

specified in medieval regulations as unfulled and of long-staple wool, and followed a suggestion of Marta Hoffmann that they were also woven in balanced four-shed twill. They therefore considered that some of the  $2 \times 2$  twills from → London could have been says (and may also have been of a mixed spinning). The use of the word for fine worsteds and cloths mixed with worsteds seems to have increased late in, and after the end of, our period.

The two meanings are difficult to distinguish in literature, except by context, which is probably why these words ultimately fell out of use, though say (wool) seems to have lasted longer than say (silk).

The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*'s suggestion of 'linen' as a meaning seems entirely unfounded and is not supported by their own attestations.

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MARK CHAMBERS

ELIZABETH COATSWORTH

## Scabbard

See → weapons as items of dress.

## Scarlet

The medieval scarlet was a woollen textile and not originally a colour; subsequent use of the term 'scarlet' as both a noun and adjective for that vivid red colour was derived from the textile's name.

None of the later medieval and modern European terms for 'scarlet', for either the textile or the colour (nouns and adjectives), has any antecedents in the ancient and early-medieval worlds. The first documented use of a word related to subsequent European nouns for the textile itself is found in the Old High German text *Summarium Heinrici* (1007–1032). In the section *De diversitate vestimentorum*, the author used the Old High German word *Scarlachen* to define a textile term from the still widely-used *Etymologiarium* of Isidore of Seville (570–636): '*Ralla vel rullo que vulgo rasilis dicitur*'. *Rasilis* (from *radere*) meant 'scraped, smoothed, shaved', and a later English medieval Latin word list defined '*ralla*' as 'shaving cloth'. Presumably the author of the *Summarium* meant a shorn cloth, because the OHG '*schar*' meant 'shorn' (from shearing: *scheren*, in modern German) and *lach* meant cloth (*Tuch* in modern German). Certainly this OHG word is the source of subsequent medieval and modern terms for scarlet in many Germanic languages. In Middle English texts, it appears in a wide variety of forms (influenced by Romance as well as Germanic languages): *scharlette*, *scarlatte*, *skarlote*, *skarlet*, *scarlat*, and *scarlet*.

This etymology, beginning with the OHG *Summarium Heinrici*, seems to support a long-favoured explanation for the true essence of the medieval scarlet: as a very fine → woollen → broadcloth, subjected to repeated shearings. The theory was first proposed by Henri Pirenne and then elaborated by Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin in *Le drap 'escarlate' au moyen âge* (1905). Both Pirenne and Weckerlin observed that the medieval Flemish term *scharlaken* or *scaerlaken* was composed of two substantives: *schar*—shear (from *scheren*: to shear a cloth) and *laken*—cloth (in both medieval Flemish and modern Dutch). That explanation does not differ in any essentials from the interpretation of the OHG *Scarlachen* or *sharlachen* given here; and it is important to note that this OHG text was unknown to both Pirenne and Weckerlin.

In their view, the most luxurious and most costly of all medieval woollens were those that were highly shorn; and only those woollens made from the finest English → wools, then the world's best, could undergo such thorough, intensive shearings. Further observing that Flemish towns dominated the manufacture and international trade in fine woollens from the 11th to 14th centuries, they concluded that their cloth merchants

had succeeded in imposing this Flemish term on, not just Germanic, but virtually all West European languages, even if Latin and Romance forms of the term came to diverge from the Germanic terms, especially in their endings or suffixes.

Finally, well-known medieval descriptions of this textile in a wide range of colours—not just scarlet-red—further convinced them that the medieval textile owed both its name and its value to this extensive shearing. To explain how the colour term ‘scarlet’ arose and how it came to be linked to the textile, Weckerlin offered the following simple hypothesis (not based on any textual evidence): since the colour scarlet, in medieval Europe, symbolized both divinity and regal, indeed imperial, supremacy—as indeed still the preferred colour for robes of the papal curia—international cloth merchants eventually insisted that all scarlets, as the luxury cloth *sans pareil*, be dyed exclusively with the agent that produced that regal colour.

Seductive and enduring as the Pirenne-Weckerlin hypothesis may be, it raises a number of serious problems. The first is the inconvenient fact that those who dominated the cloth industry and international trade of Flanders, especially at the renowned Champagne Fairs, from the 11th to early 14th centuries, were chiefly francophones: from Arras, Douai, and Lille in particular. It is highly improbable that they and the Italian merchants with whom they dealt would have adopted a linguistically awkward Flemish term. The second is that Romance-language terms for ‘scarlet’, and the English term, differ in significant respects from the Germanic forms.

The most serious flaw, however, is the contention that the high cost and high value of scarlet lay in their shearing processes, for ‘scarlets’ were subjected to shearing processes that did not differ in quality, skill, or frequency, and certainly not in relative costs, from the finishing processes for any other fine woollen textiles. Moreover these costs rarely accounted for more than 2.5–3.5% of the wholesale price.

Rather, the origin of the Germanic names for scarlet, commencing with the OHG *scharlachen* in the *Summarium Heinrici*, likely refers to the novel textile product of the recently introduced horizontal treadle → loom, first described in a mid-11th-century Talmudic commentary by Rabbi Solomon Izhaqi (Rashi of Troyes, c. 1040–1105). This new loom ultimately displaced the

traditional vertical loom, which produced essentially light worsted fabrics, producing instead a radically different cloth: the first genuine heavy-weight woollens. They differed from → worsteds in being extensively fulled and subjected to finishing processes including being repeatedly teaselled and shorn (*scharlachen*), with foot-long razor-sharp steel shears, to remove the ungainly nap of the fulled, tented cloth, thereby obliterating the patterns, which were visible in medieval (unshorn) textiles. The result was a texture often as fine as silk: hence the significance of shearing, in OHG *schar-lachen*, and in the Germanic textile terms that evolved from it.

From about the same time as the *Summarium Heinrici* may be found the first use of the term ‘scarlet’ in a Latin text, according to Weckerlin c. 1050, but used as an adjective: ‘tres pannos scarlitinos anglicanos’. His source cannot, however, be found; the next oldest known text comes from a Cluny abbey charter of c. 1100, used as noun—and one linked to the red colour: ‘de scarlata rubea tunicam’. Other less common medieval Latin forms are: *scarlatum*, *scarletum*, *scarlaccum*, *scarlateus*, *scarletus*, *escallata*, *escarlata*, *escarletum*, *squallata*. Subsequently, variants of these terms were adopted by all the Romance languages. While the Latin and most of the Romance terms retain the ‘scar’ prefix of the Germanic terms, they all contain ‘lat’ in the ending or suffix—missing in the Germanic languages (except English).

The probable origin of that ‘lat’ suffix is the Arabic name for a widely-manufactured and -traded textile dating from about the 9th century, of which the principal feature was its scarlet colour: *siklāt* (later and then more commonly *siklātūn*). Many dictionaries still favour, as the origin of the European terms for ‘scarlet’, the Persian (Farsi) word *sakirlāt*; but the first Persian usage cannot be dated earlier than c. 1290. Almost certainly derived from the Arabic *siklātūn*, the Persian *sakirlāt* was likely also influenced in its formation by extensive Italian commerce in 13th-century Persia, and hence by the Italian word *scarlatto*. The problem, however, in trying to establish the Arabic term *siklāt* as an origin, or ancillary influence, for the Romance-language terms for ‘scarlet’, is that these Islamic textiles were all silks. Some philologists now contend, however, that the Arabic term was itself derived from the Late Roman term *sigillatus* or Byzantine Greek word *σιγίλλατον*: which was indeed a luxury and a royal

woollen textile, one decorated with seals or rings (*sigilla*: seal).

Clearly, however, the distinguishing feature of the Islamic *siklātūn* (and Persian *sakirlāt*) silks was that they were very high-priced, luxury textiles dyed scarlet-red in → kermes. The principal centre of Muslim Spanish production of these luxury silk textiles, from at least the 11th century, was Almería, in southern Andalusia, a region rich in and renowned for *kermes*, undoubtedly the most costly dyestuff in medieval Europe. It could account for more than 50% of the wholesale price of broadcloth. The next most costly components of these scarlets were the wools. The best English wools were used (see → woollens) chiefly those from the Welsh Marches (Herefordshire and Shropshire), the Cotswolds and Lincolnshire. By far the least costly component was labour; the combined labour costs of finishing (dyeing, teaselling, shearing) was usually less than 3.45%.

Perhaps the best way of representing the total costs and wholesale prices of these ultra-luxury textiles is to compare them with the daily wages of medieval skilled artisans. In London, in the 1430s and 1440s, the most expensive scarlets were priced at £28 10s 0d sterling: the equivalent of 855 days' wages for a London master mason (8d per day) and 1,140 days' wages (5.43 years) for an Oxford-Cambridge master mason (6d per day). The medieval scarlets were, therefore, indisputably the most costly and luxurious textiles manufactured in western Europe, rivalled only by some imported Asian silks. Equally indisputable is the fact that they owed their luxury value and high cost primarily to the kermes dyestuff, and secondarily to their English wools.

The seeming paradox of references to scarlets variously described as brown, perse (a blue-greyish or ashen purple), murrey (mulberry), sanguine (bluish red) and even green and white can be explained by the fact that drapery records and town accounts in the Low Countries present a tripartite category for their woollens: medleys (see → medlee), blues, and whites. 'Medleys' (*draps mellés*, *gheminghede lakenen*) were those woven from a mixture of differently coloured wools, previously dyed in the wools themselves or in the yarns: a popular variety was the *strijpte lakenen* (*rayés*, 'ray' in English), in which warps differed in colour from wefts. Many were subsequently redyed in the piece, with kermes, and known as *strijpte scaerlakenen*.

Most medieval woollens began as 'blues': their wools were first dyed in woad, which required no → mordant and thus was much easier to work than wools with other, mordant-based dyes. These woollens were then redyed in the piece, after finishing, with kermes, an alum mordant, more woad, or other colourants, to produce the colours listed above—except 'green' and 'white'. There is no concrete evidence of any genuine 'green' scarlets; and the term may be a confusion between *groen* (Flemish for green) and *grein* i.e. 'grain' (kermes). 'Whites' were broadcloths woven from undyed yarns that were then dyed only in the piece (after finishing), and only in kermes, to be known as *roode scaerlakenen*.

A systematic analysis of accounts of towns in the Low Countries, providing production and finishing costs and wholesale prices for scarlets and other luxury woollen broadcloths, reveals no significant price differences between the red (*roode*) scarlets and the various other coloured scarlets, while demonstrating that scarlets always cost substantially more than other dyed broadcloths. All *scaerlakenen*, without exception, contained kermes; and price variations can be attributed to differences in the quantities of kermes used, and annual variations in the market prices for different kinds of kermes.

The medieval scarlet was therefore a very high-priced, luxury, woollen broadcloth, invariably woven from the finest English wools, and always dyed with kermes, even if mixed with woad, and other dyestuffs. There is no evidence for the use of the term 'scarlet' for any other textile, even though other textiles, especially silks, were also dyed with kermes.

The most important producers and exporters of woollen scarlets in medieval Europe were the draperies of the southern Low Countries (Flanders and Brabant) and of northern Italy, principally Florence. England, though the only source of the very fine wools used to produce these broadcloths (before the 16th century), was never a leading producer of scarlets. Nevertheless, in the 13th century, English scarlets from Lincoln had gained considerable renown, and are featured in two Iberian price lists with a value greater than those for Flemish scarlets.

Unfortunately, the role of scarlets in England's export trade cannot be properly ascertained before the imposition of the Cloth Custom in 1347, when cloth exports by native ('denizen') English

merchants were first recorded. Prior to 1347, we have only statistics on alien cloth exports, and only from the *Carta Mercatoria* of 1303 (with a large gap from 1311 to 1332). Though such alien cloth exports were generally few in number, scarlets (along with cloths partially dyed in grain) sometimes accounted for a surprisingly high proportion: 23.24% in the first decade; 63.67% in the early 1330s, 89.57% in the later 1330s, and 100% in the early 1340s. From the 1347 Cloth Custom, and especially from the 1350s, when exports of better quality woollen broadcloths began their rise, scarlets accounted for a very small proportion of the total English cloth trade, rarely more than 2% of total cloth exports. We would expect that demand for scarlets, with such extraordinarily high prices, would be limited, especially in the markets to which English cloths were now being directed: aimed at strata of less wealthy consumers than those for Flemish, Brabantine, and Florentine luxury woollens.

The European hey-day of the woollen scarlet was the 14th and 15th centuries (especially from the Black Death to the early 15th century). Thereafter, the importance of scarlets, and indeed other brightly coloured woollens, diminished in importance in northern Europe, with an increasingly pronounced shift to dark colours, especially black, which become the predominant colour for very fine woollens by and from the early 16th century. In Italy, however, grain-dyed scarlets continued to be important in the 15th century. In the years 1451–76, when Florentine woollens accounted for about half of total cloth sales in Rome, about 40% of those woollens were such scarlets. In the 16th century, Venice displaced Florence as Italy's leading producer of fine woollens, of which many were costly scarlets, but they were now producing woollens from fine Spanish *merino* wools.

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JOHN MUNRO

## Scissors

See tools.

## Sculpture

### Sculpture: ante-1100 England, evidence for dress

There is a small but significant amount of evidence for contemporary dress from pre-Conquest sculpture in England.

Such evidence, like that from manuscripts, must be treated with caution, partly because of the tendency of early medieval artists to copy from other, especially manuscript, models, rather than from life, partly because original painted detail and metal or other attachments or inserts (for both of which there is evidence) have been removed either deliberately or through wear or weathering. This said, there is evidence for innovation in the iconography of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, as in manuscript art, and where immediate models were not available it is possible that dress and other details were drawn from life; and even in cases where models were used, it is illogical to argue that the dress depicted must have been unknown to the artist/sculptor, and unrecognisable by the observer, unless the representation is so distorted or muddled that it is clear that there was no first-handed knowledge.

Most of the sculpture that has survived has done so because of its ecclesiastical context, and its subject matter, where figural (and it must be remembered that figural depictions are represented on a minority of surviving sculptures), is most often concerned with the representation of biblical scenes and figures. The majority of these are indeed based on pre-existing models, for example of the Crucifixion, Virgin and Child, the Nativity etc, and while there is an interesting story to be told of changes in fashion and theological emphasis in these—even sometimes of Anglo-Saxon innovations—they are only occasionally enlightening with regard to contemporary dress. Nevertheless, for depictions of ecclesiastical dress one would expect both expert designers and an expert audience. The figures of Christ on the 8th-century Ruthwell, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, and Bewcastle, Cumbria crosses are clearly wearing the *pallium*. This was originally a strip of white wool joined at the ends and laid around the shoulders, signifying the lost sheep carried on the shoulders of the shepherd—and therefore appropriate to representations of Christ as the Good Shepherd. From the 6th century it was worn by Popes as a sign of their pastoral role, and from the 7th all archbishops had to receive a *pallium* from Rome before they could officially hold office. It would therefore have meant a great deal to the monastic communities for which and within which these monuments were made. The *pallium* later changed in form, but in the crosses mentioned it is represented as strip around the neck, often shown with a twist below the waist,