

Gowns Worn by MAs in Early-Seventeenth-Century England and the Curious Case of Thomas Thornton's Sleeves

By Alex Kerr

Academic dress in medieval English universities was quite strictly regulated and evolution was gradual. In contrast, the period between the Reformation and the Restoration saw far-reaching changes, but the transition from the old to the new was no simple matter: for each degree several styles of gown, hood and cap may have coexisted. Two university chancellors imposed detailed rules, Lord Burghley at Cambridge in 1585¹ and Archbishop William Laud at Oxford in 1636.² Each provided an elaborate scheme of punishments for those who transgressed, but occasional admonitions later show that their rules were not always rigorously observed. However, by the time Vice-Chancellor John Fell issued revised statutes and his *Orders to Tailors* in 1666, the pattern of each item of academic dress for graduates and undergraduates, at Oxford at any rate, was firmly established, with little room for deviation.³

This article examines one intriguing example of variation in academic dress dating from exactly four hundred years ago and asks: just what did Masters of Arts wear in the early seventeenth century?⁴ It is part of a wider investigation, still work in progress, into change and diversity in academic dress in the century before George Edwards and David Loggan published their superb costume engravings.⁵ No such definitive pictorial record is known to exist for earlier periods and we have to rely very much on monumental effigies for our evidence.⁶ There are some painted portraits, but details are difficult to make out if the

1 Charles Henry Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Warwick, 1842–53), Vol. II (1843), pp. 410–15.

2 *Statutes of the University of Oxford Codified in the Year 1636 under the Authority of Archbishop Laud, Chancellor of the University*, ed. by John Griffiths (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), pp. 77–78 and 144–45; English translation by G. R. M. Ward, *Oxford University Statutes*, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1845), Vol. I, pp. 70–71 and 152–54.

3 See L. H. Dudley Buxton and Strickland Gibson, *Oxford University Ceremonies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), pp. 30–32.

4 I am grateful to Dr Nicholas Groves for suggestions on several points and to Prof. Bruce Christianson for reading earlier drafts and for his many helpful comments.

5 Edwards, *Omnium ordinum habituumque academicorum exemplaria* (Oxford, 1674); Loggan, *Oxonia illustrata* (Oxford, 1675), Pl. 10, and *Cantabrigia illustrata* (Cambridge, 1690), Pl. 7.

6 For brasses the most accessible lists for our purpose are in Herbert Druitt, *A Manual of Costume as Illustrated by Monumental Brasses* (London: Moring, 1906), Chapters 1 and 2, but the work contains many inaccuracies. Details of any dress must be verified from the monument itself. Images of many of the brasses and sculptural monuments in question can be found on the Internet: search on Google Images and Flickr by names of persons and places.

sitter is dressed in a black gown over dark clothes: especially if the background is also dark. In a few cases, we can consult engravings after these portraits that render the gowns more clearly. Of course, resident members of the universities usually held a doctorate by the time they were eminent enough to warrant painting in oils.

The monumental brass of Thomas Thornton

Thomas Thornton was born in Middlesex in 1577. He attended Westminster School before going up to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1595. He graduated BA in 1599, proceeded MA in 1602 and was elected a Student (i.e. fellow) of the college. He died in 1613 at the age of thirty-six, having held his Studentship for eleven years. He was buried in the Cathedral (which serves as the college chapel), where his brother George erected a monumental brass in his memory the following year. Most of these facts are included in the Latin inscription on a separate plate below Thornton's effigy.⁷

During restoration work in the 1980s, an unfinished engraving was discovered on the back of the effigial plate and a replica of the hidden side was made before the brass was re-installed. In her booklet on the brasses in Christ Church Cathedral, Jean Arthur states that 'the engraver misjudged his first attempt, turned the plate over and engraved the picture you now see'.⁸ Unless the plate was trimmed back later, it looks as though he positioned the first image too low, so that the base of the prayer-desk and the lower corner of the kneeler cushion ran off the bottom (Fig. 1). But there is more to it than that. While the basic design in the second image is very similar, the pattern of the sleeves of the gown has been changed.⁹ In the abandoned version, they are hanging, so-called bag sleeves with a horizontal slit at the elbow and a tube of fabric below reaching to mid-thigh level, probably open at the foot (Fig. 1a). The sleeves of Thornton's doublet, a close-fitting padded jacket, with lace frills of his shirt cuffs at the wrist, emerge from the slit. In the revised and finished version the gown has open sleeves about nine inches wide at the wrist, with a cuff about two inches deep (Fig. 2). The gown in the second engraving is not the same one as in the first simply worn in a different way: the sleeve opens into a modest funnel shape unlike the hanging sleeve, which becomes slightly narrower towards the foot, and the slit at the elbow in the first is absent in the second. So why the change?

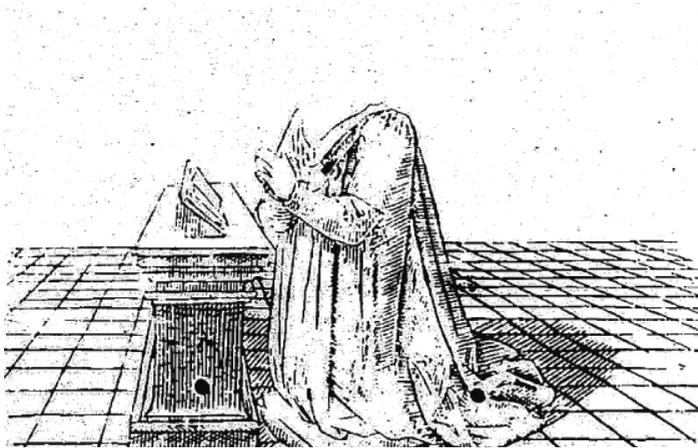
Dress or undress

One possibility is that part-way through the job the engraver was told that the original sleeves were right for an undress MA gown, but full dress would be preferable and that required open sleeves. This assumes that there was already an undress MA gown with bag sleeves at Oxford by 1613, an assumption that we shall question below. However, as W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley observes, an open-sleeved gown certainly did continue as a more

⁷ Joseph Foster probably drew on this inscription for Thornton's entry in his *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500-1714*, 4 vols (Oxford: Parker, 1891-92), Vol. iv, p. 1481. I have consulted Foster to verify the degrees of the Oxford graduates referred to below and John Venn and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 10 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 1922-54), those of the Cambridge graduates.

⁸ *Memorial Brasses and Engraved Brass Plates in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford* (Oxford: Friends of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, 1992), p. 8. I am indebted to Jean Arthur for permission to reproduce illustrations from this publication and to Jim Godfrey, Education and Visitors' Officer at the Cathedral, for letting me inspect the replica.

⁹ A note on terms used for styles of gown sleeve is provided at the end of this article.



PHOTO, RIGHT, INCLUDED BY PERMISSION OF THE DEAN AND CHAPTER OF CHRIST CHURCH

LEFT: FIG. 1 Thornton's brass: abandoned engraving, showing hanging sleeves.
 RIGHT: FIG. 1a Thornton's brass: replica made of the abandoned engraving.



FIG. 2 Second engraving, showing open sleeves.

dignified and formal alternative for Oxford MAs as late as the 1630s.¹⁰ Later in the century this gown came to be confined for the most part to official dress for the proctors, although for state occasions such as the royal visits in 1663 and 1687 MAs in the procession wore the proctor's style of gown as full dress.¹¹ For comparison, see Edwards's MA in a bag-sleeved gown and proctor in an open-sleeved gown from 1674 (Figs 3

and 4); they are similar in most respects to those still worn at Oxford.¹² Incidentally, hoods were commonly worn in Oxford with doctors' full-dress robes in Thornton's time,¹³ and

¹⁰ *A History of Academical Dress in Europe until the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 80.

¹¹ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary of Oxford, 1632-1695, Described by Himself*, ed. by Andrew Clark, Oxford Historical Society, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891-1900), Vol. I, pp. 494-95, and Vol. III (1894), pp. 226-27. Clark (Vol. III, p. 227) notes that this dress was used 'by the senior of two fellows of New College who went down to Winchester to conduct the examination for scholarships: this continued till 1873'.

¹² Loggan's Oxford proctor of 1675 is illustrated on p. 66 of this volume, in Bruce Christianson's article, 'Purple Passion?'—Ed.

¹³ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 67. Pictorial evidence in Oxford includes William Paddy, DM, at St

the proctors still wear one with their gown of office when in full dress today. It seems likely that MAs also would have worn one with their full-dress gown. The engraver of Thornton's brass had outlined the V-shaped neck portion for a hood in the first image and he repeated this and added the cowl and liripipe hanging over the back of the gown in the second. There is no cape; this is a simple-shape hood for an MA.

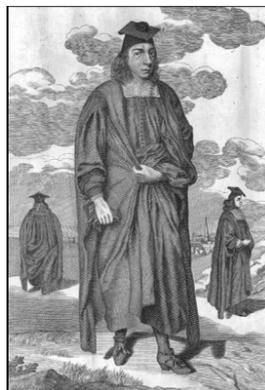
Gowns for MAs before Thornton

Open and coat-style sleeves

There is ample evidence that the sleeves of the *supertunica*, the loose, closed, ankle-length overtunic, common to all graduates and undergraduates in medieval English universities, remained narrow until the end of the fifteenth century. Then the sleeves began to open out as the tunic turned into a gown.¹⁴ These funnel-shaped open sleeves continued into the early seventeenth century. Later they were kept by doctors in full dress and proctors at Oxford, now more bell shaped, and went on to become even fuller and more pendulous for BAs generally and for doctors in full dress at Cambridge.

Effigies on brasses in England for MAs up to 1580 all show open-sleeved gowns. I know of seven that are post-Reformation (1540s or later). They have sleeves something like those in Thornton's second effigy and in every case a hood is worn with this dress. The list comprises: John Sickling (d. 1507, monument *c.* 1540) at Christ's College, Cambridge, with a *cappa nigra* over his gown (Fig. 5);¹⁵ Thomas Edgcomb (d. 1545), an Oxford man, at Eton College; Robert Harte (d. 1571/2), Robert Shingleton (d. 1577), John Glover (d. 1578) and Richard Hutchenson (d. 1579) at St John's College, Oxford; William Smith (d. 1580) in St Mary Magdalen Church, Oxford.

Pictorial evidence for the continued use of the open-sleeved gown by MAs after the 1580s is found in two interesting sources. The first, and the more significant, is John Cob-bould's painting of university processions and various meetings, which dates from about 1590 and hangs in the Old Schools at Cambridge. At the foot there is a line of regent MAs in square caps, gowns with bell-shaped sleeves and hoods lined white. As this picture was donated to the University by the long-serving registry Matthew Stokes and is thought to have been copied from one by Stokes himself, it was doubtless intended to be a faith-



LEFT: FIG. 3 Oxford MA (Edwards, 1674).
RIGHT: FIG. 4 Oxford Proctor (Edwards, 1674).

John's College, in a portrait painted *c.* 1603; and on monuments: Laurence Humphrey (d. 1589/90), DD, at Magdalen College; John Rainolds (d. 1607), DD, and John Spencer (d. 1614), DD, at Corpus Christi College.

¹⁴ See Alex Kerr, 'Layer upon Layer: The Evolution of Cassock, Gown, Habit and Hood as Academic Dress', *TBS*, 5 (2005), pp. 42–58 (pp. 47–48).

¹⁵ The MA's *cappa nigra* was a sleeveless black habit or cloak, which (unlike the doctoral versions of the *cappa*) seems to have fallen into disuse during the sixteenth century. It reaches to the shins, is closed down the front and has openings at the sides through which the sleeves of the gown are pulled (cp. Stephen Lence, below).

ful record of contemporary Cambridge practice, including dress.¹⁶ The second is the map of Cambridgeshire dated 1610 in John Speed's famous atlas.¹⁷ It includes drawings made in about 1605 depicting four figures in academic dress. One is a Cambridge proctor and another may well be a Cambridge MA, who each wear a bell-sleeved gown with a fur-lined hood and square cap.¹⁸

Two brasses survive that depict MAs in gowns with coat-style sleeves and a simple cuff at the wrist, unless (but it seems less likely) they are in fact sleeveless, the sleeves we see belonging to the wearer's doublet rather than the gown. In both cases the gown is worn with a hood. These monuments commemorate Thomas Morrey (d. 1584) at Christ Church¹⁹ and Griffin Owen (d. 1607/8) in St Aldate's Church, Oxford (Fig. 6).²⁰ Are these the gown with 'sleeves strait at the hands' prescribed

as the alternative to 'wide sleeves' (presumably bell or pudding sleeves) for clergymen in Canon 74 of the Church of England of 1603/4?²¹ This style of sleeve and variants of it are also found at the time in images of doctors.²² Various patterns that I think may be related



LEFT: FIG. 5 John Sickling (d. 1507, monument 1540), MA Cantab, in an open-sleeved gown under a *cappa nigra*.

RIGHT: FIG. 6 Griffin Owen (d. 1607/8), MA Oxon, in a coat-sleeved (or possibly sleeveless) gown.

16 See E. C. Clark, 'College Caps and Doctors' Hats', *Archaeological Journal*, 61 (1904), pp. 33–73 (pp. 60–61). The painting was retouched in the seventeenth century, no doubt to update the hairstyles, but the robes seem to have been left intact. I am indebted to Joanne Black, Facilities Manager at the Old Schools, for a high-resolution photograph of the painting.

17 *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (London: John Sudbury & George Humble, 1611/12).

18 Alex Kerr, 'Academic Dress on John Speed's Maps', talk given at the Burgon Society London Spring Conference, April 2013 (as yet unpublished).

19 Druitt (pp. 115–16) wrongly states that Morrey and Thornton (on his finished brass) have 'false hanging sleeves'; they are in coat-style and open sleeves respectively. Incidentally, he also records Thomas Reve (d. 1595), DD Cantab, on his brass at Monewden, Suffolk, as wearing a 'close-sleeved gown'; in fact, Reve has open sleeves like Thornton's finished monument.

20 Edward T. Beaumont believes Owen is wearing a sleeveless gown (*Academical Habit Illustrated by Ancient Memorial Brassess* (Oxford: privately printed, 1928), p. 73 and caption to plate facing p. 74).

21 John Henry Blunt, *The Book of Church Law*, rev. by Walter G. F. Phillimore (London: Rivingtons, 1873), pp. 397–98.

22 Good examples are John Garbrand (d. 1589), DD Oxon, at North Crawley, Bucks., John Case (d. 1599/1600), DM, in convocation dress on his monument in St John's College, Oxford, and Philip Bisse, DD, also in convocation dress, whose portrait of 1612 hangs in Wadham College. Bisse has loose or padded coat-style sleeves ('trunk' sleeves) pulled in at the wrist to a velvet cuff, which matches the facings of the black gown visible below his scarlet habit. Hargreaves-Mawdsley (p. 67) is incorrect in



FIG. 7 Mourning gown (Loggan, 1675).

coexisted in Europe at this period. Gowns with sleeves puffed or baggy on the upper arm but tight over the elbow and forearm were worn by scholars in Italy and in Spain (there called *ropa de letrado*).²³ I wonder whether the mourning gown (Fig. 7), which caused such controversy in the seventeenth-century English universities, belongs to the same family, like the DD's alternative undress gown still an option at Cambridge today.²⁴ More research is needed to establish whether these have a common origin.

The adoption of hanging sleeves

It is often said that graduates other than BAs borrowed gowns with hanging sleeves from the non-academic robes of dignity or everyday gowns worn by gentlemen and the professional classes in the sixteenth century.²⁵ Hargreaves-Mawdsley (p. 112) thinks that an order at Cambridge in 1560 stipulates for all graduates a pudding-sleeved gown or 'the "lay" type either with falling [flap] collar and false [panel] sleeves, or with a yoke and short glove [bag] sleeves'. The order in question reads: '... gownes not to be made of any other fashion but that commonly called the Priest's gowne, or else of the fashion of the playne Turkey gowne with the round falling cope [cape] and the Trunke gowne sleeves.'²⁶ The priest's gown would indeed have pudding sleeves,²⁷ but the style of Turkey gown with trunk sleeves would have large sleeves tapering from shoulder to wrist with the part covering the upper arm padded and full²⁸—no doubt similar to some of the coat-style sleeves mentioned above. Later, in the thirty years after 1580, innovation and variety in the gowns worn by MAs seem to have become rife. Burghley's 'Orders on Apparell' of 1585 for Cambridge, condemning the trend towards fashionable and extravagant garments, distinguished between the gowns graduates could wear within their colleges or

saying that Bisse is wearing glove (bag) sleeves. In all these images the subject wears a hood over his gown or convocation habit.

23 See Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women, 1560-1620* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 6, and her line drawing reproduced at <<http://www.bergdaldaspinhus.com/letradoeng.html>> (accessed 5 July 2013).

24 See Kate Douglas's drawing [d8] in *Shaw's Academical Dress of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edn, ed. by Nicholas Groves (London: Burgon Society, 2011), p. 30.

25 See, for example, Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 67. However, his reference in a footnote here to the *Life and Times of Anthony Wood* is erroneous and I can find no mention of this topic anywhere in the detailed indices to Clark's five-volume edition or in his text. See also Charles A. H. Franklyn, *Academical Dress from the Middle Ages to the Present Day, Including Lambeth Degrees* (Lewes: Baxter, 1970), pp. 110-12. Franklyn (p. 110) admits: 'We still do not know all the steps between 1540 and 1674 ...'

26 Cooper, Vol. II, p. 162.

27 Percy Dearmer, *The Ornaments of the Ministers* (London: Mowbray, 1908), p. 172 and Pl. 34, p. 164; Beaumont, p. 41.

28 The Turkey gown was a long, coat-like garment, usually worn open and having a flap collar. See C. Willett Cunningham, Phillis Cunningham and Charles Beard, *A Dictionary of English Costume*, rev. edn (London: A. & C. Black, 1976), entries for *Turkey Gown*, p. 221, and *Cannon Sleeves, Trunk Sleeves*, p. 36.



LEFT: FIG. 8 Stephen Lence (d. 1587/8), MA Oxon, in a bag-sleeved gown (or coat-sleeved gown under a habit).

CENTRE: FIG. 9 Simon Parret (d. 1584), MA Oxon, in bag-sleeved civilian (?) gown.

RIGHT: FIG. 10 Isaiah Bures (d. 1610), MA Oxon, in a panel-sleeved gown.

lodgings—a plain Turkey gown with a falling (flap) collar and hanging sleeves—and outside in the University at large and about the town—a gown with sleeves that covered the arms (presumably open, pudding or coat-style sleeves) and with a standing collar. In both cases the Orders explicitly forbid any sort of ornament or coloured trimming.²⁹

A monumental brass for Stephen Lence (d. 1587/8) at Christ Church, Oxford (Fig. 8), appears to show a gown with bag sleeves, but it has peculiarly large vertical armholes from shoulder to waist level, quite unlike later academic gowns of this type. The effigy is only three-quarter length, cut off at the knees, and the ends of hanging sleeves are not visible. Could Lence be wearing the old MA *cappa nigra* as a habit (like John Sickling in Cambridge) over a coat-sleeved gown, even at this late date? But then, his outer garment appears to be open down the front, not closed like other contemporary convocation dress. His hood and square cap suggest that, puzzling though his outfit may be, this is indeed academic dress.

The other brasses for MAs that I have identified dating from the years between 1580 and 1613 show gowns with hanging sleeves (except Morrey's and Owen's, mentioned above, which have coat-style sleeves). Evidently eclipsed by the new fashion, the open-sleeved gown does not appear on monuments for MAs during this period, although its later reappearance and evidence like Cobbould's painting of c. 1590 and Speed's map of 1610 point to its uninterrupted existence as MA full dress within the universities.

²⁹ Cooper, Vol. II, pp. 410–11. The standing collar (unlike the falling or flap collar) vanished not long after it was prescribed in Canon 74 of the Church of England in 1603/4, leaving only the stiffened yoke it had been attached to that is still found on the modern clerical style of gowns for BAs, MAs, DDs, etc. (Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 89).

Simon Parret (d. 1584), who is accompanied by his wife and their nineteen children on a monument in St Peter-in-the-East Church, Oxford (now the library of St Edmund Hall), wears a gown that has quite long bag sleeves with oval armholes and fur-covered facings and collar (Fig. 9). Parret was an MA Oxon, but he later supplicated in the lay Faculty of Medicine for the BM and later still was appointed a notary public. Robert Whalley (d. 1591) of Queens' College, Cambridge, 'generosus Nottinghamiensis, quondam socius huius Collegii' (gentleman of Nottingham, former fellow of this College), is depicted on a monument in his college chapel in a gown with bag sleeves, oval armholes and elaborately embroidered or brocade-covered facings, which appear to continue up to form a broad turn-down collar. The cuffs on the end of his hanging sleeves are trimmed in the same way as the facings. He was an MA Cantab, but the inscription does not mention this.

Four of these brasses were set up in parish churches away from the university towns. One is for Edward Harris (d. 1597), MA Oxon, at Thame, Oxon., where he was the first headmaster of the grammar school. His gown has a flap collar and panel (or possibly bag) sleeves with inverted-T armholes, each decorated with four horizontal strips of braid having a button in the middle and opening into a tuft at either end (somewhat similar to Thomas Bodley's, mentioned below). The other three show clergymen who were MAs but had no higher degree dressed in a gown with hanging sleeves. William Lucas (d. 1602/3, aged 96), MA Oxon, at Clothall, Herts., has facings with some form of trimming, possibly fur, extremely short sleeves ending only a couple of inches below the elbow and cuffs with a short vertical slit in them. Erasmus Williams (d. 1608), MA Oxon, at Tingewick, Bucks., has conspicuous fur facings and bag sleeves, the armhole consisting of a horizontal opening with a tiny vertical slit in it. Isaiah Bures (d. 1610) at Northolt, Middx, has narrow facings, a small upstanding collar and panel sleeves, the armhole consisting of a horizontal opening with a small inverted V cut out of the upper edge (Fig. 10).³⁰

Among the portraits in oils of Oxford and Cambridge graduates from the period 1580–1613 that I have been able to view, I have found only one in which an MA is wearing a gown with sleeves that can be made out with any certainty.³¹ In his portrait painted in 1588, which hangs in Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was a fellow, Hugh Broughton is dressed in a gown that has hanging (probably panel) sleeves with velvet-edged inverted-T armholes and velvet facings and collar. An engraving of Richard Rogers (1550?–1618), MA Cantab, made in 1650 after an untraced portrait of him in middle age (c. 1600?), shows him in a gown with horizontal arm slits and fur facings that continue up as a collar. An early-seventeenth-century engraving of William Perkins (1558–1602), MA Cantab, has him in a gown with horizontal arm slits and facings that merge into a wide flap collar. The image resembles

³⁰ Although there is no entry for Bures in *Alumni Oxonienses*, the inscription below the effigy states that he was an Oxford MA, of Balliol College.

³¹ <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/>> has proved an invaluable resource in this investigation.

A portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton, MA Oxon, in the National Portrait Gallery, London, painted on his appointment as chancellor at Oxford in 1588, shows him holding a small shield of the arms of the University and wearing a gown with fur-covered facings and collar, but it is impossible to tell whether it has hanging sleeves. Although previously I discounted its being an academic gown ('Hargreaves-Mawdsley's *History of Academical Dress* and the Pictorial Evidence for Great Britain and Ireland: Notes and Corrections', *TBS*, 8 (2008), pp. 106–50 (p. 113)), it could be of a type worn by MAs at this date.

a portrait inscribed 1602, now in the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, in which the pattern of the sleeves is not clear.

Are we to believe that for a few years MAs, perhaps following a lead given by graduates in lay faculties, took to civilian gowns (sometimes panel-sleeved and sometimes bag-sleeved) trimmed in various ways as their academic dress? It may be significant that none of these gowns is worn with a hood, while the open-sleeved gowns in earlier images of MAs are always shown worn with one. I am inclined to think that each of them is actually a robe of dignity or a fashionable civilian gown rather than an academic one, but without documentary evidence it is impossible to determine how the wearers or the designers of their monuments and painters of their portraits may have regarded them.

Civilian gowns continued to appear on monuments in college chapels for laymen who were MAs but whose eminent personal status no doubt called for a robe of dignity. Two are to be found in Merton College chapel, Oxford. Sir Thomas Bodley (d. 1612/13) wears what looks like a lay doctor's undress gown, with inverted-T armholes, braid-and-button decoration and a flap collar. Sir Henry Savile (d. 1621/2) wears a gown with notched little wings above the armholes and banded false sleeves or streamers, which hang loose behind the arms, and a flap collar (cp. Edward Leeds's gown, mentioned below). Neither Bodley nor Savile held a doctorate or indeed any degree in a lay faculty.

Pictorial evidence of panel-sleeved gowns for resident members of the universities first appears in the 1590s for lay doctors. Essentially, they were bringing their civilian, professional gown into the universities as academic undress. Usually, it had a flap collar and sleeves with an inverted-T armhole and a panel hanging below.³²

In the late sixteenth century, while the Puritans favoured the bell-sleeved Geneva preaching gown, some divines, determined to discard old ecclesiastical styles they regarded as remnants of popery, wore the civilian gown with hanging panel or occasionally bag sleeves, like the medics, lawyers and other lay gentlemen.³³ As we have seen, a gown with hanging sleeves may already have been worn by MAs at the time, but we cannot be sure whether it can be considered academic as opposed to civilian dress.

An academic, clerical version was taken up by DDs and BDs about 1600, to judge by the earliest pictorial representations of it. It had bag sleeves, horizontal or oval openings at elbow level, a gathered yoke, and no decoration. It has been suggested that it may have developed from the gown with bell sleeves, which became longer and narrower, so that a slit was added to release the forearm.³⁴ In fact, gowns with bag sleeves, perhaps originally invented by that method, had been worn outside the universities since the thirteenth century, one version of the civilian Turkey gown, which was probably derived from Ottoman dress.³⁵

³² Early examples are the gown on the brass for Walter Bailey (d. 1592/3), DM, in New College chapel, Oxford, which is elaborately trimmed with braid, and the one on the brass for Thomas Prestone (d. 1598), LLD, in Trinity Hall chapel, Cambridge, which is plain except for a simple edging round the armholes and along the hem. Hugh Lloyd (d. 1601), DCL, in New College chapel, Oxford, wears a gown that has a small flap collar and inverted-T armholes with a narrow edging, but the hanging part of the sleeve is a hollow bag, open at the foot.

³³ See, for example, Janet Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress* (London: Batsford, 1984), pp. 72–74.

³⁴ Nicholas Groves in *Shaw's Academical Dress*, 3rd edn, p. 8.

³⁵ See Charlotte Jirousek, 'Ottoman Influences in Western Fashion', in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Eren, 2004),

At first, the hanging part of the sleeve was quite short, and open at the foot, sometimes with a redundant cuff.³⁶ If these sleeves were ever intended to allow the wearer the choice of bringing the hand out at the end or putting the forearm through the slit at elbow level (rather as you can with a modern Cambridge BA gown), I have yet to find evidence of it. Although historians of dress have published line drawings of figures from earlier periods with one sleeve worn one way and the other sleeve worn the other,³⁷ we need to see some primary evidence—at the very least, a contemporary image of somebody wearing a gown with his arm through the length of the sleeve but also with a slit halfway down that is not being used for the time being.

It is possible that MAs followed the fashion for civilian gowns set by graduates in lay faculties between the 1580s and Thornton's time, but about 1613 or a little later, switched for some reason to the clerical style of undress that DDs and BDs had adopted some fifteen years earlier. Graduates in lay faculties continued to wear the civilian gown, a particular style of which became institutionalized as the academic lay gown. Hargreaves-Mawdsley's inaccuracies should not mislead us. He says that Cambridge MAs were wearing 'glove-sleeves' (bag sleeves) by 1589—and perhaps they were as the in-house undress allowed by Burghley. However, he gives Edward Leeds's brass in Croxton Church, Cambs., as evidence (p. 121), although Leeds was an LLD and he is wearing a civilian gown with fur-covered facings, armholes at shoulder level and false sleeves hanging loose behind his upper arms. Hargreaves-Mawdsley also cites 'an unknown clergyman (1615)' at Steeple Langford, Wilts., as an early monumental effigy of an Oxford MA in bag sleeves (p. 80). In fact this monument commemorates Joseph Collier, who died twenty years later in 1635. The earliest image of an MA in bag sleeves I have discovered so far (discounting Simon Parret, Stephen Lence, Robert Whalley and Erasmus Williams for reasons mentioned above) is of Henry Mason (d. 1619), a Cambridge man,

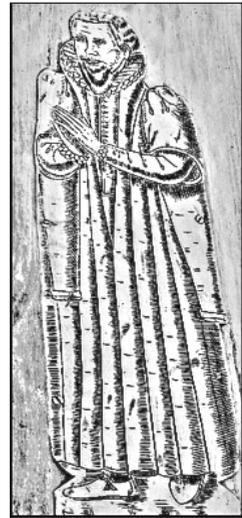


FIG. 11 Henry Mason (d. 1619), MA Cantab, in a bag-sleeved gown.

pp. 231–51 (pp. 238–39); Kerr, 'Layer upon Layer', p. 48; and, for example, John Peacock, *Costume 1066–1990s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), pp. 15 ff.

³⁶ Monuments in Oxford from around Thornton's time showing DDs in bag sleeves include those for Richard Latewar (d. 1601) at St John's College and Henry Airey (d. 1616) at Queen's College. Airey has an additional small opening cut at an angle towards the foot of each tube; it is not clear what purpose it served, but similar slits appear in the sleeves on some other monuments at this time. (Burghley specifically allowed only one slit in each sleeve at Cambridge in 1585 (Cooper, Vol. II, p. 411).) Ralph Hutchenson (d. 1605/6) at St John's College and Robert Hovenden (d. 1614) at All Souls College are each shown behind a reading desk, so that only the horizontal slit and a little of the hanging sleeve below are visible. All but Hutchenson have a convocation habit over their gown and all four wear a hood.

John Wythines (d. 1615/16), DD Oxon, at Battle, Sussex, has plain, short bag sleeves, while later, Henry Caesar (d. 1636), DD Oxon & Cantab, in Ely Cathedral has a cuff on the end of his sleeve, which is still open at the foot, although the tube is longer.

³⁷ For example, Herbert Norris, *Costume and Fashion*, Vol. II: *Senlac to Bosworth, 1066–1485* (London: Dent, 1927), p. 155.

at Eyke, Suffolk (Fig. 11).³⁸ All this suggests that 1613 was on the cusp, as it were. Various styles of gowns with hanging sleeves had been worn by MAs, possibly following a fashion to be commemorated in civilian dress rather than academic dress, like graduates in lay faculties; but perhaps the plain, clerical bag-sleeved gown was not yet quite proper for an MA in undress in Oxford, still being reserved for holders of the higher degrees of BD and DD.

Thomas Thornton, MA

It is just possible that the abandoned engraving on Thornton's brass bears a sketch for a civilian gown. However, the armhole drawn as a horizontal slit rather than some form of inverted T and the outline of the V-shaped front of a hood over the gown make this conjecture implausible.

Did the designer of the brass for Thornton assume that after eleven years as a Student of Christ Church the deceased must have proceeded beyond the MA and been admitted to the BD degree? Or did he have a design or template to hand that had been prepared for another monument, for a BD perhaps, and he thought it would do, until he was corrected? Or did he even have a half-finished plate from an abandoned commission for another person and used the back, as a palimpsest, for Thornton? The open-sleeved gown in the second effigy might have been stipulated as correct full dress for an MA who was a resident member of the University. In that case it would hold a special place among surviving monuments for MAs depicted in open sleeves: it would be the first for over thirty years and also the last before the plain bag-sleeved gown became the norm. It is interesting that there is no indication of the fur lining in the hood or velvet on the sleeves to be found in later proctors' dress. Was the original design rejected and were the open sleeves substituted because the bag sleeves were still not correct for a graduate in the lower Faculty of Arts at Oxford in 1613?

Conclusions

The history of MA gowns between the Reformation and the Restoration falls into three periods:

- (1) Up to the 1580s MAs, like other graduates, wore open sleeves, with no obvious distinction between undress and full dress.
- (2) From the 1580s to about Thornton's time MAs (perhaps particularly non-resident members), like graduates in lay faculties, seem to have taken to wearing a variety of gowns, including styles with flap collars, panel or bag sleeves, and added decoration. We do not know whether they regarded these as academic undress or as non-academic civilian dress. The open-sleeved gown was retained for academic full dress within the universities, now perhaps with the coat-sleeved gown as an alternative.
- (3) From the 1610s onwards the plain bag-sleeved gown with a gathered yoke became established as the MAs' undress gown (probably borrowed from the DDs and BDs, who had adopted it some fifteen years earlier), while the open-sleeved

³⁸ The bag sleeve open at the foot seems to have remained the fashion until the middle of the seventeenth century. Rice Jem (d. 1648), in a drawing of his brass now lost from the church at Husbans Bosworth, Leics., where he was rector, has cuffs on his bag sleeves, which are longer than those seen on earlier monuments. In the post-Restoration engravings of the 1670s the end of the sleeve has a curve cut out and is sewn shut in the style still used today.

gown was now definitely restricted to full dress. Eventually this open-sleeved gown would become confined to official dress for Oxford proctors; other MAs would wear a hood with the bag-sleeved gown when full dress was required.

The question is whether the monument for Thomas Thornton belongs at the end of the second period or the beginning of the third. Therefore, I am proposing alternative hypotheses about the gowns on his brass:

- (a) if the former and Oxford MAs had not yet adopted the plain bag-sleeved gown for undress, it looks as though a BD gown was abandoned and an MA gown substituted;
- (b) if the latter and Oxford MAs had already adopted the clerical plain bag-sleeved gown by 1613—Thornton's rejected gown might be the first surviving image of one for that degree—it looks as though an MA undress gown (incorrectly shown with a hood) was abandoned and an MA full-dress gown substituted.

The presence on the first engraving of the V-shaped outline for the front of a hood and the horizontal armhole without any vertical slit inclines me to dismiss a third possibility: that a non-academic civilian gown was abandoned and an academic MA gown substituted.

More documentary and pictorial evidence may confirm one or other of my hypotheses—or refute them—or provide another solution altogether for the curious case of Thomas Thornton's sleeves.

A note on terms used for styles of gown sleeve

A variety of terms is encountered in the literature on academic dress. This is a glossary of terms as I use them here.

Coat-style for a sleeve that tapers from the shoulder to the wrist, where it may end in a close-fitting cuff (Figs 6 and 8(?)). If the sleeve was very wide and padded on the upper arm, the term **trunk** sleeve was used in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. If the whole sleeve is baggy and drawn in to a band at the wrist, the term **pudding** sleeve is used (Fig. 7).

False for a sleeve that hangs free of the upper arm or behind it as a streamer, the gown having an opening at shoulder level to release the arm. In academic dress this style survives (in an attenuated form) in the Oxford undergraduate commoner's gown and the graduate student's gown derived from it and in the Dublin undergraduate gown for those not holding a scholarship.

Hanging for a sleeve that has an opening at elbow level to release the forearm:
either a **bag** sleeve, which has a horizontal slit with a bag-like tube below, open at the foot until the mid-seventeenth century, typical of clerical gowns with a gathered yoke (Figs 1, 1a, 3, 8(?) and 11)—eventually adopted by Doctors and Bachelors of Divinity and Masters of Arts for undress;
or a **panel** sleeve, which has an inverted T with a flat panel below, typical of civilian* gowns with a flap collar (Fig. 10)—one version of which was eventually adopted by Doctors and Bachelors of (Civil) Law, Medicine and Music as the undress lay gown.

Hybrid styles with hanging sleeves exist, e.g. Simon Parret's gown (Fig. 9) has oval armholes, bag sleeves and fur-trimmed facings continuing up to form a collar round the back of the neck.

Open for a sleeve that widens towards the wrist into a modest funnel or fuller bell shape (Figs 2, 4 and 5).

* Historians of dress and writers on monuments generally use the term civilian to distinguish the dress of lay gentlemen and the professional and middle classes from, for example, ecclesiastical or clerical, academic, legal, and military dress. They often use the term lay as a synonym for civilian, but for clarity I am reserving lay for the particular academic gown eventually approved for graduates in lay faculties in the universities.

List of monuments and portraits cited arranged by date

Date	Name	Degree	Pattern of sleeve	Hood	Location
c. 1540	John Sickling	MA Cantab	open; with habit over gown	yes	Christ's Coll., Cambridge
1545	Thomas Edgcomb	MA Oxon	open	yes	Eton Coll.
1571/2	Robert Harte	MA Oxon	open	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
1577	Robert Shingleton	MA Oxon	open	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
1578	John Glover	MA Oxon	open	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
1579	Richard Hutchenson	MA Oxon	open	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
1580	William Smith	MA Oxon	open	yes	St Mary Magdalen Ch., Oxford
1584	Thomas Morrey	MA Oxon	coat-style	yes	Christ Church, Oxford
1584	Simon Parret	MA Oxon	hanging (bag); oval armhole*	no	St Peter-in-the-East Ch. Oxford
1587/8	Stephen Lence	MA Oxon	hanging (vertical armslits)—or possibly coat-style; with habit over gown	yes	Christ Church, Oxford
1588	Hugh Broughton	MA Cantab	hanging (panel?); inverted-T armhole*	no	Christ's Coll., Cambridge
1588	Christopher Hatton	MA Oxon	hanging?*	no	Nat. Portrait Gallery, London
1589	John Garbrand	DD Oxon	coat-style	yes	North Crawley, Bucks.
1589/90	Laurence Humphrey	DD Oxon	bell—full-dress	yes	Magdalen Coll., Oxford
1589/90	Edward Leeds	LLD Cantab	false sleeves or streamers*	no	Croxton, Cambs.
c. 1590	<i>Cobbould's painting</i>	MA Cantab	open	yes	Old Schools, Cambridge
1591	Robert Whalley	MA Cantab	hanging (bag); oval armhole*	no	Queens' Coll., Cambridge
1592/3	Walter Bailey	DM Oxon	hanging (panel); inverted-T armhole	no	New Coll., Oxford
1595	Thomas Reve	DD Cantab	open	yes	Monewden, Suffolk
1597	Edward Harris	MA Oxon	hanging (panel?); inverted-T armhole	no	Thame, Oxon.
1598	Thomas Prestone	LLD Cantab	hanging (panel); inverted-T armhole	no	Trinity Hall, Cambridge
1599/1600	John Case	DM Oxon	coat-style; with habit over gown	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
c. 1600	Richard Rogers	MA Cantab	hanging (?); horizontal slit armhole*	no	print published 1650
1601	Hugh Lloyd	DCL Oxon	hanging (bag); inverted-T armhole	no	New College, Oxford
1601	Richard Latewar	DD Oxon	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole; with habit over gown	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
1602	William Perkins	MA Cantab	hanging (?); horizontal slit armhole	no	print published early 17th c.
1602/3	William Lucas	MA Oxon	hanging (panel); inverted-T armhole*	no	Clothall, Herts.
c. 1603	William Paddy	DM Oxon	bell—full-dress	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
c. 1605	<i>Speed's map</i>	MA Cantab	open	yes	published 1611/12
1605/6	Ralph Hutchenson	DD Oxon	hanging (bag?); horizontal slit armhole	yes	St John's Coll., Oxford
1607/8	Griffin Owen	MA Oxon	coat-style	yes	St Aldate's Ch., Oxford
1607	John Rainolds	DD Oxon	bell—full-dress	yes	Corpus Christi Coll., Oxford
1608	Erasmus Williams	MA Oxon	hanging (bag); inverted-T armhole*	no	Tingewick, Bucks.
1610	Isaiah Bures	MA Oxon	hanging (panel); inverted-T armhole	no	Northolt, Middx
1612	Philip Bisse	DD Oxon	coat-style; with habit over gown	yes	Wadham Coll., Oxford
1612/13	Thomas Bodley	MA Oxon	hanging (panel); inverted-T armhole	no	Merton Coll., Oxford
1613	Thomas Thornton	MA Oxon	(1) hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole	yes	Christ Church, Oxford
1613	Thomas Thornton	MA Oxon	(2) open	yes	Christ Church, Oxford
1614	Robert Hovenden	DD Oxon	hanging (bag?); horizontal slit armhole; with habit over gown	yes	All Souls Coll., Oxford
1614	John Spencer	DD Oxon	bell—full-dress	yes	Corpus Christi Coll., Oxford
1615/16	John Wythines	DD Oxon	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole	no	Battle, Sussex
1616	Henry Airey	DD Oxon	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole and extra slit below; with habit over gown	yes	Queen's Coll., Oxford
1619	Henry Mason	MA Cantab	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole	no	Eye, Suffolk
1621/2	Henry Savile	MA Oxon	false sleeves or streamers	no	Merton Coll., Oxford
1635	Joseph Collier	MA Oxon	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole	no	Steeple Langford, Wilts.
1636	Henry Caesar	DD O & C	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole	no	Ely Cathedral
1648	Rice Jem	?	hanging (bag); horizontal slit armhole	no	Husbands Bosworth, Leics.

* Indicates that the gown has facings and collar covered with fur or (in Broughton's case) velvet or (in Whalley's) brocade.