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A 17th Century Woman's Cap from Haarby Church, Denmark

Haarby church in Baag shire is the largest village church in the island of Funen in Denmark (Fig. 1). In the 16th and 17th century the church functioned as family church for members of some of the finest noble families in Funen including the Lykke, Bille, Rosenkrantz, Oxe and Rud families.

Much of the church inventory, still in the church today, is a testament of the generous donations from these noble families, such as the chalice and disk donated by Anders Bille's widow Sophie Rosenkrantz in 1661.

Haarby Church was subject to extensive restorations in 1856 and 1938. The last major restoration took place in 1975-76. In 1938 restoration work was left incomplete due to lack of funding, but in 1943 the work was resumed and four very damaged old coffins in the church vault were examined.

The arms of Lykke and Urne were displayed on the coffin lids. Two of the coffins belonged to Jacob Bille (1531-1652) and Erik Bille (1529-1656). Another coffin had a plaque with the name of Pernille Lykke. The last had no name and is an anonymous male, presumably of noble descent. All four coffins were adult size, approximately 175-180 cm in length. On the occasion of their examination, a number of well-preserved textiles were removed from the coffins: three men's caps, one with an under-cap, and a woman's cap together with shroud and pillow cases.

Since the excavation the Haarby textiles have been stored in the National Museum in Copenhagen, and, in 1965, they were issued museum numbers 821 to 831/1965 and kept in the department of the Early Modern Collection (3. Afd. Nyere Tids Samling). In 2008, the textiles were once again taken out of their storage box and examined by the current authors together with Irene Skals, conservator at the National Museum of Denmark.

The main focus was the female cap found on the body of the noble woman Pernille Lykke. Noble women's caps can be found across Denmark in written and visual sources, however, Pernille Lykke's cap is so far the only known extant example of a 17th century women's cap found in Denmark. Thus the little cap offers a unique insight into the cut and construction of period caps.

Pernille Lykke

Pernille Lykke was the daughter of Peder Lykke of Skovsbo (d. 1563) and Lisbeth Johansdatter Urne of Klingstrup (d. 1584). The couple belonged to the wealthy Funen nobility. Peder Lykke and his wife had eight children, of whom Pernille was the youngest. Pernille Lykke never married and left no issue to inherit from her, perhaps for the same reason she gave generous donations to churches and for charitable works in the last years of her life. Pernille Lykke's precise age at death is not known, her year of birth not being recorded. The earliest we hear of her is in 1599, when her name appears in a dispute about some property. On this occasion she is recorded to be an adult (Blomberg 1941).

In the 1610s, Pernille Lykke funded the so-called Sjøleboder (small living spaces) in Møntestræde in Odense. The half-timbered building meant for the poor still exists today and can be found in its original place. According to Pernille Lykke's own account, the building was divided into small "apartments" to house three honest and deserving poor women and two orphaned boys who were to go to school. The women were allowed to stay in the house until their death while the boys could stay for only three years (Engelstoft 1880, 228-230; Ladewig Petersen 1984, 405). The last to be heard of Pernille Lykke's activities is in



Fig. 1. Location of Haarby church in Baag shire on the island of Funen (Drawing: authors).

1627. In 1634 Pernille Lykke's brother is registered as the owner of her estate Højsgård situated in Haarby, at which time she must have been either dead or dying and her brother taken over the estate (Engeltoft 1880, 229).

A more precise time of her death we find, however, in the diary of Hans Mikkelsen, the Bishop of Funen diocese. His diary covering the years 1626-1641 has an entry in 1634, mentioning that on the 11th December that year he gave a funeral sermon for the noble maiden Pernille Lykke. She probably died sometime around the late fall of 1634 (Biskop Hans Mikkelsens dagbøger 1626-1641, 116). As Pernille's father died in 1563, she must have been at least 71 years old in 1634. Pernille Lykke must have been an old woman when she died.

Pernille Lykke's cap

Pernilles Lykke's cap consists of one piece of fitted silk satin which was pointed at the ears and the middle of the forehead (Figs. 2-3). The colour is a little faded reddish brown. No dye analysis has been made.

The cap has a silk lining of a light brown colour. The cap is edged with a narrow ribbon interwoven with metal thread. The same type of ribbon is stitched on both sides of the cap's centre seam, from the 'forehead point' to the gathered top of the cap's silk satin; the length is 14 cm. The gathered top is made by four rows of threads, drawn together to 4 cm, creating 25 tiny meticulous pleats.

The lining is tacked to the cap. At the back, the outer fabric and lining is sewed together with point stitch. A casing creates a channel for a narrow silk string. Along the front edge, the cap is sewn together with the lining by overcast stitching and covered by the above mentioned ribbon; 2 mm long portion of the ribbon is folded to the wrong side. The ribbon goes from ear to ear and measures 48 cm, the cap measures from the forehead point to the back 44 cm. The depth of the cap is 21 cm.

Textile analysis of the cap had previously been carried out by Irene Skals from The National Museum of Denmark. The fabric is silk, woven in a 8-binding satin, with 223 threads/cm in the warp and 32 threads/



Fig. 2. Woman's cap from the coffin of Pernille Lykke in Haarby Church, now in the National Museum of Denmark (Photos: authors with permission of The National Museum of Denmark).



cm in the weft. The lining is silk as well. It is a good-quality densely woven silk fabric in tabby weave with 140 threads/cm in the warp and 49 threads/cm in the weft. The narrow ribbon which edges the cap is 6 mm wide. The warp consists of silk thread S2z and gold thread s-spun around a core of yellow silk. The warp has 28 threads/cm. The weft is pure silk S2s with 9 threads/cm.

Pernille Lykke's cap was probably originally worn together with some sort of 'under-parts' such as an under-cap or forehead cloth of linen. None, however, was found in her coffin. Furthermore, in general no linen had survived in the coffins in Haarby. Similar caps have not been found or been preserved in Denmark. Looking further west to the British Isles, one-piece caps are well-known in the Elizabethan period. (Arnold 2008, 47, 103-104) A number of preserved examples of caps with a similar cut and shape as Pernille Lykke's can be found in this period and from around the same time as Pernille Lykke died (Dahl & Grølsted 2009, 20-21)

So-called one-piece caps have not been the object of as much research as the two- and three-pieced caps in Denmark. This may be due to the fact that only very few such caps are known compared to the many caps of the later types that have been preserved and re-used

in rural Danish costume. However, it must be noted that Danish islands such as Amager, Falster (South part of the island) and Samsø all included one-piece caps in their 'folk costume' and they were used well into the 19th century (Andersen 1960).

The English caps follow the fashions of Britain: often with all-over embroidery in coloured silk (Arthur 1995; Arnold 2008). The Danish caps were, at least according to period portraits, rarely embroidered but decorated with passementerie, metal studs, pearls and occasionally gems (Dahl 2008, 24-26, 39-47).

A supposedly English cap of fine white linen embroidered with coloured silk is presently in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The cap dated c. 1610-20 is in one piece like Pernille Lykke's cap, with curved cut-out templates and on the top of the head gathered in a row of small neatly made pleats sewn together with green silk. At the back of the head it has a narrow drawstring hem pulled together with a silk ribbon. In contrast to Pernille Lykke's cap, the Boston cap is not edged with ribbons but embroidered along the edges (Arnold 2008, 47, 103). Similarly another linen cap of unknown origin is preserved in the Ontario Museum in Canada and is decorated with whitework embroidery and dated to the first decades of the 17th century (Arnold 2008, 47, 104).

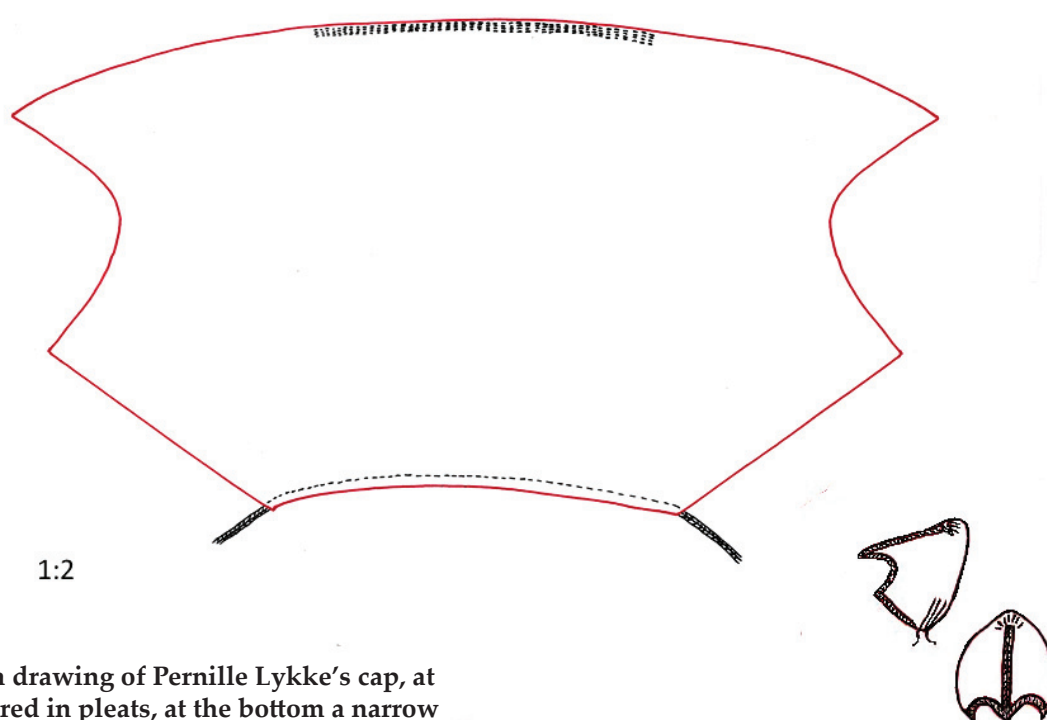


Fig. 3. Pattern drawing of Pernille Lykke's cap, at the top gathered in pleats, at the bottom a narrow drawstring hem (Drawing: Esther Grølsted).



Fig. 4. Joan, Scottish wife of citizen in Elsinore Wilhelm Graa. Epitaph (memorial painting) in Elsinore St. Mary Church, c. 1620 (Photo: Erik Fjordside).

White linen caps of this type can be found in artwork in Northern Europe, particularly in England and Scotland. The type of cap with a seam line on top of the head is otherwise not very common in portraits of Danish townswomen but are occasionally found, primarily if not exclusively, in depictions of foreign women (Fig. 4). Although Pernille Lykke's cap is of a similar cut, the fabric and decoration differ from those of townswomen portrayed in painting.

Ladies' caps in the period of Pernille Lykke's death

At the time of Pernille Lykke's death in 1634, both married and unmarried women wore head coverings. Although married ladies at the court had replaced the earlier obligatory cap with various fashionable hairdos and unmarried maidens traditionally were allowed to wear "open hair", caps remained the most common headwear for the 17th century women whether married or unmarried.

From the middle of the 16th century, helmet-like tight caps had been the height of fashion, but by the end of the century the caps were becoming taller, with a more pronounced rising back and curving at the front around the templates (Dahl 2008, 28-30). Usually a linen under-cap or forehead cloth was worn underneath the cap. The front was looped into two template buckles following the shape of the upper

caps with under-wiring or starch.

Examples of these types of women's caps can be found in contemporary Danish sculptures and paintings. An example is the sandstone sculpture of Lady Dorthe Juul, wife of the nobleman Jørgen Kaas. The sculpture that once was part of a funerary memorial of the couple in Glesborg Church, Djursland is now kept in the Randers Museum.

Lady Dorthe Juul is wearing the fashionable dress of the period – tight doublet and barrel-shaped skirt (farthingale). On her head she is wearing a tight-fitting cap, deep cut at the templates; along the selvedges the cap is decorated with borders with an abundance of studs and pearls. At the back of the head, the cap is gathered together, forming soft round folds.

Like Pernille Lykke's cap, it is decorated down the middle of the crown with a cross-shaped decoration – presumably covering a seamline (Fig. 5).

A similar cap can be found in the funerary monument of Jørgen Skeel and his two wives Kirsten Lunge (d. 1609) and Jytte Brok (d. 1640). The effigy was build around the time of Jørgen Skeel's death in 1631 and finished in 1633 (Fig. 6).

Caps of various kinds worn by noble women are also mentioned in contemporary written accounts. The noble maiden Ingeborg Rosenkrantz, like Pernille, died as an unmarried woman. At her death in 1636,



Fig. 5. Dorthe Juul, wife of Jørgen Kaas, sandstone sculpture formerly in Glesborg Church, Djursland, now in Randers Kulturhistoriske Museum. Jørgen Kaas died in 1619, Dorthe Juul in 1634. The sculpture is from around the time of Dorthe Juul's death (Photo: Camilla Luise Dahl with permission of Randers Museum).

she left behind a large number of movables and other possessions including elegant dresses and several silk caps. Five were of fine silk and one is described as a coloured with feule de mort (dead leaves) silk atlas cap (Arvelod i Ingeborg Rosenkrantz's Løsøre, 62-63). In addition to caps, she had a number of linen under-caps and forehead cloths - both embroidered and plain, as well as with lace.

Pernille Lykke's cap seems in many ways typical of its time – the style with the cut-out and shaped templates was a fashionable style popular around the time of her death and appears in period paintings and sculptures. The silk cap was thus most likely not a special burial item made to dress her in the coffin but more likely one of her own caps reused as burial clothes.

Its date is likely within a few years of her death in 1634, as nothing seems to suggest this was an old cap and it was not worn out or mended.

It is not a very elaborate piece of headwear, although it is made of silk and decorated with goldwork passementerie, suggesting that it was a simple elegant cap more suitable for everyday wear rather than for special occasions – it was a cap suitable for an old and unmarried noble maiden.



Fig. 6. The two wives of the Danish nobleman Jørgen Skeel, Lady Kirsten Lunge and Lady Jytte Brok. Effigy in Aarhus Cathedral, finished 1633 (Photograph: Erik Fjordside).



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