

**1570s Florentine Gown from the Skin Out**  
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**Kingdom of the Outlands Queen's Prize for Her Majesty Nerissa della Badessa**  
**March 14, A.S. 55 (2021)**

**Inspiration Piece:**



Figure 1: Portrait of Selvaggia di Baldo Fieravanti by Niccolo di Giovanni Betti from approximately 1570.

Inspiration for the overall style of this outfit came from the above portrait of Selvaggia di Baldo Fieravanti painted by Niccolo di Giovanni Betti in approximately 1570. This entire outfit and all of its accessories can be referenced back to the late 16th Century and draws on many portraits, paintings, frescoes and extant pieces as well as manuscripts from the same time period.

This project consists of several layers of clothing. The first layer would be the undergarments including a pair of brache (italian for bloomers or drawers) based on an extant pair in the Met Museum, a camicia (shift or chemise) based on an extant camicia housed in the Met Museum and detailed in Patterns of Fashion 4, calze (stockings) based on an extant pair in the Met Museum, and cinte per gambe (garters) based on an extant card woven garters held in the Museum of Colonial Williamsburg. The second layer is a structural layer that consists of a sotanne (petticoat) and busto di sotto (stays) based on the Allesandro Allori's Fresco "A Woman at her Toilet", as well as a gorgiera (partlet) that is based on Allesandro Allori's "Portrait of a Lady" (probably Camilla Martelli) from the 1570s. The third layer consists of a sottana (gown) that is similar in construction to the burial dress of Eleanor of Toledo and the Red Dress of Pisa as outlined in Patterns of Fashion 3. The final layer is the zimarra (overgown) that is similar in

construction to the extant dress of Dorothea Sabina von Neuburg as outlined in Patterns of Fashion 3 and is constructed to resemble the initial inspiration portrait. I have also created several accessories that can be seen in my pictures but I am not including in the competition pieces.

### Undergarments (Layer 1):



Figure 2: Extant brache housed in the Met Museum, 16th Century Italian

**Brache** Brache can be also known as paio di calzoni or pair of trousers and can be found listed in the wardrobe accounts of Eleanor of Toledo. “In the Duchess’s wardrobe there also appears a pair of trousers in crimson taffeta. Probably similar in shape to those conserved in the Prato Museo del Tessuto, breeches for women or drawers were not common their use was generally frowned upon because they were associated with prostitutes, although they were useful under the petticoat both for keeping warm and riding” (p. 133, Orsi-Landini). I chose to make a pair of linen brache for warmth as this gown will mostly be worn in the cooler months of the year. For the brache I looked at an extant pair that are housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and are described as “Linen drawers embroidered in silver and silver-gilt thread”

and are labeled as 16th Century Italian (metmuseum.org). This pair can also be found in Patterns of Fashion 4 by Janet Arnold as item #64 on pages 50 and 106. Arnold shows a detail photograph of the embroidery and the lace edging the leg openings on page 50. For an embroidery pattern, for this project, I used a pattern from Il Burato, published in 1538 on page 202 with silk embroidery yarn in 2/20 size. For the brache, I used the wider pattern that is shown on the right side of the page.

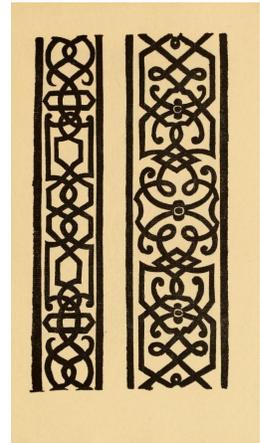


Figure 3: Il Burato: Libro de Recami, page 202

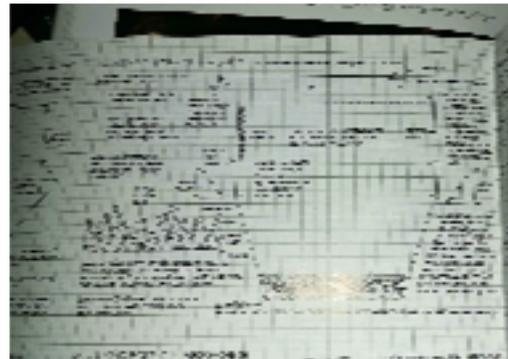


Figure 4: Patterns of Fashion 4 drawings of Extant Brache

### Supplies:

2 yards of medium weight white linen  
Thread, Scissors, Pins, Needles, etc.  
Embroidery Hoop  
Silk Embroidery Yarn in Purple & Black  
White machine made lace.

## Sewing Machine & Serger



Figure 5: Flat felled stitches in the seams

**Process:** Completed April 2020

I started this piece by washing and prepping 2 yards of medium weight white linen. I utilized Margo Anderson's Italian Lady's Underpinnings Pattern as I had not made a pair of drawers previously. This pattern is very similar in cut to the pattern drawn out by Janet Arnold in Patterns of Fashion 4. I cut out the fabric and then I decided to serge all of the pieces individually before I stitched the pattern together to help prevent fraying while I was working with the fabric. I stitched the construction seams together by machine and followed that with hand finishing all of the seams with flat felling the seams. After the body of the drawers were put together, I hemmed the leg openings by hand. I pleated the body of the drawers into the waistband and closed the waistband with a whip stitch.

I cut two strips of the same linen that was used to construct the drawers and serged it to keep it from fraying and then transferred an embroidery pattern from Il Burato to the linen with a washable marker and light board. I used silk thread in purple and black to embroider the strips in a chain stitch. I also used some of the black silk thread to chain stitch around the opening of the drawers. After the embroidered strips had been washed to remove the marker, ironed again, and was ready to be applied, I hand stitched the embroidered strips to the leg openings using a slip stitch at both the top and bottom edges of the strips. I followed that up by hand stitching a purchased lace from my stash that is visually similar to punto in aria lace using a running stitch. Lastly, I put a buttonhole by machine into the waistband and stitched on a metal shank button for closure. For the final photographs several months



Figure 6: Completed Brache



Figure 7: Extant Camicia housed in the Met Museum, shown in Patterns of Fashion 4.

later, the button had to be moved in by 2" to take in the waistband.

**Camicia:** The camicia is based off of an extant piece that is reportedly housed in the Met Museum, but my searches to date have not found it when I am searching there. This camicia is also described in great detail in Patterns of Fashion 4 as item #72 on pages 55 and 112. This extant smock is described in Patterns of Fashion as "linen women's smock embroidered in purple silk and silver-gilt thread. The bobbin lace at the neck is made of white linen, purple silk and silver gilt thread. The wristband fastens with a loop and button" (Arnold, p

55). Moda da Firenze describes camicias as “worn directly over the skin, were always in vegetable fiber, the richest being made of the finest and most transparent linen...Towards the end of the century the fine turban cloth from the Levant also came to be used in Florence for ladies’ smocks which were then adorned at the hem and neck with ‘pointed lace like the surplices of the Monsignors” (Orsi-Landini, p. 125) Eleanor of Toledo’s son Francesco made smocks part of his wedding gifts to his wife Giovanna di Austria on the 10th of January 1566 that were described as “10 smocks in worked linen with Spanishwork and gold and raw silk” which were followed up with 23 more smocks the following June described as “with the collar, the front, and the sleeves embroidered in black silk” (Orsi-Landini, p.125). Please see Appendix B: Camicia following the references page at the end of this document for the process I used to create this camicia.

**Supplies:**

- 3 yards of handkerchief weight white linen
- Thread, Scissors, Pins, Needles, etc.
- Machine Embroidery Hoop
- Silk Embroidery Yarn in Purple & White
- White machine made lace
- Sewing Machine & Serger
- Digital Machine Embroidery Files



Figure 8: Machine Embroidered sleeve

**Process:** Completed April - June 2020

Part of why I wanted to do this particular camicia is because of the purple embroidery, monochrome or polychrome embroidery is seen on many extant camicias but often they have red or black as the embroidery color of choice, this one to me is unique because of the embroidery color. My camicia was cut out based on the pattern in Janet Arnold’s Patterns of Fashion 4, item #72 on pages 55 and 112, this extant piece is housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in



Figure 9: Insertion Stitch

New York. I used

3 yards of handkerchief weight linen. The pieces were cut using the period loom width of 28 inches. All of the pieces were serged to prevent fraying while hand stitching and embroidery was planned for the entire piece.



Figure 10: Wood Thread Wrapped Button Closure

The first incarnation of this camicia was started several years ago and involved me copying the pomegranate and flower motifs for the sleeves and embroidering them by hand with silk floss. The first sleeve got about half way done over the



Figure 11: Smocking Embroidery Detail

course of several months, when it was misplaced or I became sidetracked with other projects. When it was found a couple of years later, the sleeve had something spilled on it and was ruined. Her Excellency Miriam of Unser Hafen had digitized these patterns for machine embroidery and gave me a copy of these files to use for the current project. I knew that the embroidery would have to be done by machine if I wanted the camicia to be completed in anything less than a couple of years. The sleeves were gridded at 3 inches both horizontally and vertically for the embroidery motifs. The motifs were

embroidered using water soluble interfacing, purple and light gold machine embroidery

thread and a digitized patterns of the flower motif and pomegranate motif from the extant camicia. Embroidering of the sleeves and arm gussets was started in April and completed in May. The body pieces of the camicia were hemmed on all four sides by hand and then the process of stitching it together using the same purple silk thread from embroidering the drawers and stockings was used to stitch the camicia together with an insertion stitch made up of a cretan stitch and buttonhole stitches. The insertion stitch completed the main construction seams of the body. I then made 1" wide bias tape from the scrap linen of the camicia. After the bias tape was made, I then proceeded to do the running stitches for gathering the smocking on the body front, body back and both sleeve cuffs using upholstery weight sewing thread. The gathers were pulled up to make smocking pleats and the neckline and cuffs were hand stitched to the bias tape using a double whip stitch similar to what is used for cartridge pleating. After stitching the neckline and cuffs to the smocking pleats, I added lace to the cuffs similar in style to several pictures in Patterns of Fashion 4. All of the lace was hand stitched to the camicia using a running stitch. After adding the lace, I used the same purple silk thread and white silk thread to do smocking embroidery stitches using the outline stitch, the cable stitch, and the trellis stitch to the smocking pleats. After the smocking embroidery was completed, two thread wrapped buttons were made for closures to the wrists and stitched onto the camicia along with two small portions of finger loop braids. The buttons are wood core beads, wrapped in white pearl cotton with the purple silk used for spines and the finger loop braids are made with the same white pearl cotton. To finish the camicia up, a line of chain stitches was stitched in the purple silk thread along the bottom edges of the lace at the neck, wrists, and cuffs.



Figure 12: Completed Camicia



Figure 13: Extant Calze housed in the Met Museum, shown in *Patterns of Fashion 4* and *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*.

**Calze:** According to Bruna Niccoli and Roberta Orsi-Landini in *Moda a Firenze*, in 1562 Cosimo de Medici outlawed silk stockings for the ladies in Florence, and Lisabetta Bonsi had stockings made of wool cloth and two pairs in “knitwork” as part of her wedding trousseau (Orsi-Landini, p. 146). For my calze, I looked at an extant example of Linen Stockings from Italy Housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art embroidered with Silk and Metal Thread. This particular pair of stockings is also shown in *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* by Janet Arnold on page 207 and are described as “White linen stockings, or hose, embroidered with colored silks and silver and gold metal thread. Possibly made without feet, or removed because they were worn out. Close up shots of these hose are also shown in *Patterns of Fashion 4* as item #66 on pages 52 and 107.

Italian, late sixteenth century.” I

decided to utilize the smaller pattern on page 202 of *Il Burato* to have it coordinate with the pattern on the brache.



Figure 14: hand stitching the foot bed to the toe and flat felling the seams

### Supplies:

- 1 yard of hanky weight linen
- Thread, Scissors, Pins, Needles, etc.
- Embroidery Hoop
- Silk Embroidery Yarn in Purple & Black
- White machine made lace
- Sewing Machine & Serger

### Process: Completed May 2020

I utilized a pattern that I drafted several years ago, making a change to it by adding a ¼ inch seam allowance that would allow me to serge the fabric prior to hand stitching. I used some handkerchief weight linen that was repurposed from a failed shirt that was started and never finished a couple of years ago because it was cut too short for the person it was intended for. The body panels of the failed shirt were large enough to get all of the bias cut pieces of the pattern for the stockings out of it.

I also cut strips of fabric out of one of the side panels of the shirt to be embroidered. I used the smaller version of the embroidery pattern from *Il Burato* on page 201 that is complementary to the pattern used on my drawers. I also used the same silk thread in purple and black to complete the embroidery on this piece that was used on the drawers as well as doing the same



Figure 15: Completed Calze

chain stitch. This time, I used a water soluble interfacing to copy the pattern and apply it to the linen strips to help keep the pattern from warping in the hoop. Following completion of the embroidery, the strips were washed to remove the marker and interfacing.

After the embroidery was complete, I began by hand stitching the stockings together by first stitching the embroidered piece to the top of the leg using an insertion stitch to attach the strips at the top and the bottom to the leg. After the embroidered strips were applied I used a running stitch to apply the same venetian style lace to the tops of the legs over the embroidered strip. Following attaching the embroidery and the lace I began hand stitching the toe piece to the foot, then the clocks across the top of the arch, followed by the heel and then the back seam of the leg all using a back stitch for strength. After the structural stitching was completed, the back leg seam and the arch seam were flat felled.

The seam going around the footbed was flat felled to one side only with both pieces of fabric stitched up towards the body of the foot instead of under the foot. Flat felling was done for comfort during wear on the seams.

**Cinte Per Gambe:** Garters were described in *Moda A Firenze* from the wardrobe accounts "as almost all in red taffeta with the exception of two white pairs and two yellow. Although the notebooks of the guardarroba do not mention them, it seems logical to suppose that these were edged with lace or



Figure 17: Inkle Loom warped & started weaving

precious trimming, albeit possibly less showy than the fashion of the end of the century, when they became similar to those of the men.

The garters were worn tied below the knee" (Orsi-Landini, p.147) In my research of garters, I located an

extant pair that are woven and held in the Colonial Williamsburg Museum and are listed as red and ivory silk woven either in the Mediterranean or Jerusalem for export from 1649. While this extant pair falls outside of the sca time frame, it does show that tablet woven garters may have come from the Italian city states not too long after this gown would have been fashionable.



Figure 16: Extant tablet woven arter held at the Colonial Williamsburg Museum from 1649

### Supplies:

Cotton Thread size 10 in Black White, and Purple  
Scissors

Fray Check  
Inkle Loom & Shuttle  
Thread for Heddles

**Process:** April 2020

I originally planned to do the band for the garters as a card or tablet woven band, however several of my cards have gone missing so I changed plans and decided to do a plain weave inkle band instead. I began by plotting out an inkle band through the inkle band pattern generator on <https://carolingianrealm.blog/PatternGenerator.php> . Then I warped my small inkle



Figure 18: Completed Cinte per gamba

loom that works up to be about a five foot band. I wove the band using black, white, and purple cotton crochet thread that was in my craft stash. After weaving was complete, I used fray check to seal the ends of the band and put a section in the center to be able to cut the band in half to make two garters. After the fray check was done drying, I recycled a set of brass buckles from a previous pair of leather garters that the strap had broken on because the leather was too thin. I pushed the prong of the buckle through the band and hand stitched the strap together as well as the ends of the straps with a whip stitch through the area that was fray checked and a back stitch above the area that was fray checked for

strength.



Figures 19a - 19c: Completed front, side and back views of the first layer undergarments.

## Structural Clothing Layer 2

**Sottane** For the petticoat, I took inspiration from two paintings. The first being an Allessandro Allori Fresco that is housed in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence and was created between 1575 and 1578 known as a “Woman at Her Toilet.” The second painting I found in Patterns of Fashion 4 and is a painting of Eleanor Vernon from England by an unknown artist circa 1600. What I found interesting and inspirational about these



Figure 20: Allessandro Allori Fresco "Woman at her Toilet, 1575-1578, Florence

pictures, was that they showed a petticoat as a single skirt not connected to a bodice that could be made of a different fabric than the bodice or stays. “It is significant that in Eleanor’s wardrobe there is no record of petticoats made up of only the skirt until the second half of the 50s. Although still very few, the number of these began to grow from this time on, confirming the trend of the return of the petticoat t a secondary role in relation to the gown” (Orsi-Landini, p. 80) Farthingales are different from the petticoat in that they have cords or bents to give them shape and were being worn in Florence during the 1570s as evidenced by the notebooks of the Guarderoba where they begin to make appearances in 1565. These paintings give evidence that the petticoat may have been worn instead of a farthingale.



Figure 21: Portrait of Eleanor Vernon, England, 1600, unknown artist

**Busto di Sotto** The Busto di Sotto is commonly called a set of stays or a pair of bodies. The extant pair of bodies from Eleanor of Toledo’s tomb appear to be soft and were most likely used for warmth rather than supportor structure. However, “from the records of the Guardaroba, the stays appear to be garments complete in themselves, there is no mention of a skirt to match or be sewn to the stays, even if the stitches discovered on the lower hem of Eleanor’s funeral stays suggest that there probably was one. There are no stays in the wardrobe of Camilla Martelli or the little Virginia, while they are mentioned for Eleanor’s daughters as well as a pair in 1566, possibly for Giovanna, with tabs at the waist” (Orsi-Landini, p. 132) What this suggests is that there may have been structural stays similar in shape and function to the ones in the portrait of Eleanor Vernon as well as the softer stays from Eleanor of Toledo's tomb that look similar to the Woman at her Toilet Fresco by Allessandro Allori. The portrait of a Venetian Courtesan in Patterns of Fashion 4 circa 1600 similarly indicates a set of stays under her dressing gown over the smock that looks to be structural in function.

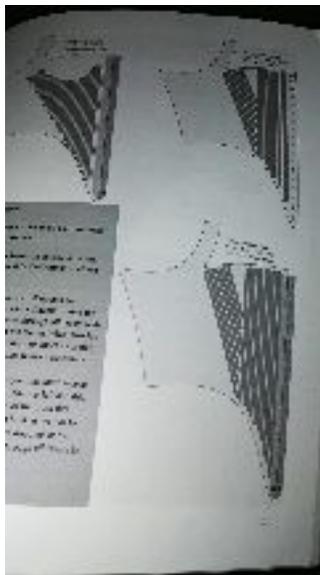


Figure 22: Figure used for laying out boning for stays from A Modern Maker Volume 2

### Supplies:

4 yards of medium weight purple linen  
1.5 yards of bronze dupioni silk  
1 Yard Linen Canvas  
Thread, Scissors, Pins, Needles, etc.  
Cotton Crochet Thread  
Brass Rings  
Hooks & Eyes  
Sewing Machine & Serge

### Process: June & July 2020

I began the stays and petticoat by custom drafting a corset pattern utilizing the method of the Elizabethan Corset Pattern Generator with some consideration taken for the process that is outlined in the Modern Maker #2, in particular the adding of straps and shaping of the back of the stays. I chose to go with a front opening set of stays for ease of getting into them by myself and I also chose to do a single piece of fabric set of stays rather than ones with back seams as I felt this was a possible weak point where the seams could split since I am a fluffy girl. I cut the pattern



Figure 24: handworked eyelets & silk Bias tape

out in 2 layers of linen canvas interlining, one layer of linen lining, and one outer layer of a bronze colored silk. I also started a kumihimo cord using a dark purple pearl cotton for the lacing cord of the stays. For the sewing, began by serging the layers of the stays together along the front sides and the bottom of the stays. After serging was completed, I machine stitched in the boning channels at  $\frac{3}{4}$ " for the boning in the front and back of the stays following the pattern in Modern Maker #2. I decided to use  $\frac{1}{2}$ ' wide reed for the stays that was purchased in rolls. After the channels were stitched in place, I cut the pieces of reed using craft scissors and used a piece of sandpaper to round and smooth the ends of the reed. I decided to use 2 pieces of reed in each channel which helped with straightening the reed that was curled from being in a roll.

After all of the reed was placed in the channels, I made bias tape from some scrap purple silk from my stash. I used the bias tape silk to encase all of the edges of the stays. The bias tape was stitched on by hand starting on the fashion fabric side of the stays, on the inside of the bias tape. The bottom and top edges were stitched in with a back stitch to add strength to the seams that would help keep the reed in the casing, the rest of the first stitches along the straps and front edges were done as a running stitch. After the bias tape was stitched completely along the fashion fabric side of the stays, the bias tape was folded over and hand stitched using a slip stitch to hide the stitching on the inside of the stays.



Figure 23: hand stitching the guard to the petticoat

Figure 23: Cutting & shaping reeds into boning for stays

I handworked the eyelets over brass lacing rings to help give them strength in the same pearl cotton that was used for the lacing braid. The eyelets were worked in a button hole stitch. After the eyelets were completed, I finished the kumihimo braid for lacing the stays and hand stitched it into the bottom left of the front of the stays.



Figure 25: hand stitching the guard to the petticoat

Following the stays, I began the petticoat that is made from the same linen that is the lining of the stays. I decided to do a basic 3 panel skirt with a waistband.

Three panels were cut at full fabric width and then serged along the weft. The panels were cut long enough to add wool felt to stiffen the hem line and fold this over into the hem. The panels were machine stitched for construction, followed by hand finishing the seams in a flat fell. Five widths of wool felt were cut at 2" wide for the hem stiffening. The wool felt was machine stitched to the inside of the skirt, which was then folded over to encase the wool and hand hemmed down. Four widths of the bronze colored silk was cut on the straight grain in a 2 inch guard. The guard was serged and the panels stitched together to make one long strip. They were then hand stitched along the hem line at the bottom and two inches above with a slip stitch to hide the stitching and hide the visible edge of the hem because of the stiffening in the hem stitching at the bottom of the skirt.

After the hem and guard were finished being stitched, I serged the waistband, and then pinned knife pleats into the skirt. I decided to only pleat the skirt around the back of the skirt to the hips to keep from adding bulk along the front at the waist line. I machine stitched the pleats in place onto the waistband and then hand finished the inside of the waist band. To finish the petticoat and stays, I added two flat skirt hooks and eyes into the waistband to close the petticoat.



Figure 26: detail from The Swordmakers Workshop fresco, Ludovico Buti 1588

**Gorgiere:**

Partlets were used to cover the neckline and bust when they were worn beneath a Sottana and are in evidence in almost all of the portraits we have from Florence during this time. Ludovico Buti created a fresco called 'The

Swordmakers Workshop' in the Galleria degli Uffizi in 1588 that in the details shows a woman with her laundry line. Visible in the detail is a partlet hanging on the line which gives an idea to the shape of a partlet that we do not see in the portraits underneath the gowns. These can also be seen in Allesandro Allori's fresco 'The Maiden's Quarter' in the Palazzo Pitti from 1580. Moda a Firenze gives the



(probably Camilla Martelli), 1570s

description of partlets as “Towards the mid 1550s, at the same time as the diffusion in Florence of gowns with a collar raised behind the neck, the elaborate veiling partlets also came to be enhanced with collars of a much more important and at times complex structure, with a very high band, often gathered, sometimes fastened with a series of laces which were usually worn open having a largely ornamental function. Such collars often featured extremely elaborate workmanship in the form of embroideries, lace, appliques of gold cord and spangles. As well as the lace in gold and silk, the collar was further embellished with ruffles which did not end at the outer hem but extended progressively around the opening and down the breast, giving rise to type which was to enjoy great popularity in the 1560s. In the following phase of evolution, the ruffle became closed at the bottom to form a continuous ring, which leaving uncovered the throat and the upper part of the bosom, enhanced the contour of the neck and the inevitable string of pearls which encircled it.” (Orsi-Landini, p.122) For my partlet, I specifically looked at the Allesandro Allori “Portrait of a Lady” (probably Camilla Martelli) from the 1570s. This portrait was interesting to me because of the gold cord and lace on the edge of the partlet and looks very similar in shape to my original inspiration portrait for the project.

### Supplies:

1/2 yard White Silk Cotton Blend  
3 yards of Gold & White Braided Trim  
1 yard Ribbon Elastic  
Thread, Scissors, Pins, Needles, etc.  
Hooks & Eyes  
Fusible Interfacing  
Sewing Machine & Serger



Figure 28: hand finishing flat felled seams

### Process: October 2020

For my partlet, I purchased a silk cotton blend back in the spring. I started by cutting the partlet based on the Margo Anderson Pattern. I serged the edges because I wasn't sure how much this fabric would fray. I machine stitched the shoulder seams. After I machine stitched the shoulders, I began hand



Figure 29: Completed Gorgiere

finishing all the hemmed edges around the outside of the partlet. After I completed the hems, I machine stitched 3 pieces of fabric together to make a long strip for the ruffle. I flat felled the two seams and then hemmed the ruffle on all four edges by hand. After the hemming was complete, I stitched some gold and white trim onto the outside edge of the ruffle with a running stitch. I chose to do the trim on the ruffle to give it a similar feel to Allesandro Allori's Portrait of a Lady from 1570. To finish preparing the ruffle, I ran a ¼ inch running stitch using upholstery weight thread along the inside of the ruffle to be used to gather the ruffle. After the ruffle was prepped and ready, I machine stitched the collar together. To help the collar stand I used 2 layers of fusible interfacing inside the collar. I machine stitched the outside

edge of the collar to the neckline of the partlet. After the collar was attached, I hand finished the inside of the collar. I then drew the ruffle up using the gathering threads and attached it to the collar and front of the partlet using a double whip stitch on the top and then a single whip stitch on the under side of the ruffle. After the ruffle was attached, I added some of the same trim used on the ruffle along the front opening edge of the partlet and around the base of the collar. I then cut 1 yard of decorative elastic into 4 sections for ties and machine stitched the elastic to the outside bottom corners of the front and back of the partlet. I then stitched in 2 hooks and eyes, one at the bottom center opening of the partlet, and one at the opening where the ruffles meet.



Figure 30a - 30c: Completed Front, Side, and Back Views of the Structural Layer (layer 2)

### Sottana (Petticoat Gown, Layer 3)

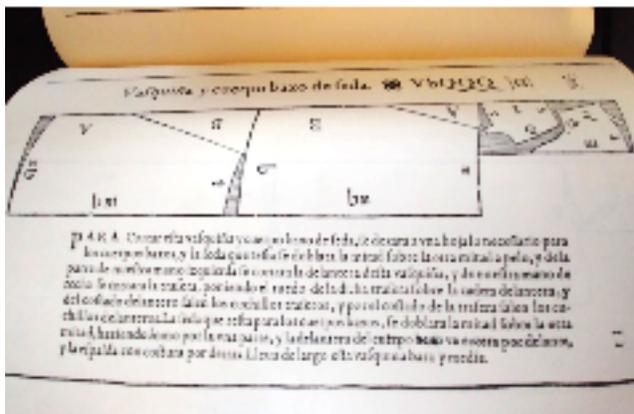


Figure 31: Folio 59a Kirtle and low-cut bodice of silk pattern from the Tailor's Pattern Book, 1589 by Juan Alcega

Eleanor of Toledo was the Duchess of Florence married to Cosimo de Medici. She introduced the style and shape of the gowns she was known for when she came to Florence at the beginning of the 1540s. This style of gown is known as a sottana and was a change from the style previously popular in Florence with the large puffed sleeves and straight waistline. The other big style change that came with the new style of dress was the couched gold embroidery. This style of gown, because of the smaller sleeve caps, allows for a zimarra (overgown) which is a dublet styled gown or a loose style similar to a ropa that could have sleeves of its own, to be

worn over the top when going out in public. The style of gown remained in fashion from the early 1540s past the time of her death in the 1560s and can be seen in portraiture well up to the 1590s. “In the twenty years in the middle of the century when the petticoat began to take over the role of gown, it was generally composed of three elements: the bodice (*imbusto*), the skirt (*falda*) with or without train (*senza o con la coda*), and the sleeves. These could be made and

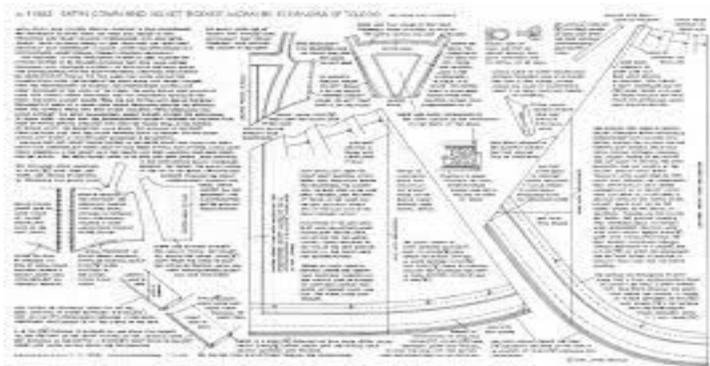


Figure 32: Drawings of Eleanor of Toledo's Burial Gown, Patterns of Fashion 3, Janet Arnold p. 104

worn separately, and attached at the moment of dressing by means of laces or ribbons. While the sleeves were generally detached, the bodice and skirt were stitched together, a fundamental condition for the petticoat to become an outer garment to all effects and purposes”

(Orsi-Landini, p. 79). Juan Alcega shows a pattern for a gown that is described as a kirtle and low-cut bodice of silk in his 1589 Tailor's Pattern Book that looks very much like the drawings from Patterns of Fashion 3 that are of Eleanor of Toledo's extant burial gown.



Figure 33: 1500s Wool Linen Blend House Dress housed in the Palazzo Reale National Museum in Pisa

For period examples of this style of dress, I looked at an extant garment from the late 1500s referred to as a house dress that is also housed in Pisa at the Palazzo Reale National Museum. The gown was published by Anea of Anea's Costume Files and photographed by the website author, who professes to work in dress history and as an art docent. This gown is made of a linen and wool blend and has a four panel straight skirt with a center front seam. As fabric at this time was typically 28" in width, a four panel skirt would be 112 inches wide.

### Supplies:

- 8 yards White & Gold Silk Blend Brocade
- 2 yards of Purple Silk - hand dyed
- 1 yard of Linen Canvas
- 1 yard of Hanky Weight White Linen
- 4 yards of White Cotton Muslin
- 4 yards of Gold Silk Ribbon
- Japanese Gold Thread from DMC (6 Spools)
- Thread, Scissors, Pins, Needles, etc.
- Hooks & Eyes
- Brass Rings
- Cotton Crochet Thread in Cream
- Ecru Poly Decorator Cord
- Brass Aiglets



Figure 34: Hand Dyed silk against the velvet for the zinnia

Glass Pearls  
Brass Jewelry Findings  
Jewelry Pliers  
Sewing Machine & Serger  
Rit Dye

**Process:** Completed July - September 2020

*Imbusto (Bodice):* To start my sottana, I began by dyeing 2 yards of white silk to be used for trim. I wanted the silk to match the velvet that I plan to use for the zimarra so this process was long and drawn out because it took 4 dye baths to get it the right color. I enlisted the help of a friend to help me with patterning and fitting the first trial run of the



Figure 36: Portrait of an Unknown Man and Woman by Sophonisba Anguissola

bodice, which I was not happy with, so in August, I refitted and adjusted the bodice pattern for the sottana. Then I got the bodice cut out of the silk brocade for the fashion fabric that was purchased for this project along with a layer of linen canvas from my stash for the inner lining and a layer of white linen left over from the camicia for the lining. All of the pieces were serged to help prevent fraying. After the bodice was serged, I stitched the shoulder pieces together on the outer layer and flat lined the inner lining to the lining. After flatlining, I did channel stitching on the lining layers to simulate pad stitching the two pieces together. After channel stitching was done on both the front and back bodice pieces, the shoulder seams were stitched together.



Figure 35: Bodice pattern cut from linen canvas about to be cut into the silk brocade

At this point I decided to start working on the trim. I decided to utilize a portrait for the trim inspiration, “An Unknown Man and Woman” (once called Vasari and his Wife) by Sophonisba Anguissola. I chose this portraits because they both showed very simple trim on the sottana and the first showed the trim in a color that matches the veste rather than being a shade different than the sottana or a neutral color. I made bias tape trim out of the silk that I dyed in July in 1 inch width. After I made the bias tape, I proceeded with putting it on to the brocade layer bodice neckline with Japanese gold thread from DMC. I am using a twisted chain stitch to apply the trim as this looks very similar to a couched cord. After the trim was stitched on in two lines to the neckline, I machine stitched the bodice brocade layer to the lining layers and got it turned, leaving the neckline and waistline to be hand finished. I stitched some of the leftover linen bias tape from the camicia to the waist line on the brocade layer and then turned it under and hand finished the waistline with a whip stitch. I then hand finished the neckline with a slip stitch to hide the stitching and turn under the serged edge. After



Figure 37: Silk Bias Tape Trim Embroidered onto the bodice in Japanese Gold Thread

the bodice was finished I began the process of hand working eyelets along both the back and front back edges for lacing using a cream colored cotton crochet thread adding in the brass lacing rings for strength. I decided to use some poly decorator cord that was in my stash in an ecru color and matched the bodice well for the lacing cord. I stitched the cord into the inside of the bias tape at the waist line and then glued brass aiglets onto the cord after they were squeezed down with jewelers pliers to fit through the hand worked eyelets. Bodice needs to have lacing rings added to the shoulder straps and it will be finished.

### *Baragonni (Sleeves)*



Figure 38: Baragonni with buttons, lacing rings, silk lacing cords and pearl aiglets

In August, I began working on the sleeves. I started by patterning the sleeves from my favorite Margo pattern and then resized them down to be more slim fitted for this gown as they will be under another set of sleeves for the zimarra. I am utilizing the 2 piece sleeve pattern. I got the brocade and some linen for lining cut out for the sleeves and then serged. I then machine stitched the construction seams for both the linings and the brocade sleeves. Following the construction seams, I began embroidering the same silk bias tape trim onto the brocade sleeve cuffs using the Japanese gold thread in the twisted chain stitch. Following the embroidery, I cut strips of the brocade and strips of the purple silk to create a looped baragonni sleeve head for the tops of the sleeves, the strips were stitched together then serged, then the purple silk was stitched to the brocade into a long tube. I have cut the tube into three inch sections and turned it, then embroidered along the seam edges in a twisted chain stitch in the Japanese gold to mimic the trim at the cuffs and the neckline. There are 16

loops on each of the sleeves. After looking at the looped baragonni, I decided that they needed poofed fabric to help them stay in the position that I wanted. I tore two 4 inch strips of the white cotton silk blend that is for my partlet and serged them and stitched them into tubes. I then threaded the tubes through the baragonni loops and puffed it up. To secure the puffs, I slip stitched the ends of the tubes together on each sleeve and then did a few tacking stitches on the inside at the base of the baragonni. In September, I strung pearls and bead caps onto Silk Ribbon for the sleeve points, the pearls and bead caps for the aiglets, matching the ones used to make the buttons. I then stitched the points into the baragonni. I also stitched the buttons and brass lacing rings into the armhole of the bodice to attach the points to the bodice. The buttons are decorative as I had previously planned to run button holes at the top of the sleeves but the sleeves ended up a little too fitted for that to be an option.



Figure 39: Flat felling the seams of the skirt

### *Falda con la coda (Skirt without train):*

In September, I began the work on the skirt for the Sotanna. Three panels had been cut for the sottana to do a rectangular construction skirt with the weft edges serged to prevent fraying prior to September. After looking at the three panels for the skirt and working with the fabric for the



Figure 40: Cartridge Pleats at the waistline of the sottana

sleeves and the bodice, I made the decision to flat line the skirt panels to protect the floats of the brocade. I decided to use a light weight white cotton muslin from my stash for the skirt lining in part because it was the exact same width as the brocade and also because I wanted to keep the additional weight of the lining to a minimum. I cut three panels of the muslin and serged the weft edges. After the muslin panels were prepped, I stitched the bias edges of the muslin to the back of the brocade to flat line each panel. After the panels were flat lined, I stitched the long seams together leaving the tops of the seams open for the first 10 inches on both sides of the back panel.

I cut the front top of the skirt to shape the waistline where the skirt would attach to the bodice. After the waistline was shaped, I flat felled the construction seams for the three panels of the skirt by hand. Then four strips of 2 inch wide wool felt was cut and stitched together to create a long strip and then was stitched to the outside edge of the top of the skirt at the waist. This was turned over and pinned to prep the waist line for marking the cartridge pleating, the wool felt was to pad the cartridge pleats on the skirt. I marked the pleats at  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch intervals and ran the gathering stitches for the cartridge pleats. I left approximately 4 inches at each side of the center front waist to minimize skirt bulk on the tummy area. After the gathering stitches were run, I then cut 3 strips of the velvet that I will be using for the outer dress in 7 inch wide strips, and serged and stitched them into one long strip. I also cut 4 strips of wool felt at 3 inches wide. I stitched the wool felt to the outside edge of the velvet on the front side to be turned under and then stitched down on the underside of the skirt to pad the hem line, the other long edge of the velvet was flipped and stitched down to the skirt approximately 3 inches above the hem to create a guard for the brocade. I had originally planned to do the guard in the same silk as the trim rather than the velvet but after looking at a couple of my other gowns with silk on the bottom hemline and the damage of wear and tear on them I decided to go with the velvet for something that would stand up to more wear and tear on the hem than silk. After the machine stitching was completed on the guard I turned it under and hand stitched it down inside the hemline encasing the wool felt that was turned to the inside. After the guard was completed, I used the same gold thread in the same twisted chain stitch along the top seam edge of the guard to make it match the trim on the bodice and sleeves. Once I was completed with the embroidery, I drew up the



Figure 41: Embroidery at the wool felt stiffened velvet guard of the hemline

cartridge pleats and started attaching the skirt to the bodice. I used a double whip stitch on the inside of the pleats and attached the top of the cartridge pleats with a slip stitch. The moment of truth was here, I tried on the dress and was getting some odd pulling from around the openings of the skirts on the back side as I had pulled the gathering threads too tight when I drew them up. The weight of the skirt was also too much for the slip stitch and was pulling the skirts down. Take the dress off and reinforce the top edge of the skirt with a double whip stitch in upholstery thread and remove the bottom two strands of gathering stitches from the cartridge pleats.

**Buttons:** I made buttons out of jewelry findings based on a tutorial from my friend, Maridith Smith. I used glass pearls, decorative eye pins and flat eye pins along with bead caps. For the sottana, I used 8 mm champagne colored glass pearls, brass bead caps, and flat eye pins. These will be for attaching the sleeves to the bodice and buttons for the sleeve cuffs so they could be fitted. For the veste, I used dark purple 12 mm glass pearls, brass decorative bead caps, and decorative head pins. The method for creating these, bends the headpin into a shank and wraps some of the extra around the shank to hold the bead and bead cap tight to the underside of the headpin. I made 16 buttons for the sottana and 23 for the zimarra.



Figure 42: Glass Pearls made into buttons for the sottana and zimarra



Figure 43a - 43c: Completed Front, Side, and Back Views of the Sottana (gown layer 3)

#### **Zimarra (Overgown, Layer 4)**

Most of Eleanor of Toledo's portraits show her wearing a gown over her petticoats or sottanas that was referred to as a zimarra in the guardarroba accounts. These gowns were loose and flowing and resembled the ropa's of Spain and the men's gowns. In the late 1560s early "1570s on the overgown took on a slender form; as in the gown here too the collar is normally high behind the neck with revers of contrasting colour" (Orsi-Landini, p.116) For a historical reference

of an existing gown of this style, I looked at the Dorothea Sabina von Neuburg as outlined in



Figure 44: Dorothea Sabina von Neuburg dress, outlined in Patterns of Fashion 3

Patterns of Fashion 3 and is constructed to resemble the initial inspiration portrait. This gown consists of a bodice (imbusto), skirt with train (falda senza la coda), and baragaoni sleeves. For the trim I took inspiration from the Portrait of Catherine de Medici by Francois Clouet because it showed a single line of trim that maybe have been embroidered down and around the dress.



Medici, by Francis Clouet

### Supplies:

6 yards of Purple Cotton Velveteen  
2 yards White Wool Felt  
1 ½ yard Purple Linen  
1 yard Linen Canvas  
2 yards of Gold Poly Decorator Cord  
10 yards of Gold Trim  
Glass Pearls



Figure 46: Pad stitching the lining layers of the collar

**Process:** Completed October 2020- January 2021

*Imbusto (Bodice):* I began by enlisting the help of my friend, Rainey Clark, to help me with patterning the dublet style bodice. The fabric was then cut out and serged in October. I started the bodice by machine stitching the velvet outer layers (back, front sides, and collar) together. I then took the inner layers of the collar (silk for lining, wool felt, and canvas) and pad stitched them together into one piece. After all of the collar lining pieces were pad stitched, I machine stitched the rest of the lining together with the addition of a silk placard on the inside front of the bodice. The silk used for this was the same silk that was hand dyed and used on the sottana as trim. Next came the trim, I had purchased a cut



Figure 47: Hand stitching the trim onto bodice and skirts

work trim that is machine embroidery on top of a satin to be applied on from TrulyHats. The trim has an iron on adhesive to the back, after getting the trim ironed on, I whipstitched it down to make sure it stays on the gown. The trim was a bit of a time sink as I had to go all the way around both sides and through the open areas in the centers. After all of the trim was stitched down, I made 16 gold cord button loops. I then pinned the loops between the lining layer and the outer layer and machine stitched the layers of the bodice together. After the layers were stitched together,



Figure 49: Pianelle (shoes)

I hand stitched the silk placard down along its back side to the linen lining to keep it in place. I then machine stitched some of the silk bias tape that I had made earlier along the bottom edge of the bodice. I turned this under and closed up the bottom of the bodice with a whip stitch. Last step on the bodice was to stitch the buttons into place. The arm scyes are open at this point to be able to add in the sleeves.



Figure 48: Jewelry

*Falda senza la coda (Skirt with train):* Progress on the Veste in December included working on the skirt and the sleeves. I stitched the 3 panels together with the 2 side back gores for the skirt. I followed that up with flat felling the seams inside the skirt. Then I got the trim placement on the skirt and got it hand stitched down. To stiffen the hem, I cut 6 wool felt 3" wide strips and

stitched them together for the hemline of the skirts as described in Patterns of Fashion 3. I also cut 6 wool felt strips 2" wide and stitched them together for the waist line. There were also 3" wide strips of linen and 4" wide strips of linen cut to cover the wool felt at the hemline and waistline and to act as a front facing going down the front opening of the skirt. The wool and linen strips were machine stitched onto the front side of the skirt so they could be turned and then have the edges covered and hand stitched to the inside. The front facings were also stitched to the outside then turned in and hand stitched to the inside



Figure 51: Progress picture of the sleeve

of the skirt. After all of the facings were stitched in, the running stitches for the cartridge pleats were run every half inch on the front 2 panels, the back panel was run at 1 inch. The skirt was then hand pleated to the bodice with a double whip stitch on the top and bottoms of the pleats.



Figure 50: Feather Fan

*Baragonni (Sleeves):* The sleeves were made up with a linen lining, a false pouf lining of the silk and cotton blend that was used for the partlet, a canvas interlining the same size as the false pouf, seven strips of cotton velvet lined in the purple silk from my sottana that are trimmed out with the same trim as the bodice and skirt, and a band of the cotton velvet. To start the strips had the trim stitched onto them and then they were lined in the silk and turned. The layers of the sleeve were stitched together at the top of the sleeve with the lining, interlining, pouf, and then

strips. This was followed up by creating a piece of cotton velvet for an underarm strip that was lined with the silk but was not trimmed out because I had used the last of the trim on the sleeve strips and when the strips that matched the sleeve head were turned they left about a 3 inch gap along the under arm. I stitched the seam inside the sleeve and turned them back out, added the underarm strip and then stitched the band to the arm. I hand finished the band inside the sleeve. At this point I took some glass pearls from my stash and hand stitched them in between each strip and ran a line of running stitches along the center back of each strip to give it the double pouf on the sleeve. After the sleeves were put together they were machine stitched into the bodice and then the lining of the bodice was hand finished around the armscye.



Figure 52: Soccacia (pocket)

### Accessories



Figure 53: Muff

For me accessories are the pieces of the historical garb that make a person look like they have stepped out of a portrait. For this outfit I created a pair of pianelle (Shoes), a feather fan, jewelry, a socaccia (pocket), a zibellino, a muff, and a coif. I can document the style of the accessories through portraits, but most of the accessories have few if any existing examples. For the purposes of this

Queen's Prize, I will show the items final pictures, but I feel they are what I refer to as sca hacks since we don't have many extant pieces to guide us in construction and many of the pieces we do have require skills that are not in my wheelhouse. The items are what finish the outfit but I can not prove or disprove that how I did them was correct in any way shape or form, with the exception being the pocket, the muff, and the coif. If you would like to see how I made specific pieces of the accessories, they can be found online in my blog at <https://mandyreneee1976.wixsite.com/florentinelady/blog/categories/costume-accessories>



Figure 54: Zibellino

### Deviations from Period Practices:

This project took 10 months from start to finish, if I had not used a sewing machine I would still be embroidering the sleeves of the camicia along with hand sewing all of the construction seams. I have hand sewn one outfit start to finish and that one took me nearly a year. I used modern dyes because period dyes can be toxic and I have had several health concerns during this time. I also tried to use a lot of the things that were already in my stash of materials rather than buying more to create this project so what I had on hand is what I used during this time of plague.

**What I learned:** I learned that I really love the lace on the undergarments, it makes them feel much less functional and much more about being pretty. This project at the beginning was a challenge to see not if I could do it but if I would be able to finish with a 10 month deadline. I had started a skin out project in the past, and never finished it. Also learned that all the layers are

really important on cold days, the day we took the photographs was in the 20s, and for the most part I was not too cold. Add a wrap or cape and I would have been toasty warm.

**Where do I go from here:**

I really want to learn the punto in aria style of italian lace so that someday I can have hand made lace on my undergarments. The only accessories or garments that I feel like I could possibly add to this would be a cape and the hairnet when my hair grows back.



Figure 55a - 55c: Completed Front, Side, and Back Views of the Zimarra (gown layer 4)

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