Late Renaissance Clothing 1570-1610 (a brief sampling)
By David Poulin

General Info
This is not an in-depth study of Spanish clothing. It is meant to be a quick and easy guide for would-be reenactors and historical interpreters. To begin with, Tony found this site that shows period fashions. Most printed and online sources do not specifically show Spanish fashions but we know that the Spanish influenced all of Europe at the time (except the English, who were considered to be ‘fashion dogs’). But the English still had a lot more Spanish influence than they like to admit. Protestant fashions at this time were very much like the Spanish in that they were meant to be plain, modest, and cover the body instead of showing it off. This was in part a reaction to both the Catholic Inquisition in some areas as well as Protestantism in others.

Plate #42 - Late Sixteenth Century - Italy
The man in the center is wearing a suit; his breeches, doublet, and cape are all made of the same cloth.

1 http://www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/COSTUME7_INDEX.HTML#Plate42
A search online for De Gheyn only produced found one picture, of a Spanish soldier in 1597 by De Gheyn.

Spanish Soldier blowing a match.²

² [http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=398](http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=398) This picture is actually a drawing on page 89 from De Gheyn’s book “The Exercise of Armes” which was published in 1607; it is available at Amazon.com for a very reasonable price.
Generally speaking, in Europe pikemen wore 3/4 armor, calivermen wore at least half-armor, and musketmen did not wear any armor at all. However, in the New World, the native Americans threw so many stones and fired so many arrows that every Spanish soldier who could get one at least wore a helmet. The stones could knock you out or even blind you. Also because of arrows, the Spanish wore padded and leather armor even when they couldn't get chain mail. They found this type of armor to be more comfortable and just as effective. Swordsmen also wore 3/4 armor. These three types of soldiers will be our main focus: Swordsmen, pikemen, and harquebusiers. By this time, crossbows were almost gone but were still listed in collections and armories. Too bad, because they were just as powerful and were more accurate than muskets. This was recognized by the general population and for centuries, crossbows became the mainstay for hunting. Oñate's men would have been considered as dragoons – heavy cavalrymen with armor and firearms - calivers or dragons (long pistols). Most professional soldiers in Oñate’s group had chain mail, worn over or under leather jerkins. Some of the soldiers had only the leather and padded armor as well. Since our focus is on a volunteer company we will not be as heavily equipped as Oñate’s men were. Here is a picture of some English Parliamentarian pikemen reenactors. This is a good looking company of perhaps a few decades after our time period.

A Parliamentarian Company

3 http://www.saint-george.info/images/costume/natgeo_marching.jpg
Here are some drawings of military clothing by Cesare Vecellio who published his work in 1588 and 1590. These must represent the styles of the 1580s.

Soldiers L-R: non-combat dress, caliverman, volunteer on galley.

These drawings depict Italian soldiers, but since the Spaniards set the styles of the period we can assume that there is some Spanish influence here. During this time period Soldiers began to dress more like the comfortable middle class. The breeches were the most marked change—breeches with nether hose (lower hose or stockings) instead of trunk hose. The codpiece had completely disappeared by this time and the fly consisted of folds in the material, sometimes tied with a bow. Vecellio shows much simpler styles than the “Costumes” website above. Sometime in the 1590s the button fly was developed, as shown by De Gheyn. Hats were becoming popular. There were also some interesting regional differences in the civilian dress of Spain.

Civilians of (R-L): Granada, Galicia, and Navarra

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Detail of Roberto Valdez’ commemorative poster of the Entrada event.
Nobility
This is what Spanish nobility were wearing:

Spanish nobility circa 1590

A nobleman’s under garments, 16th century

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Some sources say that the Spanish were only allowed to wear black, but other sources clarify that such a practice was only for formal occasions such as at court, or at church. Otherwise the Spanish nobility were extremely colorful. In order to control the garishness of some costumes, at one point a law was made that all of a person’s clothes had to be made of the same material. These were called ‘suits’ and were the beginning of the modern practice of making suits for formal occasions. There also were laws in effect that commoners could not dress in the manner of the nobility. No doubt, customs were much more relaxed on the frontier.

One Captain of Oñate’s Company, Alonso de Quesada, was the only person who listed his clothing in the inventory. He was very well-dressed:

4 suits
   1 of purple velvet with a cloak of green Castilian cloth
   1 of coarse plain grey Castilian cloth
   1 of fine monk’s cloth lined with yellow damask, trimmed with braids of silver
   1 of plain greenish cloth
4 hats – 2 expensive and 2 plain
4 doublets – 2 of silk and 2 of linen
2 buff doublets
4 pairs silk stockings – various colors
4 pairs of woolen stockings
10 linen shirts
4 pair of linen breeches
3 towels
3 pairs of sleeves
3 pairs of garters
2 under waistcoats for coats of mail
100 cakes of soap
10 pair of Cordovan leather shoes
3 pairs of cordovan buckskins boots and some white boots
2 pairs of calfskin boots
6 pairs of calfskin shoes

Patterns
The clothing pattern book of Juan de Alcega (the first Pattern book printed) of Spanish Patterns of 1589 is available at the Las Golondrinas store. You or someone that likes you a lot probably has to have some knowledge and experience of how clothes go together in order to use it – in other words – not for beginners. Patterns are shown but not sized. This book is probably too sophisticated for our soldier impressions anyway.

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7 George P. Hammond, Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico 1598-1628, The University of New Mexico Press, 1953, 252-253.
For beginners, McCall’s has a pattern that covers doublets, soft caps, and breeches, all in the same package – M4864. They have a better pattern for doublets, M4695. There are also other patterns by Simplicity.

McCall’s Patterns

**Breeches**

Despite all the Pope’s best efforts the codpiece didn’t completely go out of style until around 1575 and doublets with longer skirts began to cover that area instead of showing it off. Early breeches did not have button flies but relied on folds of material instead. The doublet with a low skirt in front helped that problem. Sometimes the fly was tied with a big colored bow. When button-fly breeches became more prominent the skirt of the doublet was shortened and the waist became higher as in previous times. Both forms of breeches were worn in this period.

Vecellio shows breeches tapering to the knee in the 1580s. They are not the overstuffed breeches that De Gheyn shows circa 1600 and later. It’s difficult to believe that stuffed breeches were very common here in the New World - it’s too hot. However, Mike Bilbo says: “Stuffed breeches are probably a form of slops. Period clothing at that time that was stuffed was a form of armor.” Commoners were not wearing very much trunk hose and hose. Andrew Garcia adds: “The Spanish did have access to cheap blue and red dye, and those combinations. The Spanish were influenced by the ‘Waloonian’ fashion of that period, probably from their service there in the clashes against the Dutch. This look called for grey slouch type hat, red stockings (for the military), and was fairly loose-fitting.”

There are cloth drawstring breeches available at this site. These breeches look very good because they balloon out at the knee.


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8 Email conversations with Mike Bilbo and Andrew Garcia.
Here is another site that sells 1600s breeches. They are more detailed than the drawstring type. The breeches look very much like the 1604 sketch and the De Gheyn drawing of the Spanish soldier above except they are not overstuffed. They also have a selection of period shirts.

http://sykesutler.home.att.net/index.htm

These breeches (and the 'French chemise shirt') can be used for the Soldado de Cuera time period (1700s). They are very comfortable. The shirt is good for earlier time periods also (I think). Also, shirts from Townsend would work too.

http://cobb creek.com/mens_clothing.htm

**Caps and Hats**

Many forms of soft caps were worn throughout the 1500s and up through the 1620s. The most common were the "Flat Cap", "Period Beret" (also worn by English royal guards), "Muffin Hat", "Floppy Hat", and "Slouch Cap". Soft caps were worn by workmen and soldiers as a form of barracks cap. The Osprey book “Conquistador” shows Spanish soldiers on the march wearing soft caps. They can be purchased at this site: http://sykesutler.home.att.net/index.htm

Soft caps were worn up into the 1620s and some forms are still worn today. In the 1590s brimmed hats were becoming fashionable. The felting process for hats, was picked up by the English during this time period, so they were just coming into style. At first they mostly had narrow brims but by 1600 it seems that wide-brimmed felt hats were becoming more popular, though they were probably expensive. The type “b” shown above appears to have been popular among Spanish noblemen.

Not much is known about the origin of felt hats. Felting is a very ancient process, probably developed by ancient Asian nomadic tribes. Apparently the Romans also had a type of felt hat. It is known that felt hats became popular for a time in Nuremburg, Germany, in the 1400s.

Some of Vecellio’s drawings show Italian peasants and a Galician nobleman wearing wide brimmed straw hats. Straw hats must have been the domain of common people. De Gheyn shows mostly felt hats on the soldiers.

**Doublets**

As stated before, doublets were the favored type of jacket although there were other styles that were in use. I haven't found good documentation on the other styles. Doublets can be made from patterns found at Hancock’s and Joannes (Simplicity and McCalls). The Pendragon site also sells doublets but the cost is enormous and they seem to be more suited for nobility. Some doublets were also made for armor. They were usually made from leather and were padded and sewn in a vertical, horizontal, or cross-cross pattern. A plain leather doublet is available at this
site. It is not padded but looks really good. You can add the padding yourself if you are ambitious (better buy the large size if you do). http://www.swordsofhonor.com/roughoutvest.html

Some drawings of doublets.⁹

Early 17ᵗʰ century doublet with sleeves

Buff leather jerkin circa 1580

This last example is remarkably like the rough-out vest in the web link above.

**Cold Weather Clothing**

Capes were the main form of winter wear. The old style was about hip length. Longer styles were beginning to be used in this period. Some sleeved jerkins (doublets) were meant to fit over a close-fitting doublet to provide more warmth.

**Shirts**

During this time period the stand-up collars were still in use but were giving way to the standard fall-down collar after the turn of the century. Fall-down collars became wide and lacy in this period but commoners would not wear them much. Standup collars never completely went out of style. Lace on the neckline and wrists is ok if you are really a dandy. Cobb Creek sells a “French chemise shirt” with puffy sleeves and standup collar that looks great for $75. Sykes Sutler also has a large selection of period style shirts.

**Stockings**

With breeches you should have long wool or cotton stockings although having no stockings is perfectly authentic too, especially for people who work for a living. Long cotton stockings and leather garters can be obtained at this site. http://jas-townsend.com/index.php?cPath=5

**Shoes**

Brogans will be ok for us. The shoe of the period is shown in the de Gheyn drawings as similar to brogans but cut down below the ankle. Apparently, there was a type of brogan worn by the English during the English Civil War, but De Gheyn shows small shoes, and sometime boot-tops

worn over the shoes. Here in New Mexico, local native moccasins are OK also. Andrew adds, "Heels were now more acceptable and used by more than the upper class. You can find women’s low-heeled shoes that look appropriate in the Goodwill stores. Round-toed shoes are more appropriate than square ones for this period." These examples shown here are a bit old-fashioned for what we are doing but they are perfectly ok to wear.

![Men’s shoes circa 1537](image1)

![Men’s shoes circa 1558](image2)

![Soldier shoes](image3)

**Pouches**

Before you get all your gear on and try to find a place for your car keys and wallet, you might consider purchasing a leather pouch. You can also use a cotton drawstring bag tied to your belt – the kind we have in our CW haversacks. By the way, I don’t know if haversacks should be used. Most of their gear was probably stored in wagons or carried in what was called a snapsack while on the march. Snapsacks are narrow drawstring dufflebags with a shoulder strap attached. They could have drawstrings on both ends.

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10 Email conversations with Andrew Garcia.
13 [http://www.museumreplicas.com/webstore/eCat/accessories/historical/pouches_and_sporrans.a spx](http://www.museumreplicas.com/webstore/eCat/accessories/historical/pouches_and_sporrans.a spx)
Some Pictures of actual Spanish period clothing:¹⁴

14 http://www.Kostym.cz: these photos could not be found when I went back to find them. The website was being rebuilt so they may pop up again. The photos are the property of Martina a Martin Hribovi, but I included them here because actual photos of Spanish period clothing are so rare.
Spanish suit (doublet and trunk hose) c. 1575

Spanish jerkin c. 1580
More Drawings of period soldiers:

Traveling musicians in 1570. The two men on the left could be soldiers.
First third of the 17th century, circa 1600-1633.
German soldiers - first third of the 17th century. Circa 1600 it became customary for officers, NCOs and musicians to wear sashes over the shoulder.

New Recruits
Each of us should strive to obtain basic clothing:
A hat or cap
Doublet
Shirt
Breeches
Stockings
Shoes
Pouch
Sword and belt or baldric
The following is a depiction of Oñate’s company the Company of Military Historians. The two men in front on the left and center are infantry.\textsuperscript{15}

And here we have a modern artist who has based his or her rendition of early New Mexicans on De Gheyn’s drawings (with a Spanish twist).  

With some variation in clothing and the addition of some pikemen and swordsmen, these are good drawings for New World Spanish infantry of this period.

Women
There are many examples of Spanish Noble women wearing their best. These can be found on the internet or in books, but it is difficult to find examples of peasant women. The following are the only examples I could find. Peasant women wear anything made of plain wool, cotton (in the new world) or linen (in the old world). Cloth can have patterns woven or embroidered into the cloth (like brocades) but no prints. Peasant women also wore small bonnets, but Spanish women tended to prefer shawls over their heads. This practice stemmed from the fact that at one point, Spanish common women were not allowed to wear hats. In New Mexico this practice continued on into the late 1800s. Some of the women who came with Oñate were not commoners but most were. Shoes can be slippers or moccasins or leather shoes, similar to the pictures below. Some women wore a form of doublet. Here are a couple of French examples:\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Peasant women}

And a couple more Italian examples from Vecellio.¹⁸ These women are wearing straw hats.

Whatever is perfect authenticity in clothing we may never know, but the important thing is to get out there and start having some commemorative fun.

Sources:

**Clothing Books**


**Historical Books**
George P. Hammond, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico 1598-1628*, The University of New Mexico Press, 1953.


Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Publishing Division of the University, 1991.

**Historical Online Costume Sources**
THE HISTORY OF COSTUME – INDEX, By Braun & Schneider - c.1861-1880
http://www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/COSTUME7_INDEX.HTM#Plate42

The Getty: http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=398

Guild of the Fraternity of Saint George: http://www.saint-george.info/images/costume/natgeo_marching.jpg

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