors were the only people allowed to make women's clothing in Sweden and the profession was regulated through the existence of the tailor's guild. Tailors working in Finland were at the time naturally subject to the same guild laws which governed all Swedish tailoring. Interestingly, the tailor's price list transcribed by Pylkkänen doesn't include any quilted items.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps if one wished to buy a professionally made quilted petticoat, it had to be purchased abroad or at least from a large Swedish city? Alternatively quilting may not have fallen under the tailor's

trade and would have been something female workers would have been allowed to undertake. Further research in the manufacture and trade of quilted garments in Swedish ruled Finland and the Kingdom of Sweden as whole still needs to be made to arrive at more certain conclusions on these topics.

As previously mentioned at the beginning of this article, quilted petticoats survive in many museum collections such as the V&A, the Metropolitan Museum and Colonial Williamsburg to name only a few. The designs of international examples differ, but diamond and lozenge shaped base-designs and decorative floral motifs are common in many of them. In her article ‘The Layered Look: Design in Eighteenth-Century Quilted Petticoats’ and research report ‘The Layered Look Revisited: New Discoveries in Quilted Petticoats’, Linda Baumgarten analyses several examples of quilted petticoats.<sup>53</sup> The design and manufacturing techniques of the Porvoo petticoats are similar enough to Baumgarten’s examples from British and North American museum collections to attest to the enduring and geographically widespread popularity of quilted petticoats in the eighteenth-century. It is clear that the Porvoo petticoats were a part of a far reaching and well-established fashion trend and that the global trade networks of the eighteenth century enabled their creation and consumption as valuable luxury goods.

## CONCLUSION

Quilted petticoats are garments which are very much representative of their time. As demonstrated by the examples from Porvoo museum they could be made from expensive materials such as a variety of different silks and showcased their wearers social status through these sartorial choices. Literary sources confirm that they could be purchased ready-made from foreign countries, but they could also be made at

home by local craftspeople or by the wearers themselves. [this sentence doesn't seem to sit naturally with your paragraph about where the petticoats were made?] These garments therefore represent not only their wearers personal tastes and financial standing, but also the global commercial trade networks which enabled the dissemination of fashionable ideals as well as the movement of goods from place to place. Though sumptuary laws endeavoured to curtail the consumption of silk and other luxury textiles, it is obvious that silks were still being worn by those who had the means and opportunity to buy them. These petticoats also attest to the transformative nature of eighteenth-century women's garments: they have been altered, refashioned and reused by a variety of owners for several purposes, not all of which are clear to us today. As seen in inventory deeds, quilted petticoats were often considered high-quality textiles and when made from silk, they were given high monetary valuations even when listed as being worn out or unfinished.

The three petticoats show varying stages of alterations made to the garments to ensure their continued use and preservation. These alterations speak to the inherent value of textiles in the society of their time, but also to the continued value of assigned to the objects over a course of several decades and even centuries. The petticoats would have been expensive items due to the amount of silk required to manufacture them and as discussed similar examples feature in several inventory deeds of the eighteenth-century. All three petticoats were made during the period of Swedish rule in Finland when the sumptuary laws were in effect and all of them are ornate in their design and reflect the purchase power of their original owners. Quilted petticoats could be used and treasured for decades, and the alterations made to them are a testament to their endurance as useful items of clothing.

The fact that the Porvoo examples display the same materials, similar designs and similar manufacturing techniques with other existing quilted petticoats from the same era makes them excellent examples of wider cultural connections to the Swedish empire and the western world. They are an interesting case study and be used as historical sources in themselves to shed light on various aspects of eighteenth-century commerce, fashion, culture and politics. By tying them to archival sources such as probate and inventory deeds we can shed light on how these garments were passed on from one generation to the next and understand both their monetary and social value. The survival of quilted petticoats in Finnish museum collections is proof of their enduring popularity in the eighteenth-century and beyond. [perhaps some of the material in the previous section needs to be moved to the conclusion to avoid confusion and repetition?]

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<sup>1</sup> The diary of Jacobina Charlotta Munsterhjelm, 1799-1801. 7.10.1800. Passage translated from Swedish to English by Anni Shepherd. (Note: the nettlecloth cloth mentioned in the text likely refers to a fichu or other similar item of finely woven cloth intended to be worn as an accessory.)

<sup>2</sup> For a thorough assessment of the widespread reuse and remaking of eighteenth-century women's clothing in England see C.A. Dowdell, 'The Multiple Lives of Clothes: Alteration and Reuse of Women's Eighteenth-Century Apparel in England', (PhD dissertation, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Valerie Cumming, C.W. Cunnington and P.E. Cunnington, *The Dictionary of Fashion History* (New York: Berg, 2010), p. 168

<sup>4</sup> Anne Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth Century England* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1979), p. 47

<sup>5</sup> Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 1: Englishwomen's dresses and their construction 1660- 1860* (London: Macmillan published, 1977), pp.30-1

Nancy Bradfield, *Costume in Detail: Women's dress 1730-1930* (London: Harrap Limited, 1985), pp. 21-6 (Note: The Snowhill Collection includes several quilted petticoats which can be viewed through the National Trust collections database at <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/>) [date accessed]

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent overview on Swedish sumptuary laws see Eva Andersson, 'Foreign Seductions: Sumptuary laws, consumption and national identity in early modern Sweden' in *Fashionable Encounters. Perspectives and Trends in Textile and Dress in the Early Modern Nordic World*, ed. Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), pp. 15-30

<sup>7</sup> Mikael Alm, *Sartorial Practices and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century Sweden: Fashioning Difference*, 1st edn (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), pp. 1-17

- <sup>8</sup> Riitta Pylkkänen, *Säätyläisnaisten pukeutuminen 1700-luvun Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1982), pp. 42-3
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> For a thorough exploration on the topic of smuggling see Anna Knutsson, 'Clandestine commerce: retailing contraband textiles in late eighteenth-century Sweden', *History of Retailing and Consumption*, 5:3 (2019), 261-275
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Eva Christina Mäkeläinen, *Säätyläisten seuraelämä ja tapakulttuuri 1700-luvun jälkipuoliskolla Turussa, Viaporissa ja Savon kartanoalueella* (Forssa: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1972), p. 10-18.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid. pp.137-8
- <sup>15</sup> Alm, pp.10-13
- <sup>16</sup> Mäkeläinen, pp.17-19 and Patrik Steorn, 'Caricature and Fashion Critique on the Move: Establishing European Print and Fashion Culture in Eighteenth Century Sweden', in *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800*, ed. Evelyn Welch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 257
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. pp.258-262
- <sup>18</sup> Seija Johnson, 'Fashion from the Ship: Life, Fashion and Fashion Dissemination in and around Kokkola, Finland in the 18th Century', in *Fashionable Encounters. Perspectives and Trends in Textile and Dress in the Early Modern Nordic World*, ed. Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), pp. 31-48
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.32
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid
- <sup>21</sup> Riitta Pylkkänen, *Säätyläisnaisten pukeutuminen 1700-luvun Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1982). pp. 66-9 and pp. 240-2
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 455-88
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 240
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Pylkkänen, pp. 466-7
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp. 468-9
- <sup>27</sup> Johnson, p. 37
- <sup>28</sup> Pernilla Rasmussen, 'Recycling a fashionable wardrobe in the long eighteenth-century in Sweden', *History of Retailing and Consumption*, 2.3, (2016), 193-222 (p. 193).
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp. 202-206. See also Dowdell.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> For more information on the recreation process see Anni Shepherd, 'The Petticoat Project: Research Through Replica-Making in a Museum Environment', *The Journal of Dress History*, 6.2, (2022), 92-118.
- <sup>33</sup> Marketta Tamminen and Juha Jämbäck, *Kulttuuriperintöä, Kulttuurielämää: Porvoon Museoyhdistys Ja Porvoon Museo 1896-2021*. (Porvoo: Porvoon museo, 2022). p. 36
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid. pp. 59-60 and 67-70
- <sup>35</sup> Porvoo Museum website, <https://www.porvoonmuseum.fi/en/the-museum-with-regional-responsibility-in-eastern-uusimaa/>
- <sup>36</sup> Linda Baumgarten, 'The Layered Look: Design in Eighteenth-Century Quilted Petticoats', *Dress*, 34.1, (2007), 7-31 (p. 10).
- <sup>37</sup> Ingrid Mida & Alexandra Kim, *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018). See also Lydia Edwards, *How to Read a Dress*, revised edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).
- <sup>38</sup> Figures 5, 7, 8, 13 & 14 were taken on a Mark II Canon PowerShot G7 X camera through a 7x magnifying Peak Scale Lupe. Contrast has been heightened on some of the images to clarify and sharpen them, but no major editing has been done to enhance them. The images were taken by the author in the absence of a microscope and though they are not sufficiently accurate or magnified for fibre analysis of the garments, they still produce valuable insights to the garments and assisted the author in firmly identifying the weaves and stitches used.
- <sup>39</sup> Baumgarten, 2007, pp.24-28

<sup>40</sup> The information about the fashion parade was gained through an interview with Porvoo Museum textile conservator Heidi Gustafsson who kindly showed me the original photographs taken in 1956 on 22.8.2024. The museum has not published any written information about the parade.

<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, I have not been able to find reliable information on Mrs. Heikel's date of birth or death. Her name and city of residence along with the information she gave pertaining to the yellow silk petticoat have been recorded in the object database of the Porvoo Museum.

<sup>42</sup> Helsinki Court Archives, Inventory deed records/ Helsingin raastuvanoikeus - Perukirjat 1683-1689: Perukirja 1687 < <http://yksa.fi/100211/153598220130400> > [accessed 22 November 2023].

<sup>43</sup> Helsinki Court Archives, Inventory deed records/ Helsingin raastuvanoikeus - Perukirjat 1302 - 1563; Perukirja 1496 < <http://yksa.fi/100211/139877628098800> > [accessed 22 November 2023].

<sup>44</sup> Tryggve Gestrin, *Hedvig Elisabeth Born* (2018) <<https://www.geni.com/people/Hedvig-Born/6000000041913920599>> [accessed 21 November 2023]. (Though the genealogy records can be modified by registered users, the records relating to the Born family associated with Backby manor have been written by Espoo City Museum researcher Tryggve Gestrin and can be considered reliable.)

<sup>45</sup> Merja Herranen, Juha Jämbäck, Marketta Tamminen and Susanne Kurtén-Lehtinen, *Porvoon museon aarteita: Skatter i Borgå museum* (Porvoo: Porvoon Museo, 1996), pp. 26-27.

<sup>46</sup> DATS in partnership with V&A, *Identifying Textile Types and Weaves 1750-1950*, 2007, available online at <https://dressandtextilespecialists.org.uk/toolkits>, accessed 23 August 2024, p. 13

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Hodacs, pp. 96-108

<sup>49</sup> Elisabeth Stavenow-Hidemark ed., *18<sup>th</sup> Century Textiles: The Anders Berch Collection at the Nordiska Museet* (Stockholm: Nordiska Museets Förlag, 1990.) pp. 178-86

Note: The selvages of the Chinese silks in the Ander Berch Collection all have a red vertical stripe running down the length of the fabric. If it could be determined that the selvages of the brown petticoat had this stripe, it would increase the likelihood of the petticoat being made from Chinese silk.

<sup>50</sup> Aristocratic women in Finland often undertook plenty of needlework and it was not uncommon for them to weave their own fabrics particularly for household linens. For example, Charlotta Jacobina Munsterhjelm's diary mentions her mother both combing flax and weaving fabrics.

<sup>51</sup> Pylkkänen, p.117

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp.492-3

<sup>53</sup> Baumgarten 2007, pp. 7-31 and Linda Baumgarten, 'The Layered Look' Revisited: New Discoveries in Quilted Petticoats', *Dress*, 47:2, (2021), 181-198

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### **Image captions**

**Figure 1** This image taken in 1982 shows the object BM3823 in its current form as a wall hanging or potential bedspread. It is highly likely that the object was originally a quilted petticoat.

*Photograph: © Porvoo Museum.*

**Figure 2** A digital sketch showing the measurements and current make-up of the blue quilted petticoat in the Porvoo Museum collection. In its original state, the petticoat would have comprised of seven panels, which were subsequently cut up to form a bedspread or wall hanging. All numbers refer to measurements in centimetres. Note: this sketch is for illustrative purposes only and is not to scale.

*Sketch: © Anni Shepherd.*

**Figure 3.** A photograph showing the acanthus leaf design on the edge of the garment as well as the diagonal diamond pattern. Note the fraying of the silk and visibility of the wadding underneath.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figure 4.** A close-up of the centre seam where two halves of the petticoat have been joined to form a blanket or wall covering.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

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**Figure 5.** The splits in the satin woven silk can be clearly seen with the naked eye, but when photographed through a 7x magnifying loop the coarseness of the wool wadding can also be detected. The acanthus leaf pattern has been worked in a series of small backstitches, which are sadly out of focus.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figure 6.** The brown silk petticoat has a yoke and waistband, both of which are later additions. The garment displays significant fading in several large areas but is otherwise in good condition for its age. Porvoo Museum, inv. no. BM3279.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figure 7.** Details of the decorative pattern on the brown petticoat displaying a variety of embroidery stitches and techniques.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figures 8 and 9.** When photographed through a loupe it is clear that the brown top layer silk is again a satin weave. The ornate quilted pattern has been most worked with backstitch, which is clearly visible from the reverse of the garment. The lining of the petticoat is a plain-woven fabric, which is most likely made of linen or hemp.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd.*

**Figure 10.** A pocket has been added to one of the original side openings of the skirt. The side opening itself has been stitched shut as the orientation of the skirt has been changed.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figure 11.** Yellow silk petticoat, the change from the geometric diagonal quilted pattern to the more elaborate floral designs is stark, but well executed. Porvoo Museum, inv. no. BM1935004

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figure 12.** Signs of wear on the hem of the yellow quilted petticoat.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figure 13.** The waistband currently on the garment is made from a synthetic fibre and has been whipstitched into place.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*

**Figures 14 and 15.** Unlike in the other two petticoats, the top layer of BM1935004 is a plain-woven silk. The lining is also plain-woven and could again be either linen or hemp.

*Photograph: © Anni Shepherd*