Texts and pictures about

a normal or not normal thing:



Bernd Rohrmann





Bernd Rohrmann (Melbourne/Australia) Hats - - - history ~ features ~ fate

March 2016

What kind of hats are there?

Very very many! First of all, hats have a function! The essential purposes are:

- <> to protect against the weather, such as: very cold, rain, strong sunshine,
- <> to indicate once's formal status and once's wealth,
- <> to serve soldiers in battles,
- <> to present fashion.

For a long time, different cultures and countries had their own style of hats, regarding both private and professional usage.

Nowadays, the wearing of hats has gone down, because many people prefer caps or knitted bonnets or beanies, and individualism is 'unmodern'.

When was the hat 'invented'?

Caps have been used by humans for tenthousands of years. It seems that in began as response to cold weather.



During advanced civilizations, with the development of high cultures, which were Sumer in Mesopotamia and Egypt, around 3000 B.C., hats were fully developed. At first this was done to present the status of rulers - kings or pharaohs.





During the Akkadian, Assyrian and Babilonian empires, quite a wide variety of 'headdresses' was elaborated.

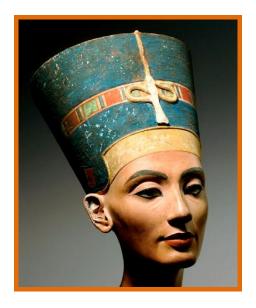






This included first-class highly decorated hats for women.

In the Egypt empire that happened as well - the most famous example is of course Nefertiti (Nofretete).



To sum up - more than 3000 years ago hats were fully established - as professional and as private daily devices.

Which hat or cap styles became common across people?

The first widely used cap was the Phrygian cap, which developed in the 7th century BC, was worn widely in the Hellenistic and Roman world, and is still in use. For a while it was a symbol for liberty.

It seems that a 'normal' hat for daily use came up around 500 BC in Greece, the 'Petasos', the first hat with a brim - an essential headdress ever since.





Another extremely common hat used for at least 1000 years is the conical bamboo hat in China and other East-Asian countries.



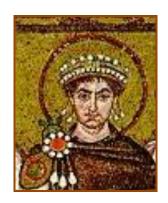
During the Roman Empire hats were not much a matter; man often did have just a laurel leaf headband. However, military headwear was a main gadget.





Things changed in the later "Eastern" Roman Empire, of which Constantinople was the capital. Headwear became highly ornate, especially for royalty and high-status people.

Furthermore, crowns were sometimes more decorated for women then for men, as the example of emperor Justinian and empress Theodora shows.





In the manifold European countries that did arise after the end of the Roman empires an immense variety of hats and caps developed, many quite garnished. It seems that eventually the headwear of women was even more enhanced. Here are just a few examples.

















In Asia, e.g. in India, China, Japan, numerous hats for women and men were social standard as well. Here are some Chinese examples.



That's enough history ... Now a brief tour through the essential hats of the last hundred years ...



The widely used fedora hat is both formal and casual, feasible for men and women, and may be decorated with bands or feathers. It's often used in theatre or films to convey the type of a person.







The cowboy hat was developed on American farms yet is also used as laid-back headwear. Many designs suit men and women. In the USA were many people dislike formal Europe-style hats this is the way to go.





In almost all hot countries strawhats are 'the' summer hats, and there are countless varieties if it.







Less common yet widely popular in North and South America is the Pamir hat, usually designed as white hat.





How about women hats?

Well there is such a big variety and individuality that it's not possible to identify the one "archetypal" hat. One feature is that colours are not at all restricted - even lilac is "quite alright"! Here is a very small set of examples, just five.



Hats and caps for ship personnel is a world of its own. Here are examples for crew, small-ships officers, captains.

The middle one, called 'Elbsegler" in Hamburg/Germany, is since decades my own favourite.







A very special use of hats is to make them a compulsory headwear for students who get a degree, masters or PhD. These hats differ very much across universities, and they are somewhat bizarre - yet here is an example anyway.



Caps are for thousands of years an alternative to hats. As they are easy to create, and are much more suited for practical and informal headwear, they are nowadays about everywhere.

The main types are beanies, made from fabric, and bonnets, which are knitted from wool. For both types of caps there are lots of names, across and within countries. All colours occur. Here are three examples.







Knit bonnets are widely used in cold or windy weather. They usually have a "pompom" on top. Some include a band to hold the cap in place.

Possibly the most formal hat is the tophat, also called cylinder hat, mostly worn by men. It is usually made with fine silk. The tophat is also liked by artists - female as much as male ones.

The real tophat (which you won't get in Australia; my one is from Germany) includes a technology called "chapeau claque" which make it collapsible.





The use of tophats has gone down yet it can still be seen at societal events. The tophat is certainly a symbol for class, style and elegance.



What's the difference between men and women hats?

To begin with some naive questions, who has more special/elaborate/extraordinary/odd hats --

- ? rich men or rich women? => rich women
- ? kings or queens? => queens
- ? male or female artists? => female artists.

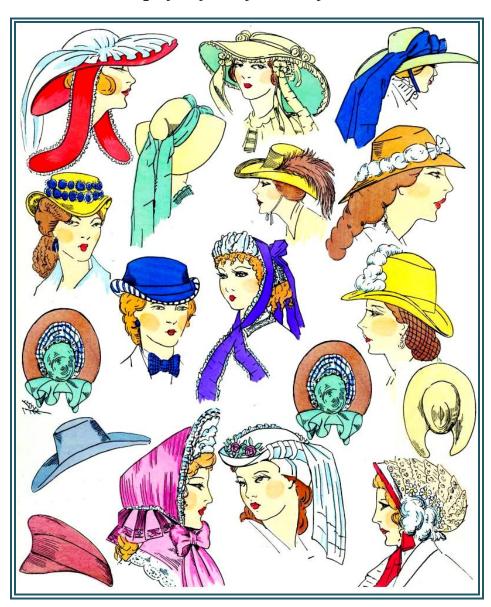
Here are some collages, first men and then woman, from Europe and America.





As these pictures show, the fedora hat is still very much a standard hat, well, for men.

And now women hats are displayed, just a few out of thousands ...





Greetings or bye-bye? Greetings: yes for my brave bookworms, bye-bye: no, no, no!

Do have countries their own unique hat style?

Oh yes! Since at least 4000 years states/countries/nations had - and mostly still have - their own headgear style, regardless whether it's a cold or moderate or hot country. And to distinguish between practical use and status indication is true from early times onwards.

In the following pages all sorts of hats or caps are presented, mostly based on what I observed during my voyages. Some are included just for fun. Please be aware that this collage is 'ad-hoc-ish', it's not an academic endeavour!

Argentina



The largest ethnic background is Italy. The most unique communities seem to be gauchos on cattle farms and tango musicians and dancers.











The Austrian hat which grabbed mostly my attention was the Alpine hat, usually a Tyrolean hat (Tirolerhut) which was developed in the province Tyrol (Austria, partly in Italy, bordering on Germany). It's still widely used, by both men and women.







In spite of the enormous variety of people un Brazil, hats shielding against sunshine, especially strawhats, are the most frequent sight.

By the way, when looking for Brazilian hats in the internet, the certainly 'un-Brazil' US-American baseball caps are completely governing the result - again an example for the absurd dominance of this country, even in headgear ...





China



In terms of people, China is the largest country in the world, and consequently its 'hat history' is immense. Yet during Mao's revolution, about everyone was meant to wear the same "working class" dress. The resulting cap is still prominent today. Yet the

oldest hat is the conical bamboo hat of farmers. Above that there are many elaborated hats which indicate the wearers background and status.



England

The black "polo hat" is almost symbolic for England. Many variations, especially for women, are common as well.





Two types of hats are 'emblematic' for France, the Kepi - originally for the army yet soon for almost every service institution - and the Beret. Both were used by high officials as well, such as queens or presidents or generals.

Many of these are still customary.



Germany



In Germany, a confederation of a dozen states, with long traditions of headgear, it's not easy to select 'typical' hats ...

The most known one is the Bavarian hat, which is very similar to the Tyrol hat . In southern Germany it's still very common, for both, men and woman.

The cord around the hat is a vital feature. Often this hat is decorated with special feathers.



India

A billion of Indians, and hundreds of cultures - is there "the" headwear? Not really, yet the turban is obviously the most common one. It occurs in about every colour and folding style. Women are more likely to cover their head with a losely bent cloth - highly decorated on official events.



And here is something to amuse you -- who may this person be?



Israel 🌣

The number of cultures in the Israelian population is very large, and it is impossible to identify "the" headgear ... It seems that young people tend to caps which have explicit links to Israel, and that older historically bound people wear high black hats.





Very traditional yet still widely used hat; two examples, for a woman and for a man.





The country Namibia sits in south-western Africa. From 1885 to 1990 it was a colony, first of Germany and then of Southafrica. About 10% of the population are

Hereros. This tribe has stunning headgear, worn only by women, and still in full swing!













Niger is positioned in the midle of northern Africa, and is mostly part of the Sahara desert. A unique part of its population are the Tuareg. These were the principal inhabitants of the Sahara until about 1900, when France took control. The Tuareg were nomads with a pastoralist lifestyle.

Their famous dress is the indigo-blue colored veil, worn by all men yet not all women. Those I met in the Algerian Sahara had also white dresses. Silver jewellery for women is still common; men often wear a decorated bag around their neck.







Peru



In Peru, a country in western South America, there were two influences on hats and caps - from the original population and later from the Spanish occupiers. Here are some traditional headgears.









Russia

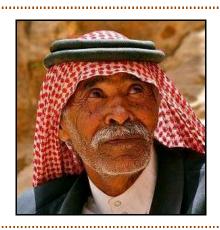


The winter in Russia is rough, and in some areas very harsh. Thus hats and caps for cold weather are essential, and available in a wide variety. Many can be folded upwards or downwards, depending on the temperature. Here are just two:



Saudi Arabia -- and nearby muslim countries

In the kingdom Saudi Arabia and other muslim countries nearby, such as Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Yemen, the "keffiyeh" or "kufiya" or "ghutrah" is the traditional headdress - only worn by men. It is usually held in place by a circlet of rope called "agal". Many colours occur; the white kufiya has a high society eminence. Regarding women, in the conservative muslim world they have to wear a mostly covering-the face headgear - which may be like a kufiya but not include an agal.









The main label is "hijab". The appraisal of hijabs is a thorny matter, because complimenting or protecting or suppressing women are all occurring viewpoints.



Headgear in Scotland is by long tradition a cap in red with green sections; the fabric follows the "tartan" pattern.





Out of the many headgear styles in Spain, just two shall be mentioned here. One is the "sombrero cordobés", designed in Cordoba. It's used for formal events but also at festivals and by flamenco musicians. The other one is the beret (Baskenmuetze), the traditional cap in the Basque area of Spain, and also southern France. Originally black, it's nowadays made in about every colour.





Until 1919, nowadays Turkey was the centre of the Ottoman empire. The Osman fez, as well as caps with gold-like decorations are still quite common.



USA

In the United States of America very many cultures from Europe, Africa and Asia have shaped the society, and all brought their specific hats and caps with them. Nowadays not much of that is vivid, as just one thing, the so-called baseball cap, is almost completely ruling US-American headgear (dealt with further downwards).



It seems that the only hat style created there is the "cowboy hat", which exists in a wide variety of shapes and colours, and is equally worn by men and women.



Vietnam 🔀

After Vietnam became an independent country, and Saigon was replaced by Hanoi as the governing city, traditional dressing lost significance. However, some unique headgear for woman is still alive - worn at least during special events.







Are there Australian hats?

The long-time standard hat in Australia is the akubra, worn by men and women, even in the big cities. A similar one is the barnah. Both used to be country hats. Another Australian hat is called slouch hat, mainly used in institutions such as the army.







However, for quite some time US-American headwear is dominating in Australia, baseball caps and beanies - yet both have no link to Australian history and culture.

Do my friends wear hats?

Yes, some do. In Europe in winter time, in Australia in summer time. Or at any time.











Some like, some bear and some dislike hats. Anyway, here are a few examples. And yes, I genuinely enjoy seeing my friends "under a hat", whenever that happens.

What about hats on show events?

As someone who lives in Melbourne, the famous "Melbourne Cup" is 'the' event of the year, that's even a holiday! It is far more than a horserace though, it's also by long tradition a fashion event - and hats are every year the giant highlight.

Very many women and a few men work for month to prepare the most beautiful, and more so, must strange, hat for this show. Here are just 10 of these almost absurd hats.















How are hats of queens?

When I collected pictures of hats, very very often there were queens. And more than

anyone else it was queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, and she is indeed known for her obsession with hats! She probably has 999 ones - below I present just a dozen ...



Hats of popes and patriarchs

Of the many religions, for only one hats are important - christianity. In fact, for the pope of the Roman-catholic church, the patriarchs of the Orthodox churches, and the patriarch of the Coptic church (obviously the oldest one) hats have always been a crucial symbol of headship.

Here are 8 examples of the countless hats - four plus two plus two for the three christian dominations.

















By the way - the various 'Protestant' christian churches do not have a patriarch or pope, or any other 'leader'.

Consequently, the hat culture doesn't exit there.

Military matters -hats of soldiers

For thousands of years hats have been a crucial matter for soldiers - originally as part of their military equipment for combats, yet increasingly to indicate rank and might as well.

To sufficiently to describe all this, a book of its own would be necessary ... Instead, I will just show some eminent examples. These are:

Officers of the army of the Roman empire; a famous warrior of the Muslim empire, Salah ad-Din; war helmets in medieval times; hats for soldiers in Napoleon's army;

the "Pickelhaube" in Prussia, and the steel helmet (Stahlhelm).















The steel helmet, a German invention during world war I, is now used is by all armies world-wide.

Are hats presented in art?

Yes, they are, they are indeed. Almost every artist, when painting people, included headwear.

It goes back to presenting kings and queens, which was done by artists - see the examples of queen Nefertiti or emperor Justinian and empress Theodora presented above.

Anyway, let me begin this chapter with a very thoughtful picture of the unique artist Magritte.



In the following, at first works of classical European painters will be presented, from the renaissance and the like, and then works of famous modern artists, from the 19th and 20th century..

The painting below, by Macke, gives a nice start for the agenda, a lady with a hat is looking for hats ...



Here are four hats painted by Duerer, Michelangelo, Raphael and Rembrandt.

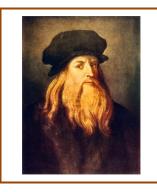








And then four hats in paintings by DaVinci, Duerer, Breughel the Elder and Bosch (the first two are self-portraits).









And now works by Renoir, Leger, Kahlo and Modigliano.









Then: Van Gogh, Munch, Leger, Magritte.



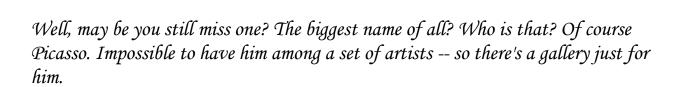






Of course all these artists are "big names", and all are certainly part of the history of art.

May be you miss one? May be Dali? Dali is without doubt the grand master of surrealism, and I very much esteem his phenomenal art - so here he is, with an hat in flames.











Finally, the weirdest 'arty' hats I ever saw are on Rapa Nui, on the heads of mighty statues, hundreds of years old.



Almost all of these hats or caps in art I do admire ... Yet now I'll move to a less charming topic, accompanied by a gorgious guy of Bosch.



Is there an inferior - yet dominating - hat?

Well, yes, there is. It's the "baseball cap", developed in parts of USA and now in use allover the world.



This cap (it's indeed not a hat) is made in one design, it is available in very many colours, and worn by men an women in the millions, almost billions. This seems to include about half of the Australians. Funnily, very very many men were it the other way, front to back - believing they have chosen an "individual" style. In any case, the baseball cap is a big business which outruns many traditions in western and even in eastern countries.

Is it so good?

Well, it's reasonably cheap - however, baseball caps are actually not very functional, because they sit so tight that sweating of the head is increased, they reduce the visibility of the left and the right section of the environment, and the protection of the eyes from sunlight is uneven.

The big advantage (for "modern" people) is that they are suitable for adding marks or ads, which is nowadays very common - and defacto means that people become an advertising venue.

So, in my (may be arrogant) perspective this thing is indeed a sad example of the enormous headwear culture which humankind has developed over thousands of years.

Do I have hats?

Surprise surprise, yes I do, about twenty, and about twenty caps or beanies as well.



By far the most exciting (and most expensive) hat is my tophat, which I wear only to unique events - may be to scare my friends?

My favourite headwear, and regularly worn since decades, is Hamburg harbour cap, called "Hamburger Elbsegler".

Here is a selection of my hats and caps.



Those shown here are from Australia, Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, Latvia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Scotland, and Switzerland.

They all deal with cold weather, some with sun, some very well with snow - yet the big hats with large brims do not like wind!

And the final pic shows me dressed appropriately in an arabian country, Iraq, just to amuse you



What may be the future of hats?

For me it's almost a horror thought that people won't wear hats anymore and that only the so inferior baseball cap will survive ...

There are so so many fine hats and caps around - - many of them are presented in this essay - - that I of course strongly wish they will stay as essential attribute!



Beside headwear presenting style and identity, they are also functional, for protection and for handling weather, heat or rain. Yes rainhats are certainly useful - even though they can't replace umbrellas ...

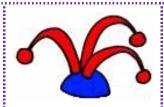




There are also hats which are just fun and not meant to fulfil any purpose, beside amusing oneself or other people on special events.









I am known as tophat fan. However: Neither extra-high nor extra-wide tophats are convenient - how to get into the tram or a taxi with these rather absurd hats?



There are Australian hats which are pretty much forgotten, and certainly not easy ones, such as the amusing cork hat.

And regarding caps, nowadays covert with ads - I certainly hope that no one feels compelled to carry the self-appraisal on the hat ~ head.





To come to the end - - yes, most days our life is just normal, just daily duty, just leisure pursuit, just family matters. Yet every now and then we go to a special event, which may not be "normal" ...

So I dare to suggest: Dress up sometimes, and make it a vital mission to wear a hat, a special impressive distinctive one!



That was it, my hat essay, chatting about the history and the features and the fate of this, enriched with lots of pictures. Given that we may all struggle sometimes with "beating the burden", I hope that this naïve yet genuine discourse let you forget all your musts for a while and just enticed you.

