

Black, It's Not Just for Mourning

By Trystan L. Bass

Costume College 2015

<http://trystancraft.com/costume/>

Why was black worn?

- To show mourning for the dead.
- To show piety, modesty, & reserve.
- To identify certain serious professions.
- To show wealth, status, & power.

These reasons coexisted,
& different reasons mattered more
for different classes of people.

When & where does black NOT historically mean mourning?

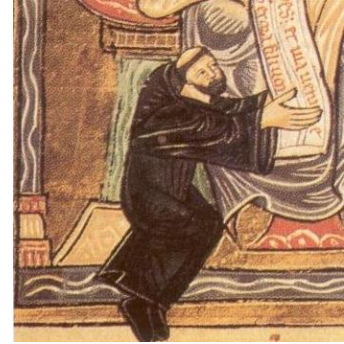
- Egypt (yellow)
 - Thailand (purple)
 - China & Japan (white)
- except since the 20th century among Westernized people in these countries

Early Dyed Black Cloth

- Cheap black dyes have existed since antiquity. But they produced muddy shades & were not valued.
- Thus, cloth dyed black was first used by marginalized people & for unpleasant tasks like mourning.

Rule of St. Benedict

- Plain, utilitarian clothing for monks.
- Black becomes standard in 9th c., symbolizes humility, penitence — bright color, even white, seen as vain, worldly.

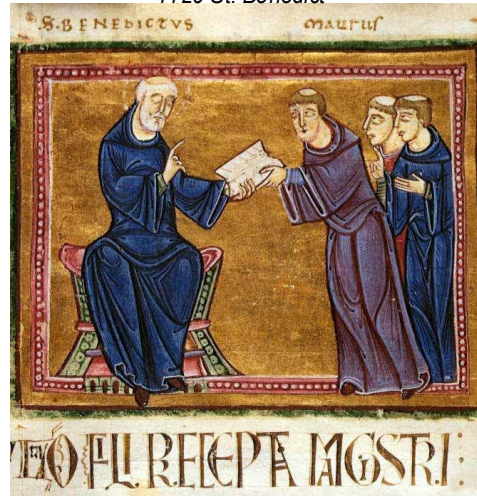


11th-c., Odo of Cluny

13th-c., Bernhard von Clairvaux



1129 St. Benedict



747-821, Benedict of Aniane





1292-1336, Richard of Wallingford



1340 Codex Manesse

Early Mourning

- Black symbolized death, hell, the devil, evil, darkness in Christianity.
- Social status dictated elaborateness of funerals & mourning.
- Different courts had their own mourning garb traditions.



1490, unknown lady by Lorenzo di Credi. Although the sitter is sometimes said to have been the widow of the artist's brother Carlo, there is no firm evidence for this.



1512, deathbed of Philippes de Commines



1560, Mary Queen of Scots in mourning for Francis II



1586, Queen Anna Jagiellon as a widow



1560, the Judde Memorial



The great
Eagle of
Embroidered Barmy of England borne by
Pembroke assisted by the St. Howard of Effingham



Robert Treswell Somerset &
John Raven Richmond Heralds
of Armes.



The Healm and Crest borne
by Raffe Brooke Yorke Herald
of Armes.



1603,
Procession
of heralds
at the funeral of
Queen Elizabeth I

The Targett borne by
James Thomas Chesky
Herald of Armes.



The Sword borne by
William Segar Norroy
King of Armes.



A Gentleman
Wshew with a
white Rodd

The Coate borne by
William Cambden
Clavenceux King
of Armes.

A Gentleman
Wshew with a
white rodd.





1595, Venetian lady in mourning



1600, widowed Elizabeth Howard, Lady Southwell



1613, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, wearing a black arm band for her brother, Henry, the Prince of Wales



Dame en grand deuil

*Cette belle qui vouloit suivre Dit apresent qu'il est fort doux
Son Cher quand jl cessa de viure Desperer vn nouuel epoux*



1666, Margaret of Austria in mourning

1675, lady in deep mourning

The “Long Robe” Professions

- Monastic orders & use of black in heraldry in 12th-13th c. gave black clothes higher status, moral authority
- 13th-14th c., men in public positions began wearing black: scholars (often monks), lawyers/jurists (also often clergy), clerks, magistrates, bankers, merchants



1485, Levinus Memminger, a Nuremberg judge



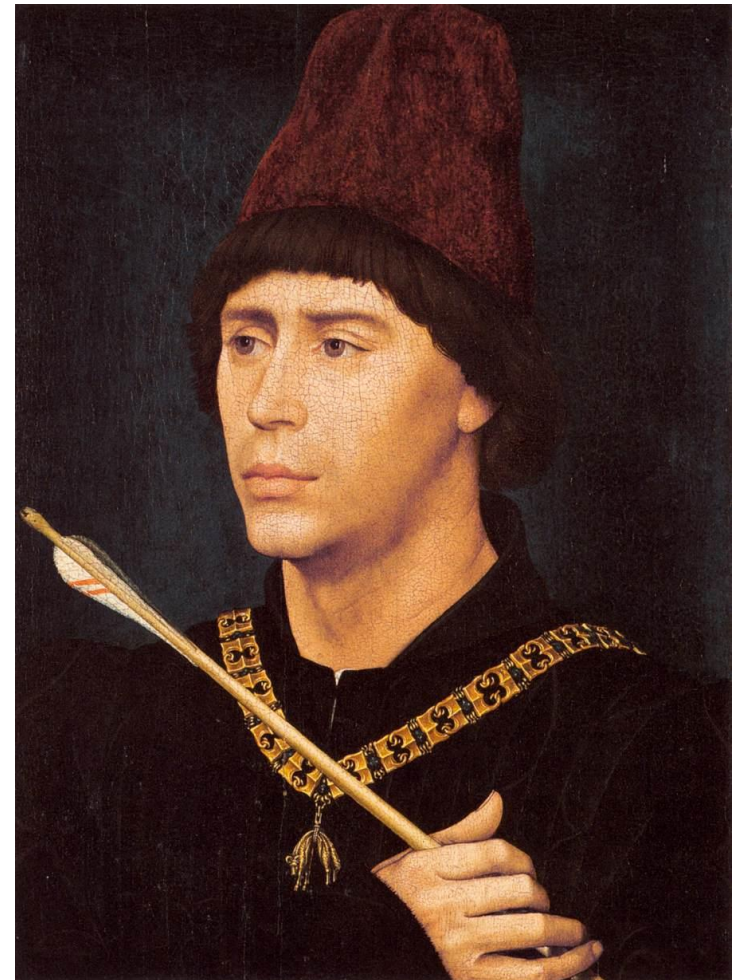
1502, Jacob van Driebergen, scholar & founder of Utrecht University

The Rise of True Black

- Did better dye technology make black trendy or did trend for black fashions push dyers to improve technology?
- Rise of wealthy middle class forced sumptuary laws; wealthy regulated color.
- By 14th c., dyes for black get darker, richer, more stable, less drab, more affordable, more common.



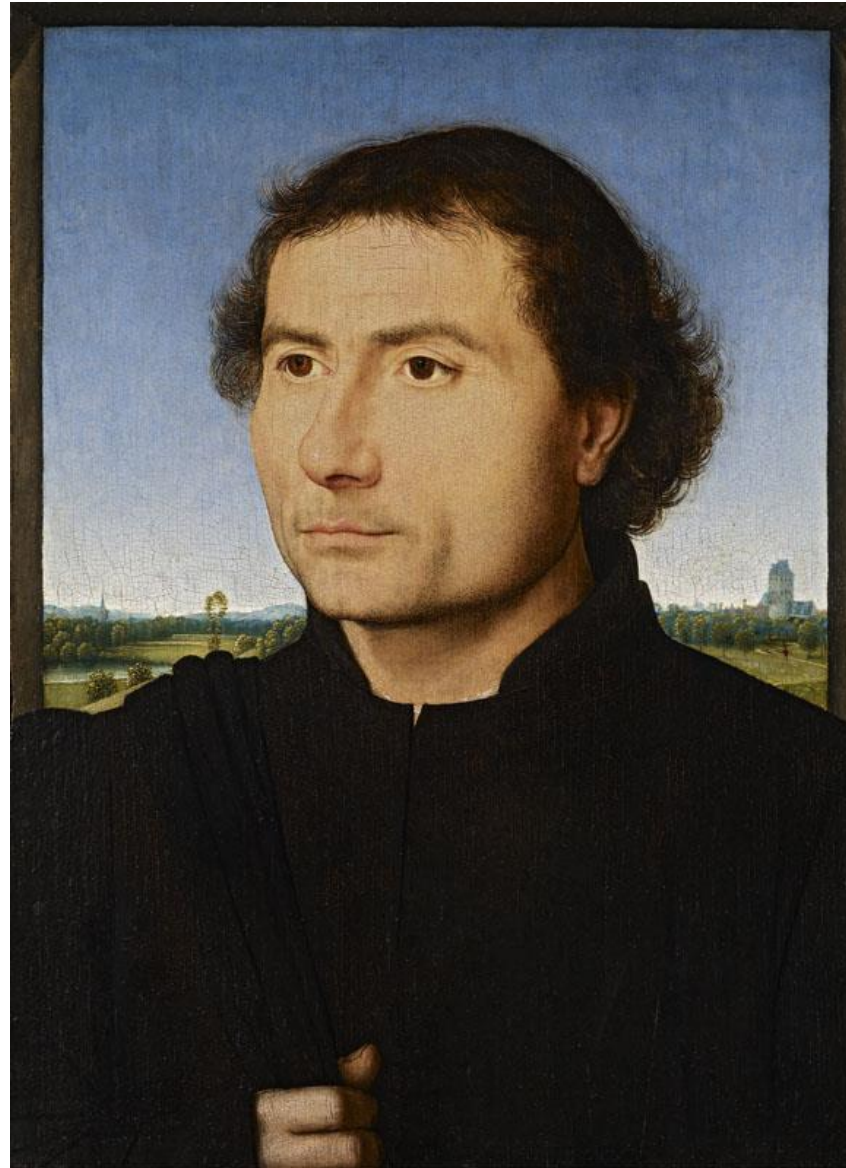
1540, Philip the Good, Third Duke of Burgundy



1461, Antony of Burgundy



1443, Nicolas Rolin, French duke's chancellor



1470, Hans Memling, Dutch gentleman



1463, Jan de Leeuw, Dutch goldsmith



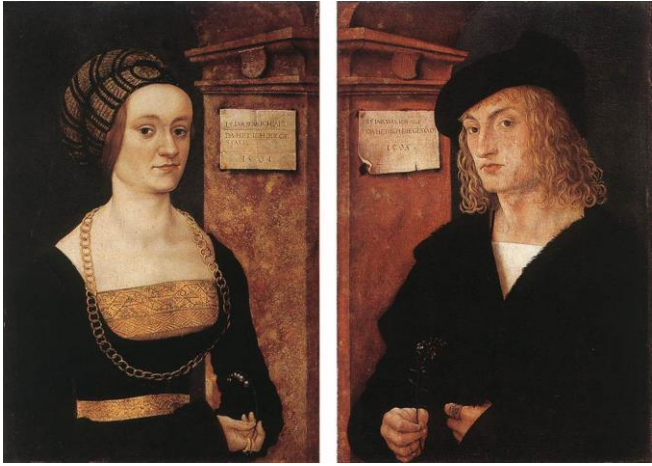
1460, Anna von Nassau, German lady



1472, Francesco del Cossa,
a young gentleman



1508, unknown young lady



1505, Barbara & Hans Schellenberger, wealthy German couple



1500, Tommaso Raimondi, a young gentleman



1507, a Venetian nobleman



1515, Mary Tudor & Charles Brandon



1550, Queen Mary Tudor



1541, Christoph Fugger of Germany's leading financier family

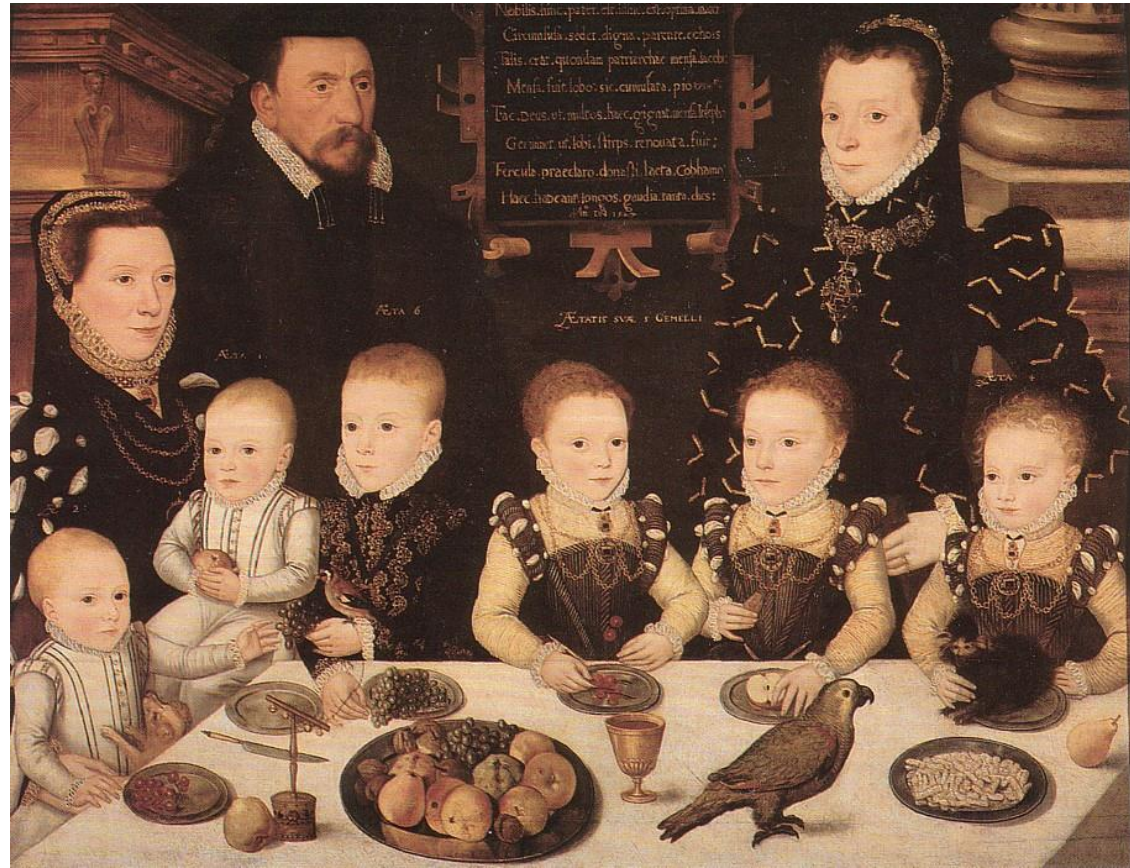


1540, fashionable young man by Bronzino



1563, Sir Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk

1567, William Brooke, 10th Lord of Cobham, and Family





1552, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria & his wife, Anna of Austria



1592, Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury



1570, Ship owner Gillis Hooftman & his wife, Margaretha van Nispen



1575, Queen Elizabeth I of England



1590, Philip II of Spain



1619, Lady Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent



1610, Isabella Brant

Mourning or Fashion?



Posthumous portrait (painted c. 1628) of Anne of Denmark, possibly in mourning for Prince Henry, who died in 1612



1610, Mary Radclyffe, wife of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston, a prominent courtier to James I



1619, Lady Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, favorite attendant of Queen Anne (who died in 1619)

Sober, Modest Black, Part 2



1526, *Martin Luther*

- The Protestant Reformation strips vestments from priests.
- Bright colors & decorations were a 'distraction' from God.
- Black becomes the color for Puritan dress.



1547, the Triptych of the Micault family by Jan Cornelis Vermeyen



16th-c. English middle-class women



1570s, Joene Goldstone



1571, Dorothea Frey



1575, Mary Tresham, Lady Vaux



1580, Queen Elizabeth I, 'Sieve Portrait'



1596, Joan Allyn



1600, portrait of a French woman



1610, Netherlandish portrait of a young lady



1619, Anna Boudaen Courten

The Pale 18th Century

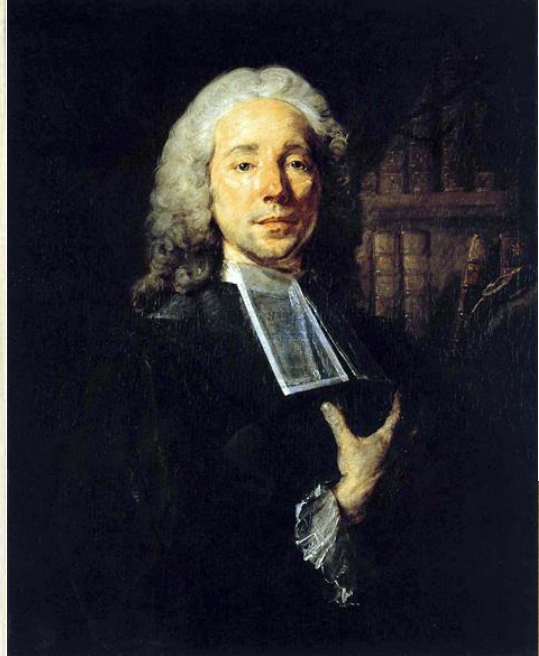
- Black mainly worn by men in 'sober' professions, like law & religion.
- Black often worn by older women (whether or not they're widows).
- Black sometimes worn by younger women for fancy dress portraits.
- Black generally worn for mourning.



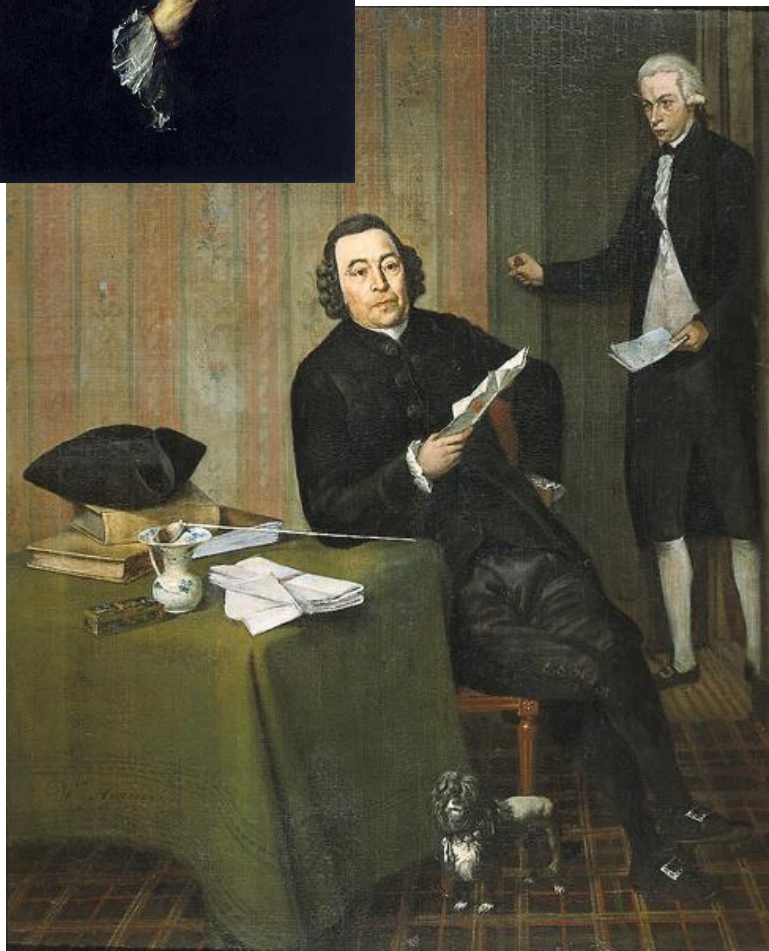
1732, headmen of the Surgeons Guild



1750, Lawyer Johann Adam Nissel



1767, Lawyer Daniel Jousse



1778, Notary Wernerus Kohne



1760, Maria Vorontsova



1780, Mary Palmer



1789, Hannah, 1st Viscountess Cremorne



1769, Penelope Margaret Stafford



1785, Mary Palmer



1788, Charlotte, Lady Milnes



1717, Dowager Electress Palatine Anna Maria Luisa de Medici in mourning



1772, Maria Theresa of Austria in mourning



1780, widowed Sophie Caroline Marie von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel



Post 1795, Marie Thérèse of France



1794, *Gallery of Fashion*, afternoon dress, half mourning



1798, *Gallery of Fashion*, afternoon dress, half mourning

The 19th Century - Elaborate Mourning

- Peak mourning 1840s-1880s.
- Strictest observance by urban middle-to upper-classes in Britain & America.
- Etiquette was most restrictive for women.
- Modeled on fashions of the day, but in dull/non-shiny fabrics like crepe, bombazine, & parmatta; high necklines, long sleeves; "widow's cap" &/or veils.

1817 - Princess Charlotte's Death

- Beloved princess & only child of George IV died in childbirth - elaborate funeral inspired the populace to wear black.

1818, *La Belle Assemblée*



1819, *Ackermann's Repository*,
halfmourning evening dress



More National Mourning

- U.S. Civil War, 1861-1865.
- Death of Albert, Prince Regent of Great Britain, 1861, Queen Victoria in mourning.



1862, Queen Victoria's five daughters (Alice, Helena, Beatrice, Victoria, & Louise)



1852, Amelia Hackney's mourning dress



1860s, woman in full mourning



1870, mourning dress in crepe



1889, Empress Elisabeth of Austria, in mourning for her son Rudolf

1894, Queen Victoria



19th Century - Fashionable Black Still Reigns

- Cheap, durable synthetic dyes
- Men's business suits, uniforms, formalwear
- Women's best dress, work wear, service
- Across classes, from Europe to U.S.

1810s, anonymous woman



1825 velvet evening gown

1833, Mme. Jules Antoine Droz





1851, Madame Moitessier



1854, German lady



1863, *Inés Francisca de Silva-Bazán y Téllez Girón*



1869, *The Lady With the Glove* by Carolus Duran



1876, afternoon dress



1877, dinner dress



1878, afternoon dress



1875, *Woman Reading in a Forest* by Gyula Benczur



1883, *Madame X* by John Singer Sargent



1880s, Maria Hendrika, Queen of Belgium



1885, evening gown

20th Century & Beyond

- Fashion & personal taste dictates clothing as much as tradition or etiquette.



1916, House of Worth



1926, Lanvin Robe de Style



1927, Chanel suit

Bibliography

- *Black: The History of a Color* by Michel Pastoureau
- *Gothic: Dark Glamour* by Valerie Steele & Jennifer Park
- *Black in Fashion: Mourning to Night* by the National Gallery of Victoria

