

Emily Hastings  
THTR 350-C Shively  
Research Paper  
Due date?

Dress of the Elizabethan “Common Sort”: 1560-1580

As I finish my final year at Knox, I continue to be fascinated by the culture of the Elizabethan era in England, with a particular interest in the area of costume history. My previous independent study on the topic of Elizabethan dress focused almost exclusively on the garments worn by English noblewomen during the early and middle years of Elizabeth’s reign, from around 1560-1580. While I learned a great deal and continued to pursue the topic independently and through other coursework, some questions remained unanswered: namely, to what extent were the fashions of the elite similar to those of the lower social classes? How were they constructed, and by whom?

These questions were motivated in part by my experience wearing the garments I created during my previous project. While they are certainly beautiful, they are delicate, already requiring some mending despite wearing them only a few times for brief periods. They are also unwieldy, particularly the large farthingale. People in period who had to do any sort of physical work would not have been able to wear this kind of clothing.