

Historical Reproduction Footwear by Francis Classe



About the Shoemaker

I have been crafting historical reproduction shoes since 2000. After an illuminating class on turn shoes, I learned quickly from other accomplished shoemakers and soon was visiting museums and researching extant pieces to understand the details of construction down to the stitch, materials, and tools used. I have done quite a bit of research on raised heels, much of which you can see on my website at <http://www.raisedheels.com>. You can also view some pictures of extant raised heels and pictorial evidence, as well as examine my past work, some of which was crafted for the highly authentic Tudor living history group at Kentwell Hall in Suffolk. Note that I am not a full-time shoemaker; I enjoy this as a hobby and a passion, and as such, I make my attempts as authentic as possible, which does take time. Feel free to contact me at francis.classe@gmail.com with any questions or to request a quote.

About the Work

I endeavor to use period materials, methods, and tools wherever possible. Only period leathers are used, such as vegetable tanned and alum tawed leather - modern chrome-tanned leathers, used by a large percentage of other "historical" shoemakers, are strictly avoided. All work is done by hand (no machines or glue) with 100% linen thread; white threads, usually for outsole stitches and linings, are waxed either with a synthetic white wax (so as to avoid the use of caustic lead), or a blond wax (a mixture of beeswax and rosin). Closing (assembling the upper part of the shoe) and inseaming (attaching the insole to the upper) are typically done with a traditional black shoemaker's wax composed of pine rosin and pine pitch. Shoes are stitched using vintage steel awls, turned wooden hafts, and boar bristles, which form a superior seam to those stitched with needles. All shoes are lasted on vintage lasts which have been altered to achieve a more period shape. Shoes are lefts and right unless specially arranged and agreed upon.



What is Included

Each pair of shoes is tailored to the individual. After taking some measurements and a tracing, we will discuss the available options. The shoes will be delivered in person (where possible) in their own shoebox, and any final fittings or adjustments will be made then. Shoes with laces will have fingerloop braided laces with aglets on the tips for tying. Upon request, pictures during the construction process can be provided. Additionally, I stand behind all of my work - if any adjustments are required to ensure a better fit, I will make them, even if it means re-making the shoes. Your shoes should last you a good long time, but in the event that there is any defect in the work, any repairs (including re-soleing, re-dying, etc.) will be free of charge within the first year. I am also happy to repair my work for an additional charge after the one year time frame.

Ordering/Payment Information

There are many options available, so I always start off with a discussion of what you are looking for, and then can better provide a quote. The price depends on the types of decoration, closure, construction, etc., which is why I request that you get in touch with me to get an official quotation. There are some pricing guidelines on the next page which will give you an idea of the price range for a particular style of shoe. A deposit of \$50 is requested for all commissions, and full payment (Check, Paypal, Cash) is required in full prior to delivery of the finished shoes. However, for feet with special needs, I request 50% of the purchase price up front; most of the time, I can find someone to fit shoes that are not quite right or no longer desired, but for feet with special needs, the likelihood of being able to do so is significantly smaller. Lastly, I would request that you not distribute this pamphlet widely - I may not be accepting commissions, and I do not want to engender ill favor or disappointment!

Shoe Construction and Ornamentation

Shoe Style

Flat Shoes with an optional heel lift. \$250-\$450.



Corked Shoes with a ~3/4" cork wedge. \$400-\$600.



Heels with a ~1.5" timber heel. \$450 - \$650



Chopines/Pantofles of cork or timber. \$350 - \$600



Sole Attachment

Turn Shoe with a single sole. For lightweight shoes or indoor shoes.



Turn-Welt with a double sole. For harder wearing turn shoes.



Welted with a double sole. For harder wearing outdoor shoes.



Randed with a double sole. Recommended for Heels, Chopines, and Pantofles.



Upper Ornamentation

Slashes in the vamp and quarters can reveal the wearer's hose or a lining.



Pinking and scoring can also be used for a more subtle decorative effect.



Linings

Vamp and quarter linings of taffeta in many colors are available.



Socks (insole linings) of wool are also available as an option.



Opening Ornamentation (folded/slashed/bound)

The opening of the shoe can be left plain, folded over, slashed, or bound with a strip of leather.



Reinforcements

Toe and Heel stiffeners can be added as an option.



Vamp/Quarter reinforcement pieces can be added.



Colors

A variety of dyed leather colors are available, such as black, blue, green, red, maroon, orange, and purple. White is also available in alum tawed leather.

Special Shoes

Shoes for those with special needs, or unusually shaped shoes (like the early Tudor "cow-mouth" shoes) are also possible.

Close-Up Samples of Work (First Page)



Corked shoes with a 7/8" heel rise. Folded and slashed openings, pinked and scored quarters and vamps, with silk taffeta linings and wool sock. Appropriate for any time between about 1550 and 1590.



6" Chopines of cork with brocade covering, leather insole and outsole, silk binding, and silk ribbon. Insole is tooled and a tassel is attached. Chopines are also decorated with braid, gold lace, and brass tacks. Especially appropriate for Venetian ladies from about 1560 to 1630.



Flat double soled welted shoes with a single heel lift. Plain openings, slashed vamps, and silk taffeta lining in vamp and wool sock. Reinforcements at the heel and vamp/upper join. Appropriate for any time between about 1560 and 1590.

Close-Up Samples of Work (Second Page)



Flat double soled welted shoes with a single heel lift. Folded and slashed openings, slashed quarters and vamps, with very full silk taffeta linings and wool sock. Appropriate for any time between about 1530 and 1590.



1.5" Heeled double soled randed shoes with plain openings. Pinked and scored vamps and quarters. Fingerloop braided lace with brass aglets. Appropriate for any time between about 1580 and 1620.