

Elizabethan Smock

During my time in the SCA, I have been Viking. An Eastern Swedish Varangian from the 905's. Once I ventured into the 1400's. However, beyond that, I have not stretched my skills in patterning or construction.

I am part of another group that does historical sewing, Foundations Revealed. Recently, they held a contest which involved making a garment, and for that, I chose an Elizabethan Smock. I realized that this garment could also be entered in Queen's Prize, as I had been planning a late Elizabethan outfit to stretch my skills as an apprentice. I discussed my project with my Laurel, and she assisted me by letting me peruse her library.

The garment spans a 20-25 year period. Details of the style can be seen from the 1580's on. I have posted links to my inspirations. Many of the extant smocks had tons of embroidery or lace insertions, which hid sewing construction details. The extant garments in Janet Arnold's Patterns of Fashion 4 that I chose to base my smock on was heavily embroidered. Hence, I used more than one pattern to construct my garment.

I used a heavier linen than one of the originals, simply because it was what I had available. Other garments ranged in weight, so I didn't believe this to be an issue. I used pearl cotton, as I also had this to hand, and not the kinds of embroidery silks that would have been available in period. It worked well with the linen without shredding. The lace, purchased and in my stash, is similar in style to other laces I have seen on extant garments.

The actual garment was started on January 5th, 2021. It was finished February 2nd, 2021. It is entirely hand sewn. It will also form the basic foundation layer for a late Elizabethan garment to be completed later this year.

I found the construction of this garment to be a good challenge. As mentioned, I usually make early period Norse garments. I chose the smock and the gusset/gore details to stretch my skills. I found the triangular neck gussets very interesting. When looking at paintings of the period, it made the hang of the garments far more logical in my mind. The split top underarm gusset was another example of interesting construction. It was present in a variety of depths on a number of garments. It was a challenge to set it right, as well as to fell it.

The embroidery is sufficient at the moment, but I may still go back and add to it. Some of the garments were so beautiful. However, I simply didn't have the time to do more.

Overall, I enjoyed this project. I look forward to making the stays and the gown.