

The Ideology behind Holderhold and Cuprien women's fashion

A look at the history behind fashionable female style in 165 OW, and what the ideological message behind it is

Socialist Holderhold was legendary for its feminism. In fact, all people in the ruling circles had to be human women. Their courts followed some of the strictest dress codes of the time.

In contrast to many other societies, Holderhold women paid great care to their hair. This had roots in archeism, late Archa's religion, under whose rules many peasant women had had to wear hoods or veils and were only allowed to show hair in private. This tradition had disappeared during the Orc Wars, but hair still played a special role. In fact, many women among the Archaean elite had worn their hair loosely as a symbol of empowerment or beauty. The Holderhold regime in turn declared such show-off style to be socially inappropriate, and loose hair was banned from formal occasions. The modest social women who were in power still wore their hair long - it was seen as nicer than short hair, after all, and short hair was in any case a male, and thus negative, attribute - but had to restrict its openness in two ways. For one, they always wore hats. Secondly, they tied their hair up. The predominant method was to make a bun with a single braid down the right side.

Holderhold's typical brimless rounded hats were of clouded origin. Most likely, they were Ancetartic polar caps adapted to the much warmer Archaen climate. This headgear, exuding modesty due to its very simplistic design, became the socialist trademark. It was worn by soldiers, workers, and the enlightened leaders. A political leader's hat was distinguished by the Red Saltire slightly offset to the right, and a fancy plume.

To socialists, clothing had to be practical and not get in the way. This translated into formal wear quite directly. The women wore tight-fitting silk pants that reached up above the hips. These pants expressed sleekness and style, but were also very simple in apparel terms. On the upper body, they wore sleeveless bodices called *brayur*. They had round and stiff collars to enhance the formal appearance and distinguish themselves from soldiers and officers, who had revers necklines. The bodices were fastened down the middle by four brass buttons. Finally, they ended

well above the hip in a wide leather belt, which on the front was closed by a large brass buckle, which typically represented the wearer's arms (either Holderhold's or her native Theskgard Pact state's). The orange bodices were additionally accentuated by diagonal red lines reminiscent of the Red Saltire which originated from the buckle, passed over the shoulders, and rejoined back at the spine down at belt level. The bodices also had black or red shoulder-pieces without decorations.

In colder temperatures, a tight-fitting long-sleeved shirt similar to the pants could be worn beneath the bodice.

Despite the accent on sleekness and simplicity, the bodice and pants were not regal enough to please the eye, and so officials - along with military officers - were allowed to wear side-capes. These were fastened at the right collarbone and on the left shoulder blade, and could be of any color, though the rank-and-file wore black.

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The Cuprien was inherently less consistent due to its non-totalitarian nature. However, for the sake of interesting comparison, we will have a look at the most extreme fashion movement, what was called the New Surinist Revolution. Though its peak was quite short-lived, for a year nearly every woman, and several men, in the upper spheres wore this style.

The historical context lies just before the Orc Wars, in the Armurian invasion of Vivien. This had been a clash of cultures: the Surin modern starquintist one against Vivien pilgrism. Pilgrism, like archeism, called for extreme modesty and concealing clothing; Surin nobility, who were often their husbands' status symbol, did the opposite. They flaunted their bodies, wearing almost see-through silk tops and side-slit skirts. "Surinism" as such was not a thing.

Around 163, meanwhile, a new movement budded. Many Tsseh purebloods were fleeing the east due to war, and their rich were assimilated into the Cuprien rich. Tsseh serpentine clothing was novel and, to some, exciting to wear. Those who embraced Tsseh exhibitionism and jewelry proudly called themselves "New Surinist".

Even this specific movement was not extremely coherent. Its main tenets were extravagant gold and emerald jewelry and alluring clothing. Tsseh jewelry as such was traditionally worn on arms, with golden snakes writhing their way around forearms, fingers, and sometimes even - for the expensive mastercrafted ones -

through the elbow joint to the biceps. This slinging jewelry also went around necks, legs, and hips. Sometimes silk chokers and bracers with silver studs were used.

The dominant colors were pink or deep violet (the predominant Tsseh nobility colors), or Cuprien blue. Green, the most common among Tsseh women, was seen mostly as distasteful.

What was perhaps the biggest difference to Holderhold attire was the exhibitionism. In contrast to old Surin fashion, where more private parts were teased by see-through cloth, New Surinism used exclusively opaque silk cloth, and some netting, though only as fringe decoration and not as the main fabric. The most common way of wearing the silk was in strips wrapped around the shoulders and over the breasts, to join a large wrap around the abdomen. Virtually all female New Surinist clothing had a large cleavage; men even went completely topless.

Some women also saw thighs as an important part to reveal. They did so by wearing wraps or codpieces, often in combination with leggings. The majority, however, merely opted for side-slit skirts or ignored this altogether; in fact, the practice was quickly abandoned, as it did not fit well in courts.