Introduction

The entry is a 1525 German Saxon court gown meant for nobility. The inspiration from this gown was pulled from a variety of gowns painted by the contemporary German artists representing the women of the Saxony region, with a heavy focus on Cranach, the Saxon painter commissioned to champion and promote the regional culture and heritage.[1]

In preparation for construction of this gown, an analysis of hundreds of Cranach paintings, from religious to mundane and portraiture, were examined. While sadly, no extant women's clothing has been noted pertaining to this style, contemporary clothing from neighboring regions, as well as the contemporary gown of Mary of Hapsburg, provides some insight to possible construction. Other sources, such as sumptuary laws, extant fiber analysis, tailoring notes roughly fifty years post period, and social and climate understanding lend to a further understanding of plausible construction for the iconic gown.

Figure 1: Cranach, Lucas. "Portrait of a woman." c. 1528.

The bodice varied with either a low neckline, high collar, or a low neckline with a shawl like garment which creates a high collar when worn. The gown is often seen with a white stomacher and a highly decorated band across the chest, called a bustfleck. However, variations include red, black, or gold stomachers or even a solid colored panel. See Figures 1-3. The bustfleck could be


Figure 2:Cranach, Lucas. "Saints Genevieve and Apollonia" c.1506.

[1] Ozment

the same color as the main dress, but was often a different color which matched the contrasting trim on the dress. It could be plain, decorated, brocade, slashed, or pictorial. See Figures 4-6.

The iconic Cranach gowns of Saints and the nobility also show skirts that are pleated all the way around the waist, requiring a large amount of fabric. Pleating itself will be discussed in more detail later.

Figure 4: Cranach, Lucas. "Sibylle von Cleve" c. 1530s.

The variation of the decoration can be seen in the portrait of the *Saxon Princesses* by Lucas Cranach the Elder, see Figure 7, representing court dress as indicated by the intricate gold, pearls, jewels, ostrich feathers, and elaborate jewelry.

Figure 3: Pencz, Georg. " Portrait of a woman" c. 1540

The women wearing the dresses wore their hair on occasion loose or braided but were typically seen with a cap that hid their hair, typically referred to as a goldhaube. The garment was aptly named as most representations show it as being primarily a golden colored fabric, often decorated with pearls or other geometric motifs and was worn alone or with a hat. See Figures 3-6.

Research into the German Saxon gown has also posed an interesting question regarding age appropriateness. While some indicate the gown is prepubescent only, a survey of ages of the women painted wearing this gown disprove this theory. However, Cranach was known to favor luminous, youthful beauty and was kind to the vast

Figure 5: Cranach, Lucas. "Judith" c. unknown

Figure 6: Cranach, Luca. "Portrait of the Lady of Schleinitz " c. 1526

majority of older women he painted by making them thin, young and pretty.[2]

Figure 7: Cranach, Lucas. "Three Saxon Princesses." c.1530

Some portrait examples include the portrait of *Katherina von Bora* who was 31 years old and the mother to three children[3] (See Figure 8) and *Katharina von Mecklenburg* who was 27 and bore her first child the year the painting was made[4] (See Figure 9). Further, in paintings such as an *Interior with a Child Birth Scene* by Lucas Cranach the Younger (See Figure 10) show midwives, *Christ Blessing the Children* by both Lucas Cranach the Elder (See Figures 11) shows mothers of newborn and toddlers, all show women past adolescence wearing the fashionable gown.

Figure 8: Cranach, Lucas. "Katharina von Bora" c. 1526

Figure 9: Cranach, Lucas. "Duchess Katharina" c. 1514

[2] Ozment 98
[3] Born in 1491, the first known portrait of Katherine von Bora was made in 1530 by Lucas Cranach the Elder.
[4] Born in 1487, Lucas Cranach painted her portrait in 1514, along with her husband's.

Furthermore, cloth and materials were expensive (to be discussed in greater detail later). And, unlike modern times where fashion changes quickly and clothes are (generally) cheap enough to dispose of rather quickly and have clothes for limited purposes (children's clothes, teen clothes, maternity clothes, nursing clothes, etc.), the same is not true in the 16th century. Fashionable dress was worn by all regardless of age, as evidenced by the fact that small children wore the same fashionable dress as their mothers or contemporaries. Such examples of this include the *Portrait of a Saxon Princess* and *Christ and the Children* (Figures 12-13).

Figure 10: Cranach, Lucas. "Interior with a Child Birth Scene" c.1530s

Figure 11: Cranach, Lucas. "Christ Blessing the Children." C. 1535-1540

Figure 12:Cranach, Lucas. "A princess of Saxony." C.1517

Figure 13: Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder. "Christ Blessing the Children." C. 1540-1550

Material and Colors: Evidence

Fabric choice, both the materials and the color, are important as they are regulated by sumptuary laws in many cases, have a profound effect on warmth and functionality of purpose, and are the outward show of wealth and status.

First and foremost is to determine the message you sending with your fabric choice. The materials were expensive and a beautiful gown made out of the wrong materials would change the status of the wearer as quickly as court politics.[5]

Second, the climate must be considered. Northern Europe, and Germany in particular, doesn't experience as nearly drastic of weather changes with current ranges from 1.5-22°C (34.7-71.6°F)[6] as the Northern part of the Midwestern United States. During the 16th century the temperatures were as moderate if not slightly cooler and drier than modern temperatures[7], necessitating several layers, with furs and wools to ensure warmth.

Sumptuary laws, which varied by city state in the area that is now commonly referred to as Germany, encouraged the use of native materials while placing strict bands on imported fabrics. In Nürnberg, restrictions were placed on silks, velvets, and brocades limiting them to only the very top of the class structure, along with cloths of gold or silver.[8] These restrictions included prohibitions on the use of these materials as linings and the subsequent slashing and puffing of the outer fabrics in order to expose the expensive linings.[9]

Under the Holy Roman Empire Imperial Orders written in Augsburg in 1530, noble women were also subject to sumptuary restrictions. Wives were permitted to have a total of four silk gowns, one of which could be of velvet and the remaining three of damask, but could not have pearls throughout or be made of silver or gold cloth. Trimming in pearls and silver was permitted only around the top and not to be more than an eighth of an ells width. A knight's wife may decorate with gold on the top, but again, subject to the eight of an ells width restriction. Additional gowns of other materials were permitted. Hats and coifs could be jeweled, but not more than forty guldens worth. Noble women were also permitted to wear up to

[5] Mellin
[6] Weather Online: Germany
[7] Pfister
[8] Greenfield
[9] Id

a hundred gulden's worth in golden chains, bracelets, neckbands, and other jewelry, with the exception of rings.[10]

The width of the fabric differed based on where it originated and varied based on fiber type.[11] While the width was not mandated everywhere, England helps provide some understanding as English cloth was required to follow standard widths of: "wool broadcloth, 63 inches; kersey (a type of wool), 36 inches; cottons and friezes, 27 inches; and silks, 20 to 22 inches."[12]

In the German city-states, fabric was measured as an "elle." Like the rest of Europe this was not a standard unit of measure like the yard or meter, but rather a subjective measurement of the seller that was typically determined by the distance between elbow and fingertip. The shortest known measurement was 15.86" and the longest was 31.93".[13] The standard modern conversion is 23.62".[14]

Figure 14: Threads dyed using natural dyes and mordents available during the 16th century in Europe.

Colors also played a pivotal role, as some dyes were more expense than others due to difficulty in achieving the color or the expense of the root/bark/insect/material that created the dye. Figure 14[15] shows a range of dyes on 100% lamb's-wool threads, which were available during the 16th century in England using natural dyes and mordants (used to allow the dye to adhere to the fiber). The predominate dyes of the period were madder, weld, woad, indigo,

[10] Maximilian I
[11] Reed
[12] Id
[13] Wikipedia – German Elle
[14] ConvertUnits.com
[15] Dying in the 16th Century

cochineal, fustic, brazilwood, and cutch, which could then be over-dyed with another dye to create a variety of colors.[16] Madder, depending upon how it is prepared, produces a beautiful range of reds from brick red to a bright turkey red. Cutch, produces a range of yellows. Both colors are also affected by mordants, which can either brighten or sadden the colors.[17] Different fibers will dye to different colors, further expanding the color range shown below. It is also important to note this is not the extent of the colors available, just the most commonly used.

There are few surviving German clothing pieces from this time period. The Mary of Hapsburg gown, Figure 15, a contemporary, is dated from 1520 and made from a silk damask that measures 22.83" wide.[18] The skirt, measuring 41.34" in the front and 48.82" in the back is comprised of four full length panels and 2 smaller circular pieces, for roughly 360.64" of fabric for the skirt in the silk brocade[19]. Dividing this by the yard, it would take roughly 10 yards for the skirt alone, plus an additional 100.29" (or 2.79 yards) for the sleeves, bodice and extra needed to complete the circular skirt, the gown takes roughly a total of 19.51 elles or 12.81 yards of the 22.83" wide fabric. Putting this in the modern standard of 45" wide fabric, it would take roughly 6.5 yards. This does not include the lining, the accent trim at the neckline or the cuff.

Figure 15: Mary of Hapsburg gown – Hungarian National Museum.

While this seems like an excessive amount of fabric for the time period, inventory records from 1498 regarding the purchasing fabric for two court dresses for Bianca Maria, Holy Roman Emperor Maximillian's wife, in 1498, 20 elles of red crimson damask and 20 elles of black damask were ordered in addition to 30 elles of statt zenndl (super light weight habbotai kind of silk) for underlining, and for trimming, 8 elles of glat tuch (unknown) and 1 elle of Londener Turch (unknown). Further 28 elles of black damask was ordered for an Unterrock (undergown) and 20 elles of stat zenndl

[16] Dying in the 16th Century
[17] Dying in the 16th Century
[18] Szent-Györgyi
[19] Id

and one elle of black husaken (unknown) as an underlining for the gown. [20] These gowns are of distinctly different designs, but show that fabric consumption by the upper class of this caliber was not unheard of.

While ties and lacing are abundant and familiar for quite a while by this time, hooks and eyes are also being used on garments.[21]

Material and Colors: My Gown and Underpinnings

Starting with the hidden layers, my hemd (shift) is made of 3.5 yards of white 3.5oz/handkerchief weight linen. Over the hemd is my unterrock (petticoat) which provides bust support and shaping. The body of the petticoat is made from .5 yards of hedge green 3.5oz/handkerchief weight linen and .5 yards of blue coutil fabric. The outer layer is 100% Indian silk that was hand dyed (I picked it up for a dollar a yard) and trimmed with a dark brown 100% dupionni silk, using approximately 4 yards of each silk in total. The skirt for the petticoat is lined in the same brown silk and the decorative Indian silk forms the top layer. The Indian silk required lining as it is extremely light and sheer.

For my Rock/dress, I used the following materials: 8 yards of a gold brocade of unknown fabric (likely cotton and polyester) purchased due to cost effectiveness and the outrageous costs of most wool or silk brocades, roughly 3.5 yards (I bought a lot because it was very inexpensive) of a dark navy blue twill wool that is very light weight and drapey, and 1 yard of deep red twill wool. Linen canvas[22] has been used for stiffening for the bodice which initially caused me some concern as I purchased it for increased breathability, but it wasn't anywhere as stiff as the cotton and that was before I washed it. However, once the layers were tightly quilted it did stiffen up and now provides amazingly great support without losing shape. I also purchased some iron-on interfacing with a medium stiffness to help give more body to the blue wool when using it for the sleeves and the "slashes" in the sleeves.

I used Gütermann polyester sew-all thread that color matched my fabrics for all machine sewing and hand sewing. While using fabric threads for finishing is a very laudable task, it can be very frustrating as the threads are weak and can be difficult to work with.

The all of my fabrics were 55" wide. If I convert just the main Rock to a 45" wide fabric for comparison purposes to the Mary of Hapsburg gown, I would have used roughly 10.7 yards in total for the skirt plus

[20] Inventory Order of Maximilian I
[21] Images of such can be seen in several extant garments, in particular (Arnold, Patterns of Fashion 4).
[22] This is the "linen canvas" from Fabric-store.com which is a 7.1oz.

another two for the body and sleeves, for a total of 12.7 yards. While that seems drastically more than the Mary of Hapsburg gown, it should be pointed out, that I am proportionately larger than Mary of Hapsburg. Further, and more importantly, as will be discussed further, the skirt construction is drastically different. The general fabric consumption is worth noting for both dresses in order to keep grounded on whether the techniques are plausible.

For the haube/hat I used a large scrap of black low pile polyester velveteen, again because of cost and availability of 100% silk velvets, a scrap of red 5.3oz/middle weight linen for the lining, and scraps of the red wool from the main dress for the band, along with synthetic gold trim.

Figure 16: Initial sketch for my gown.

Figure 16 shows the initial drawing for my gown, inspired by the many paintings and portraits I reviewed and pulled inspiration. There are two very notable and distinct aspects of my design. First, while the front placard is traditionally white, I did find a few different examples that were red, black, and gold, see Figures 1-3. Since the placard wasn't uniformly white, I opted for blue to match the main body of the gown to create the look I desired.

Construction - In to out/Up to down

Hemd

Depictions of the shift, also referred to as a shift, smock, chemise, or undershirt, vary in style from an opaque low necked and long sleeve loose fitting garment to a very sheer and almost invisible high collared garment, as seen in Figures 4,5,10. In some paintings it almost appears as if they didn't wear anything, see Figures 7 and 13. In several cases where it appears that no undershirt is represented, a closer look reveals the slightly paler or slight fullness of a sheer garment that hides under a golden bejeweled "necklace." Figures 17 and 18. Wedding gift sumptuary laws also provide insight that a hemds were not only viable wedding gifts, but that they were made of linen.[23] The fiber content is not surprising as it is comfortable to wear against the skin and would be durable enough against constant washing. Also in *Christ and the Adultress*, the *St. Barbara Center Alterpiece* and *The Fountain of Youth*,

Figure 17: Cranach, Lucas. "Judith with the head of Holofernes." C. 1530

Figure 18: Master IW "Judith with the head of Holofernes." C. 1525

[23] Greenfield.

women are seen in a state of undress wearing a low necked hemd, likely made of linen. See Figures 19-21.

These variations lead to a lot of confusion on how to best approach the Hemd and what was the most appropriate style. When considering the main purpose was to be a barrier that protected the main garment from the natural oils, perspiration, and potential odor (pre deodorant days), as well as provide something durable and washable, a two step approach was deemed appropriate.

Figure 19: Cranach, Lucas. "Christ and the Adulteress" c. mid-1540s

First, I choose light weight linen for the main Hemd that would serve as a barrier. I used a simple rectangular pattern found in similar extant garment throughout Europe. I then cut a low front and back neckline so it wouldn't show when wearing the main gown. The side and shoulder seams were machined and a serger used to prevent fraying in modern washing. The hem was also machine stitched. The neckline and cuffs were handsewn using a whip stitch.

Figure 20: Cranach, Lucas. " St. Barbara Center Alterpiece" c. 1540

Figure 21: Cranach, Lucas. "The Fountain of Youth." C. 1546

This main Hemd is durable and functional. For my second part approach, I still needed to address the issue of the sheer Hemd. The first issue was why bother since it appears that in some they weren't wearing anything. A review of sumptuary laws for nearby city states explains a possible reason for the presence of the near invisible Hemds shown in Cranach and other artisans' portraits. Under the 1485 Nürnberg Hochzeits-büchlein, the Nürnberg council forbade women from wearing garments cut too low

at the neck. "Too low" in the eyes of the city-fathers, was anything exceeding one finger's breadth below the throat. In the back of the collar might lawfully be half a quarter-ell lower.[24]

While these laws applied to Nürnberg and not the Ducal state of Saxony (for which I haven't found an English translation), assuming a similar law provides a possible explanation the reason for the ultra sheer covering seen in portraits, as my experience tells me this was neither for warmth or for protection from the sun. By wearing such a shirt, the wearer was clearly minding the letter of law, not the spirit. A review of sumptuary laws in comparison to contemporary portraits as well as changes to the law, reveal this type of behavior from the citizens to be fairly commonplace.

As a discreet shirt was now required, I opted to make it in the form of a partlet. This would allow for easy wear, with less bulk. Again, neighboring areas were already using such garments, especially for fine clothing and would be more cost effective use of materials. Also, Figure 22 shows an example of a German gollar (based on the ties under the arms and relevant contemporary portraits was worn under the main Rock/dress), made from linen with embroidery, dated around 1560,[25] which helps support that a simpler version would could have been in use in prior years as it is not too far of a stretch in the evolution of fashion.

Figure 22: Gollar - Inv. NR. 1994/0073

While I was unable to find a silk or linen as remotely fine as what is indicated in Cranach's paintings, I found the best modern equivalent I could and used a 2oz silk organza. This material is hard to work with on the best of days, and I honestly could be perfectly happy to never have to mess with it again.

[24] Greenfield.
[25] Gollar - Inv. NR.: 1994/0073

Figure 23: Cranach, Lucas. "Ill Matched Couple: Old Man and Young Woman" c. 1522

Before beginning construction, I examined several different paintings and portraits to try and determine the closures, as I never saw an opening indicated. This could be artistic interpretation, or that the view afforded by the artist didn't show it, but I was baffled that there was never a hint of a closure indicated. See Figures 23-24. In pondering possible construction without a slit for an opening to allow the head to pass through, the only option left was that the neck hole actually opened to be as large as the head and was somehow drawn closed in order to be more fitting. Since the opaque shirts always had decorative necklaces over the neckline, it is possible it covered a more durable material that would allow for a drawstring or smocked linen (which can allow it to act like an elastic if stitched correctly) to be under the decorative collar.

Figure 24: Cranach, Lucas. "Herod's Banquet." C. 1539

I tested this method using modern elastic stretched to just big enough for my head. Next I cut a strip of linen as long as my stretched elastic plus seam allowance and wide enough to cover both sides of the elastic with seam allowance. Using a long curved stitch to tack the stretched elastic to the linen on one

half, I then folded the linen to completely cover the elastic and sewed the ends to create a collar. Next, I cut a hole in the middle of my silk organza bigger than my head and gathered it into the linen/elastic collar stitching it in place.

To finish, I trimmed the edges of the silk so it would hang down long in the front and back and to just over the edges of my shoulders. I then used the rolled hem on my serger to finish the edges since they wouldn't be seen. Figure 25.

Over all, this works perfectly and actually a bit better than I hoped. A drawstring method or smocking would definitely work, but take a bit more time to construct and a little more effort to hide the ties under the collared jewelry. This method allows me to get dressed by myself with a bit more ease, and since you can't see it when I'm finished getting dressed, I will leave it with the modern elastic.

Figure 25: Sheer partlet and hemd

Strumpf (Hose)

While there are examples of earlier period hose and later period hose, the in between has been elusive. Of those found, the hose have been from the late 16th century, including the knit pair belonging to Eleanora of Toledo, another knit pair believed to belong to Queen Elizabeth, a linen pair with embroidered tops but no feet (Figure 26[26]), and a pair of men's made in the late 16th century meant to resemble a pair from the early 16th century.[27]

Figure 26: Extant stockings with embroidered cuff. C1600

As shown by the extant pieces, knitted hose, especially silk knit hose, gained favor over the cloth hose.[28] This is not to say that cloth hose became obsolete however, there are several records showing that Queen Elizabeth owned cloth hose throughout the 16th century.[29]

Of the various hose available, only the wealthy could afford knit silk hose due to the expense.[30] Other options, in order of cost included cloth woven silk (sarcenet) hose, knit wool, and cloth woven wool (flannel).[31,32] Linen hose would depend upon the quality of the linen ranging from a course spun to an extremely fine and expensive weave. Additions, such as embroidery, or the cost of dyes (hose came in a variety of colors) would also affect the price of the hose.[33]

Knit hose, however, require the obvious ability to knit. On the other hand, cloth hose made from materials such as silk, wool, or linen are within the reach of anyone who can sew by hand or machine. The remainder of this section will focus on the more general skill set of sewing. I will leave the knitted stocking discussion to those who possess the necessary knowledge.

[26] Arnold, Patterns of Fashion 4
[27] Schuessler
[28] Hribovi
[29] Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd
[30] Schuessler
[31] Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd
[32] Schuessler
[33] Schuessler

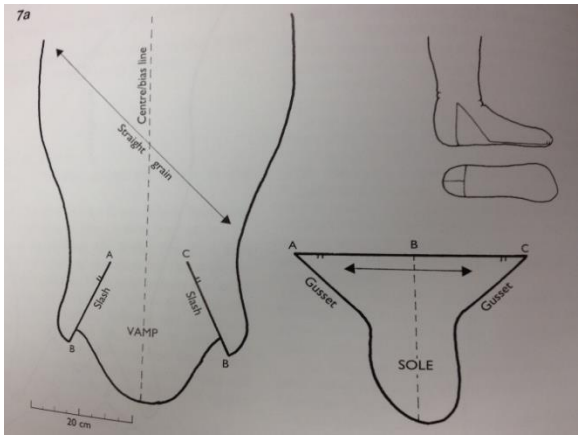

Figure 27: Diagram of Hose construction based on extant

Extant cloth stockings show that the body of the hose was cut on bias for form and fit.[34] Figure 27[35] is an example of the layout for hose construction based on extant stockings from the 16th century, with arrows noting the grain of the fabric. An alternative pattern is shown in Figure 28, the difference being the seam stopping at the base of the heel, rather than continue to the sole. This is not as historically accurate, but would allow a bit more comfort (no seam) and allow for additional sole padding to be added in case of thread bear or the want for additional warmth and/or cushioning. The hose could be decorated, often by embroidery, with wool, silk, or metal thread, typically on the cuffs which were folded over or at the "clockes" (ankles).[36]

Hose were stitched using a running stitch or back stitch, typically on the back seam. Seams were flattened and top stitched 2-3mm from the seam, with back seams having been overlapped 4-7 mm with an upright stitch along both edges.[37] Hose were held in place by strips of fabric or ribbon tied just below the knee. These strips of fabric or ribbon are called garters, and were needed regardless of whether the hose were knit or woven cloth.[38]

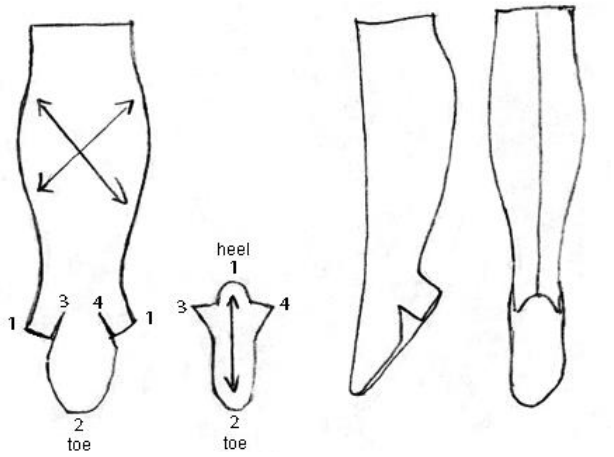

Figure 28: Diagram of Hose pattern

For my court gown, knit hose are the best option. However, I don't knit. Therefore, I purchased a pair of knit hose for my outfit, complete with the vertical stripe that was popular in the German city states as seen by Figure 29. I would note that this is a Landsknecht woman, but since very few pictures show women with their skirt up enough to see the

[34] Brescia, Women's Renaissance Hose and stockings
[35] Thursfield
[36] Schuessler
[37] Crowfoot
[38] Brescia, Women's Renaissance Hose and stockings

stockings, and then they usually aren't even wearing them, this was the closest I could find. There are plenty of pictures of noble men wearing striped hosen.

Figure 29: Schoen, Erhard. "Landsknecht und sein Weib" Woodcut. c. 1535

Unterrock (Petticoat)

Extant and contemporary wardrobe accounts indicate that bodice stiffening throughout Europe was prevalent. One way to stiffen the bodice would have been by quilting several layers of canvas together.[39] However, while this method provides some structure, it would not provide sufficient rigidity for the fashion in some regions such as England and Italy. Germany, however had less rigidity. A more effective method for creating the desired effect can be created by using buckram (glue-stiffened canvas), a method referenced in a Tudor wardrobe account.[40, 41] The addition of boning to a bodice, using reeds or bents, allows even greater control of the shape and the flattening effect.[42]

These contemporary construction techniques would not be unheard of in Germany, especially as the Italian influence was felt in Germany as indicated by various laws trying to dissuade the nationals from adopting Italian dress. While national dress varied, elements and techniques are transferable and can be seen in various contemporary paintings and are evidenced in sumptuary laws attempting to limit the use and exposure of foreign influences.

One major difference can be seen in the desired effect of the shaping garment. In England and Italy, contemporary paintings and portraitures indicate a desire for a very cylindrical shape, including the flattening of the chest. However, the Saxon gown allows for the natural curve of the chest.

Figure 30: Amman, Jost. "Furrier" – wood cut from Das Ständebuch. C. 1568

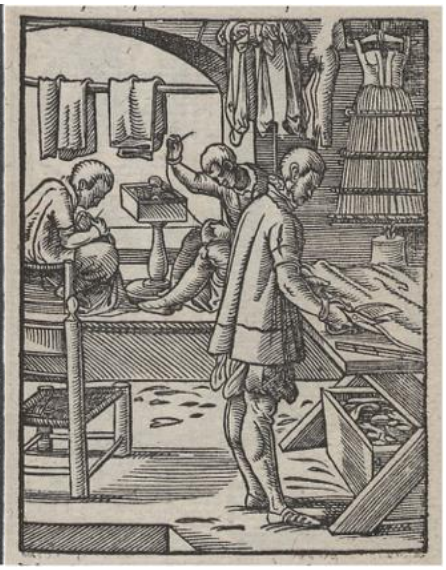

Figure 31: Amman, Jost. "Tailor" – Woodcut from Das Ständebuch. C. 1568

[39] Mellin
[40] Leed
[41] Mellin
[42] Id

Figure 32: Pencz, Georg. "The Story of Joseph." C. 1546

One way to achieve this is by creative placement of the quilting and/or reed/boning placement. German wood cuts show a distinguishing way of marking out the cup line on the bodice with attached skirt, where if it is less quilted, allows for the proper curvature of the chest, as seen in Figures 30-33. Further, with the addition of reeds to the internal structure of the bodice creates a more ideal silhouette like those portrayed by Cranach, something the fashionable would be eager to emulate. In addition, the reeds provide greater stability and strength in the bodice.

Figure 33: Pregnant woman with multiple children (11) from Medical text of Ambrose Pare c. 1575

The earliest extant structured garment is in fact a German pair of bodies buried with Pfaltzgrafin Dorothea Sabine von Neuberg in 1598, shown in Figure 34 (Dorothea Corset). It is made of three layers of cream-colored fabric, the outer layer being silk backed with linen and the inner lining of linen, and has channels, backstitched between the two layers into which whalebone was inserted and a larger pocket sewn down the front to allow for a busk to be slipped into the corset to completely flatten the front. It has tabs at the waist in the back, as well as small eyelets at the waistline through which the farthingale or petticoat could be fastened to the corset. Also, the armholes are rather far back, which is consistent with garments of the time allowing for the desired rigid posture of the time.[43] The corset has similar lines to the one in the wood cut, showing it likely evolved from it with the skirt removed.

Figure 34: German pair of bodies buried with Pfaltzgrafin Dorothea Sabine von Neuberg in 1598

It is not surprising that an additional layer would be worn underneath the main gown since as a practical matter it would provide warmth in the cooler climate. This would also be an additional way to show off wealth in rich and expensive fabrics and can often be seen in paintings as women hold their main dress exposing the rich underlayer. There are also various

[43] Leed

sumptuary laws indicating materials which can be properly used for such layers based on class.

From the portraits it does not appear to be limited to any specific color, being seen as grey, black, gold, and even a bright blue and a bright green.

To make my petticoat, I first patterned the body using a pattern I recently made for my landsknecht gown. I then cut the pattern to provide the correct neckline and lowered the back so it could be worn with low backed as well as high collard overgowns.

Figure 35: Inside of Unterrock showing boning channels.

Next, I took a lightweight linen in light green (which happened to be scrap from another project) and cut it and the coutil fabric according to my pattern. The coutil fabric offers a nice high density fabric that is lightweight and thin that will help shape without stretching or use of quilting or gluing. Next, channels were sewn following the pattern of channels in the Dorothea Corset. See Figure 35.

Mine more closely resembles the front lines of the Dorothea Corset by being longer in the front than the drawings show. I choose this so it would help create a more flattering and slimmer physique than if I cut it at the waist. I also wanted to ensure that the gathers from the skirt didn't push up or otherwise interfere with the overgown, especially as I am short waisted and am trying to create the illusion of a longer torso.

Since I was using two pieces of quarter inch flat oval reeds (back to back), I sewed 3/8 inch channels for the boning. The reed was cut to the necessary length for the channels. I like to take some extra steps to finish the reeds and prevent them from poking through. First, rough cut a rounded edge with your scissors. Using fine grit sandpaper (220 grit), sand the edges smooth. This takes extra time, but prevents sharp edges that can poke you or ruin the garment. Once the bones were finished, I threaded them into the channels and stitched the bottom of the channels in the front.

To finish and create more of the look from the drawings, blue Indian silk was cut to the pattern and put over the coutil. This creates a nice slippery surface for the overdress and makes the petticoat pretty as well. Next I stay stitched the edges, except for where the reeds were, and stitched the chest lines as seen in the drawings, Figure 36. I then used some brown dupioni silk to decorate the top and opening and

created a bias tape from the brown for under the arms and along the bottom of the bodice. This was hand stitched in place.

For the skirt, I cut three panels of the brown silk, sewing them together at the selvages, to line the blue Indian silk. The brown was then sewn to the bottom and turned. Next, the top edge was stay stitched together. See Figure 37. Finally, I attached the skirt using a cartridge pleat. See Figure 38.

Figure 36: Showing finishing with chest channel reinforcement.

Figure 37: Bias tape on edges.

Figure 38: Cartridge pleating of skirt.

Rock

Introduction: My observations and approach

Several recreations of the gown, and the one purported by the "Reconstructing History" pattern suggests making the bodice in the same fashion as the Mary of Hapsburg gown, see Figure 15, then pinning the bustfleck in place over the chest. The gown is then laced across the open front, showing the shift worn underneath.

This method does not reproduce the same look as seen in the portraits. First, the wrinkles created by the shift bunching are not reflected in the portraits, which for the exception of a select few, See Figure 39, show a completely flat and creaseless stomach. Second, the lacing pulls awkwardly on the sides of the gown when pulled to the necessary tightness to properly fit the bodice and prevent the shoulders from falling off, distorting the shape. Not only does it not look like the portraits, but the construction would be highly uncomfortable with lacing digging into the wearer's stomach. Further, it would be unflattering, especially for those with anything besides a fully toned stomach to have rolls in between the lacing.

Figure 39: Cranach, Lucas. "Portrait of a Woman." C.1522

While it could be argued that the painters touched up the portraits to show smoother stomachs and cleaner trim lines, this is doubtful. The poufs were clearly acceptable fashion as shown in sleeves and in pants of men at the time. If the gown did have such poufs in the stomach area, why suddenly desire to show it as flat?

In examining the possible construction of the gown, portraits such as the various depictions with states of undress done depict a smooth white piece, possibly a plastron between the sides of the main gown. The strings are clearly not laced, indicating they may be more visual than functional, especially when considering the solid inserts don't have lacing.

Figure 40: Anonymous Master form the Cranach Workshop. "The Suicide of Lucretia." C. 1520-1540

This theory is backed by the portraits of *Lucretia* c. 1540 showing a patterned inside of a plastron peeled down from her chest. Figure 40. Further, the gown pictured in *Christ and the Adulteress* by Lucas Cranach, the Elder, shows a broad white panel under the dress. See Figure 41. Unlike the dresses in the *Lucretia* portraits that are slipping off the shoulders due to the lack of a front panel, this dress remains firmly on the shoulders, despite the lack of lacing, which is loosely held to the side.

Another interesting aspect of the *Lucretia* c. 1530, Figure 42, is the section showing a waistband and the plastron hanging down loosely. The waist band was likely not a signifier of a separate skirt that could shift

Figure 41: Cranach, Lucas (the Younger. "Christ and the Adulteress" c. 1532

Figure 42: Cranach, Lucas. "Lucretia" c. 1530

and move, but rather a piece that hooked to the plastron to keep everything in place.

My gown is constructed on these assumptions.

Bodice

To begin, I drafted a pattern, which is best done over any supportive garments you plan to wear as they will ultimately alter the shape of the garment. This is said from experience as I initially planned on making this gown self supporting. Figures 45-47 show the fitting making various adjustments with the idea of the pattern being self supporting, using linen canvas. The canvas was cut with the grain going in three different directions (grain, cross grain, and bias) and quilted together at the top where there was no boning.

Figure43: The start of a pattern – no support

Additional linen was even added where the boning stopped in order to create smoother lines once the outer fabric was added. See Figure 48. However, it was still leaving a faint line in the outer layer of navy wool just from handling. Ultimately, I decided against having a gown with an internal structure and quilted over the channels (after removing the reeds) having opted for the unterrock to provide the support.

As can be seen from the Figures, the arm hole is as close to the shoulder joint as possible to allow for maximum mobility.

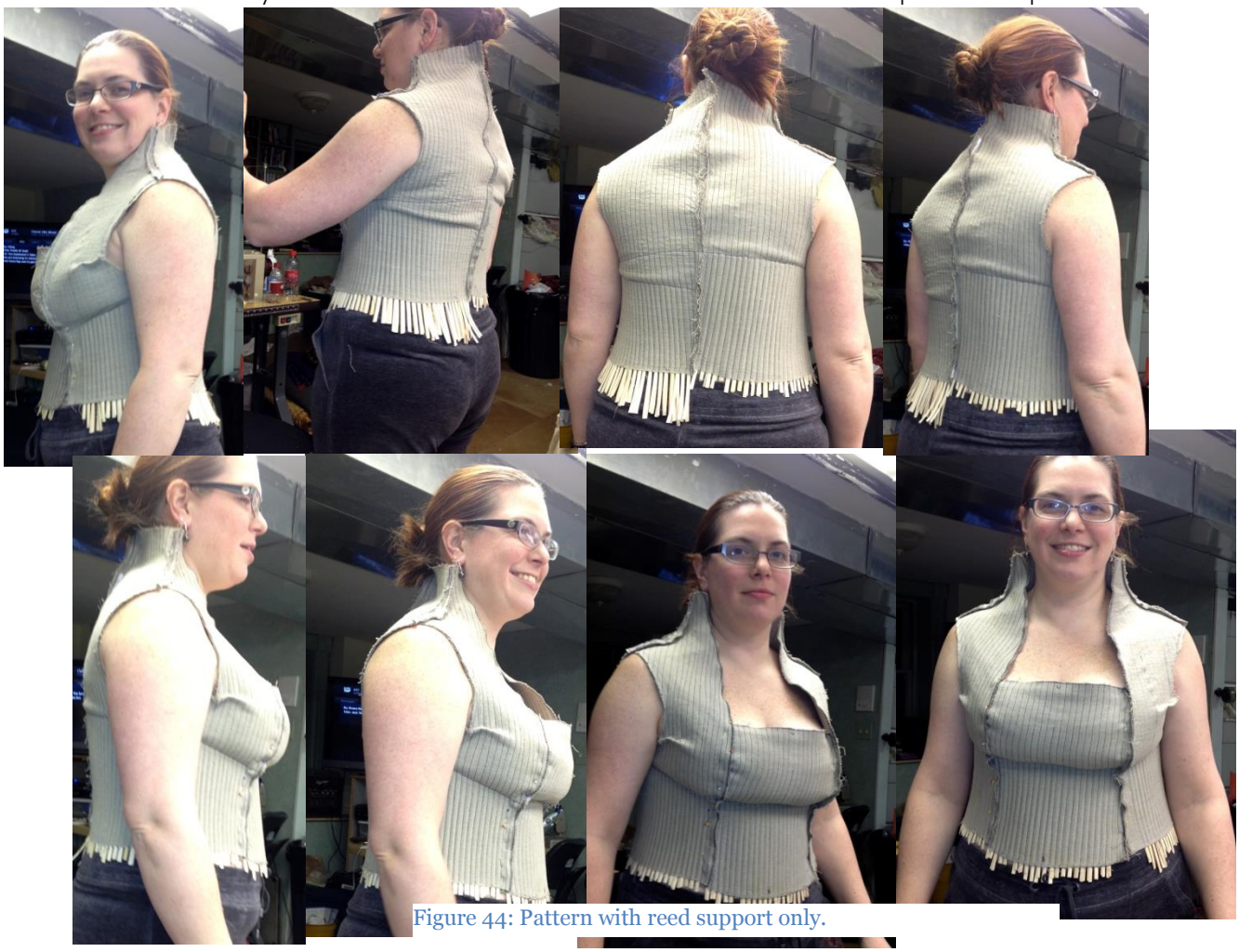

Figure 44: Pattern with reed support only.

Figure 45: Take 2 – tweaks and all.

Figure46: Extra layer to make smoother

Based on a survey of portraits, mainly various depictions of either the *Suicide of Lucretia* or paintings with women breastfeeding, I decided to lace both sides of the center front piece. This has a couple advantages. First, it makes the fit, with the exception of the waist area, very flexible regarding fit. Also, should I find myself in need of breast feeding, the Rock is easily adaptable. Finally, it is also easier to dress myself using the lacing method.

Therefore, I made two lacing strips from scraps of linen canvas, ensuring they were strong enough and covered them in the blue wool. Next I hand sewed the eyelets, using several strands of matching blue thread. The lacing strips were then sewn directly onto the quilted base, now ready for finishing.

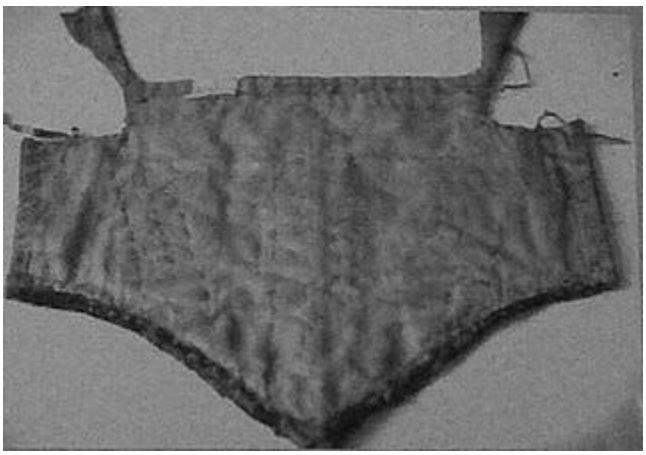

Figure 47: Extant Red Pisa Dress, c. 1550-1560

Based on contemporary extent pieces, finishing was done by wrapping the outer fabric around the stiffened core and the lining stretched to just shy of the edges and tacked along the inside. See Figure 47. This is the method I used for finishing. Using my pattern, I cut out the outer fabric of navy wool, adding generous allowance along the outer edges, but not the arm holes as it wasn't needed or the side seams, since they were sewn at the normal seam allowance. I then wrapped the outer piece around the stiffened piece, and tacked it to the inside. I then repeated with the lining, folding the edges of the white lining to just the inside edge of the

bodice piece. Carefully, I cut a slit just big enough to pull the lacing strips through and tacked in place, along with the rest of the edges. The same technique was used for the front placard and lacing holes were added to the sides.

Just to keep from fighting with everything moving, I found it useful to baste the armholes so all three layers (outer, stiffened inner, and lining) acted as one piece.

The sleeves are actually pieced together. A tight fitting sleeve was patterned, with the seam under the arm, similar to the Mary of Hapsburg gown, only tighter fitting. Lines were then drawn to indicate where each section of the sleeve would be, and pieces cut accordingly.

The puffs were created by cutting a base piece from the pattern. The red wool, which created the puff, was then cut in a rectangle slightly taller than the piece and roughly half the width of the fabric. This was then gathered to fit the piece and tacked into place, removing the excess as needed.

Figure 48: Sleeve construction progress

To create the slashes, first, the interfacing was ironed onto the blue wool as the blue had very little body and wouldn't hold the shape well enough without the interfacing. This was then cut into strips that were sewn into tubes, which were turned and ironed flat. The strips were then placed over the puff, again with a bit extra to allow them to bubble out a small bit. See Figure 48. This technique was repeated for each section of the sleeve that had the slash and pouf. The plain sections of the sleeve simply had the interfacing attached in order to give the fabric more body. The bell cuffs were cut from both the red wool and gold fabric.

Figure 49 shows different sleeve options considered before the final was set in. It should be noted that the fashionable trend of "slashing of outer garments pulling of expensive linings"[44] was prohibited for the merchant and lower class in Nuremburg, but was widely used by the Landsknecht, who held special exemptions from sumptuary laws, and prevalent with the noble class. Therefore, the very presence of slashing was likely an indication of status.

Figure 49: Sleeve options!

I choose colored insets based on Figures 50-53 showing that not all insets were white.

Figure 50: Cranach, Lucas. "Portrait of Johann Fredrich the Magnanimous from Diptych:Two Electors of Saxony. c. 1509

Figure 51: Cranach, Lucas. "Friedrich III the Wise, Elector of Saxony." c. 1515

Figure 52: Circle of Lucas Cranach the Elder. "Portrait of a Woman." c. 1525-1535

[44] Greenfield

Figure 53: Maler, Hans der. "Sixth Commandment: You shall not commit any unchaste deed." c. 1528/29. And Detail

Decoration/Bustfleck

While there were many options on decorative aspects along the sides and top of the collar, I ultimately decided on simplistic lines, especially in light of a more complex bustfleck. I considered various metallic gold trim, but found the look that most suited what I wanted and gave the best feel was scraps from the skirt sewn into tubes and ironed flat. I considered adding pearling and/or gold trim as well, but it ultimately distracted and gave a less authentic feel. See Figure 54.

The strips where added as double lines and hand stitched in place along the opening and added as accents to the puffs on the sleeves.

Figu

Figure 54: Decoration options.

The bustfleck reflects my personal heraldry with the inclusion of an owl that was designed after Durer's owl, Figure 55. While not as common, some pictorial bustflecks can be found such as those in Figures 56-57.

Figure 55: Durer, Albrect. "The Little Owl." c.1508.

Figure 56: von Kulmach, Hans. "Casimir, Margrave of Brandenburk-Kulmbach" c. 1511

Figure 57: Stigel, Bernard. "Bianca Maria Sforza." c. 1508

Figure 58: Finished pearled bustfleck.

The owl pattern was drafted onto the brocade using a pencil and roughly sketched. The more common transfer method would have been pounce, but my attempts have left mess. With light fabric and the fact that

I carry my projects with me to various places, having something that was less likely to rub off or make a mess was a wiser option. I used small cut garnets for the eyes and then couched 3mm rice pearls to create the pattern. The feet have rough gold purl, the beak smooth gold purl, and the owl is outlined in a gold twist. Accent pearls have been stitched around the owl to provide balance and transition. While other decorative devices were considered they were ultimately rejected for not having the right feel or being a distraction. See Figure 58.

Skirt

Pleating

There are numerous theories on how the skirt for the Rock is "pleated." The term is in quotes because there is no indication that they thought in terms of pleating as we think of it today, however the painted folds indicate that some method of uniform gathering and attaching fabric was used in order to create fullness and body in the skirts.

The portraits all indicate a full and flowing skirt with deep folds reaching the floor. The fullness is indicated not only in the way it hangs, but also when the skirt is lifted there are abundant folds in the woman's hands and the unlifted skirt remains fully pleated. Along these lines, when the gown is lifted to expose the colorful petticoat, it is likewise full and flowing as opposed to a farthingale or other hooped petticoat.

Therefore, when determining how the skirt is gathered in, a thought must also be given to the shape of the skirt that is being pleated, i.e. rectangular, circle, or triangular (gored). Of course, part of the shape is determined by fabric consumption and what that may say about the wearer.

An excellent source, and the closest extant we have, is the gown of Mary of Hapsburg. See Figure 15. While the front is flat, the back does show floor length folds created by a circle skirt that is gathered on the sides and back. The construction of the gown is interesting as it gives a similar effect as those in the paintings without as much fabric consumption as various pleating options would require.

The idea of a circular skirt is not limited to the gown of Mary of Hapsburg. In a later 16th century German Pattern Book: the *Leonfeldner Schnittbuch* c. 1590, on pages 37 are sketches of what appears to be a woman's gown. See Figure 59. The bodice is clearly defined and appears to have the skirt at least partially attached, whether it is cut out this way or sewn together is unknown. Of particular interest is

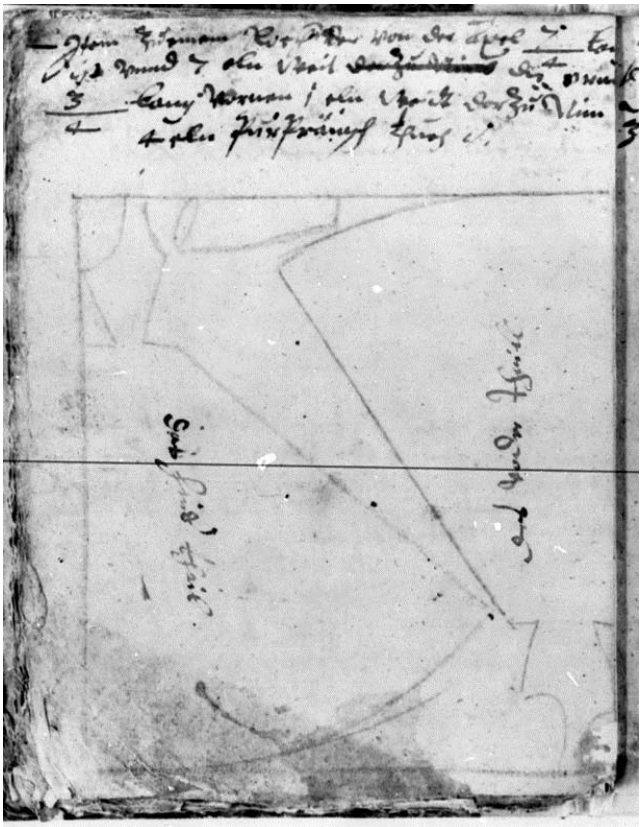

Figure 59: Leonfeldner Schnittbuch c. 1590, on pages 37

how the skirt at the waist section extends beyond. Could this be to allow for pleating of some sort or just plain gathers? Unfortunately, the circular skirt appears to be the only similarity so it is uncertain if the pattern, dated 70 years after the extant gown, is of any relation.

In examining the pattern, it can be noted how the skirt extends straight out past either side of the bodice before starting the slant downward for the sides of the skirt. Even with pleating this straight section into the waist line, the skirt would not fall as represented in the paintings. Instead the fabric would be concentrated at the quartered points and remain smooth across the main part of the waist where it attached to the bodice. However, if the bodice was detached and the fabric carefully and evenly pleated, this design layout may have merit for the early 16th century German Saxon gown. It might also work well for some of the lower class gowns where paintings show pleats only at the sides rather than all the way around, but still allow for some fullness to the skirts, which could be what the pattern was intended for.

Going back to the extant gown, another notable difference occurs when comparing the look of the skirt as it attaches to the bodice in comparison to those of the portraits. Not only does the skirt push out in the portrait, it also falls in even intervals, indicating that some form of uniform pleating was used. The Mary of Hapsburg gown does not share this characteristic, indicating that her gown is likely a similar but alternative style available at the time. Again, this is supported by various paintings, an example of which can be seen in Figure 2, where the two different skirt constructions can be seen.

Having ruled out the same method as the Mary of Hapsburg gown, it was time for some experimental pleating in order to determine the most appropriate form of pleating to recreate the folds seen in the paintings. Figure 60 shows the results of the testing using the fabric that would eventually form the first German gown I made. The fabric has been left in rectangular form for the experiment.

Figure 60: Pleating experiment: Roll pleat, double box pleat, knife pleats

From left to right the linen is pleated in a rolled pleat (4 pleats), double box pleat (2 pleats), and a knife pleat (4 pleats). The contenders would be the rolled pleat and the double box pleat for the ability to keep the pleat to the ground. However, only the rolled pleat gives the same impression at the top point as the paintings. In terms of fabric consumption, in the pleats pictured each rolled pleat uses approximately 10.5" of fabric, the double box pleats 11.75", and the knife pleat 5.5".

Construction

Taking some leftover canvas from the bodice I created a band that is roughly an inch and half wide. One inch of this was sewn into place under the bodice and the half inch holds the pleats. The support for a band which is holding the skirt can be seen in Figure 42. An examination of other paintings indicates that it may have also been sewn directly to the bodice. The band, however, allows a perceived lengthening of the waist and helps to create the willowy figure desired by fashionable ladies.

The gowns represented in paintings and portraits show a variety of configurations for striping on the skirts. I ultimately decided to have three stripes in the accent plain navy and the rest in the brocaded gold. For seam allowances, I used ½" for the top and ½" for the hem, and ¼" for the inside strips.

I then cut three widths of strips in navy in intervals of 1.25", 3" and 5". Three widths of gold were cut in intervals of 28.75", 1.5", and 4". These include seam allowances of ½" seam allowance to the guard and 1 ½" seam allowance for folding/finishing/attaching the top edge of the skirt to the bodice and ¼" for the seam allowance to sew the stripes together everywhere else.

Next, I sewed the accent pieces together to form a very long strip and then repeated with the main skirt fabric. The accents and the main fabric were then sewn together, matching the seams of each panel. I

used 7 panels of 55" wide fabric, with a total of a 1" seam allowance per panel (half inch for each side). I added my hem to the guard using a quarter inch double fold and machine stitched it in place.

Along the top edge I used a serger to finish the raw edge. Then I folded the serged edge to the inside of the panels, roughly an inch and then straight stitched at about 5/8 from the fold. The edge was then folded in again so the stitched line is just on the inside of the skirt and the raw edge is hidden. This created a thick edge in order to attach the skirt to the waist band. therads or not.

Before continuing, I considered pulling the black medallion threads in the skirt. Figure 61 shows the comparison. Ultimately, I decided on keeping the medallions. They added a nice visual feature and seemed to tie the gown together. I did however remove some of them for use in the bodice and bustfleck so they would detract there.

Figure 61: Comparison on whether to pull colored medallion threads or not.

Once the edges were prepped, I began roll pleating. Having done this a few times now, I have learned how to easily gauge the fabric consumption. I start by counting my panels, which become my place holders. The waist band is then divided by the number of panels in the skirt and marked accordingly with either a pin or fabric pen. Then working in panel wide sections, I determine how wide I want my pleats and mark accordingly. Then panel is then divided by the number of pleats I would need to fill the space, which I mark with pins.

This method ensures that my seams end up at the bottom of a roll pleat and are more discreet and that the fabric is evenly distributed. It also saves from multiple pin pricks which happened when I tried pinning all the roll pleats in place first.

To attach the roll pleat, I found it useful to have a good metal thimble, a pair of pliers, and a strong needle; I used a size 1 Brazilian embroidery needle. I then used a polyester thread that matched the linen and quadrupled it, doubled them after threading the needle and knotted the ends.

On just shy of the bottom edge of the band I pulled the thread through, then picked up the rolled pleat and about an 1/8 of the way in from the edge, stuck the needle in, being sure to go through all the layers in the rolled pleat; this was especially important in the center of the pleat to prevent it from sliding out and coming undone. The thimble helped push the needle through and the pliers helped get the needle out. I

learned this after trying the first couple just using my hands resulting in tender sore appendages. Once the thread was through the pleat and ensuring the pleat lined up on the waist band, the pleat was sewn in place by placing the needle through the band at the top of the pleat. Once on the back of the band, I moved over roughly a ¼ or an inch or so and poke the needle back through the waistband to just above the pleat. I then repeated the steps above until all the pleats are sewn in place. I did find doing a few stitches to hold the roll pleat before trying to sew it on to the waist band to be useful. See Figure 62-63.

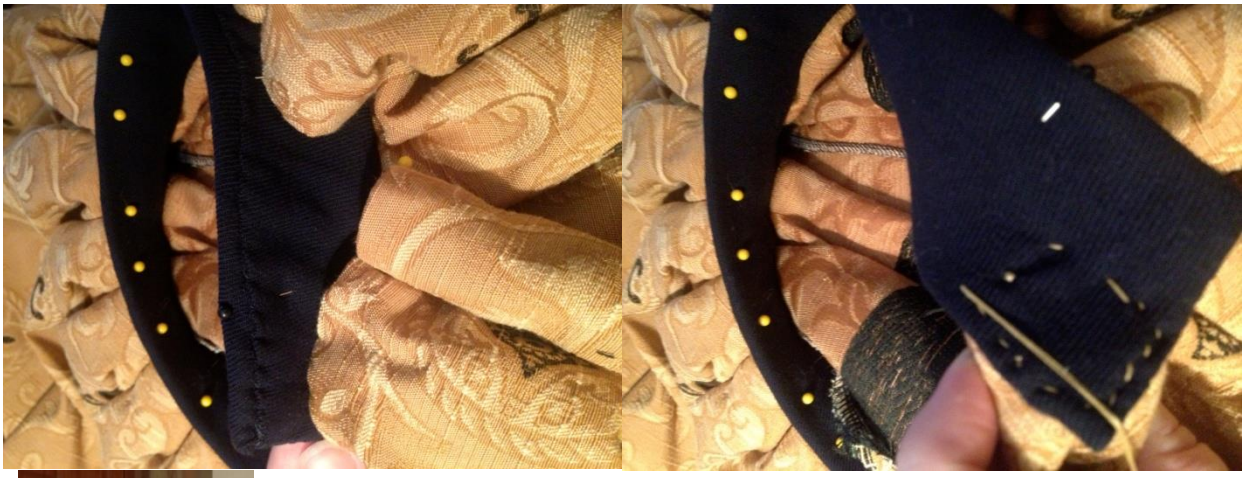

Figure 62: Sewing on roll pleats.

Figure 63: Completed skirt

Once the skirt was attached to the waist band, I stitched the waist band to the bodice using several strands of thread and the Brazilian needle. Hooks and eyes were also added to hold the skirt portion closed.

Finally, I added brass washers to act as the lacing rings that go over the stomach. These are seen in various portraits poking out from under the bust line to the waist. The washers are sewn on in a triangular pattern to keep them from shifting up and down. Originally, I had a gold cord I bought from JoAnn's to lace. Within a few times wearing this gown, the cord started fuzzing and untwisting. This made me very unhappy. So, I made cord from a gold bamboo thread using a cardweaving method (five cards). See Figure 64. I then sewed the cord around the top washer and added an aglet for ease in lacing.

Figure 64: Card woven cord using 5 cards.

Figure 65: Cranach, Lucas. "Princess Magdalena of Brandenburg." c. 1530-1540.

I also choose to have my skirt a different color than the main part of the bodice. While this may seem highly unusual, Figures 65-70 show various examples of skirts being a different shade or a different color than the bodice.

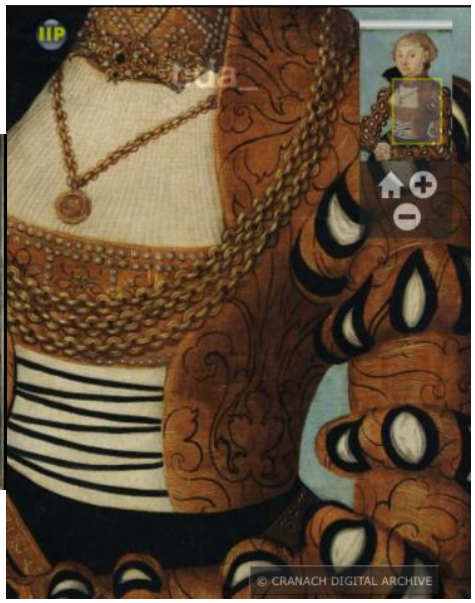

Figure 66: Cranach, Lucas. " Portrait of Princess Maria of Saxony." c. 1534

Figure 67: Maler, Hans der. "Fourth commandment: Honor your father and mother." c. 1528/29.

Figure 68: Heusler, Antonius. "Portrait of a Bride." c.1534

Figure 69: Master of the Mass of St. Gregory. "Altarpiece of the Virgin: St. Ursula." c. 1529

Figure 70: Maler, Hans der. "Eighth commandment: You shall not give any false witness." c. 1528/29.

Goldhaube

The only extent goldhaube, seems to be an anomaly in itself. As seen in Figure 71, the extent is made from a netting in which gold oblong spangles were attached from a hole on one end lengthwise using copper wire. The inner band is macramé, allowing for it to stretch. There are tubes of stuffed silk in the lower half of the goldhaube and a tie at the bottom.[45] Figure 3 shows an example of what it would have looked like when worn.

Figure 71: "Goldhaube mit beweglich eingehängten Metallplättchen." Object T35 c. 1650/1700. Germanisches Nationalmueseum.

While I have in fact made a goldhaube of this nature, I choose for this project to make one more in line with tradition, even if not the most traditional. Several contemporary portraits and paintings depict a gold colored or gold accented head covering with a bulge, presumably hair or fake hair, worn low near the base of the head. This could have pearls or just trim as adornment. However, I wanted something a bit less traditional for my look, and as such, following closer to those portrayed in Figures 72, I opted for a black haube with gold trim and red band.

Figure 72: Cranach, Lucas the Younger. "Female Portrait." c.1564

[45] Goldhaube.

Figure 73: False hair braids.

First, I made false braids using synthetic hair to help create the proper weight and shape for the goldhaube. I had help in the method of braid from my Laurel sister, Gionetta, who also provided me with the false hair. After creating the braids, I added a silk strip along the top to hold the sides of the braid, as I didn't want to have a bump under the top part of the haube. I also sewed in some combs to help hold the hair in place on my head as I have very silky hair. See Figure 73.

Next I made a pattern for the haube, and using small darts around the sides was able to create the smooth haube seen in the portraits. The darts are easily hidden by the band around the haube. See Figures 74. On my velvet I picked the gold trim that looked best with my piece and sewed them on into a lozenge pattern. Once the decoration was done, I sewed the pleats for the main part of the hat and the lining. These were then sewn together and turned right side out. The band, made from scrap wool from the dress, was then added and sewn in place. A small hook and eye was added for underneath the braid to help pull and hold the haube tightly in place. A small pin that goes through the haube and into the silk ribbon of the false hair is also a big help in making sure it doesn't slip on my hair. See Figures 75.

Figure 74: Patterning the Haube

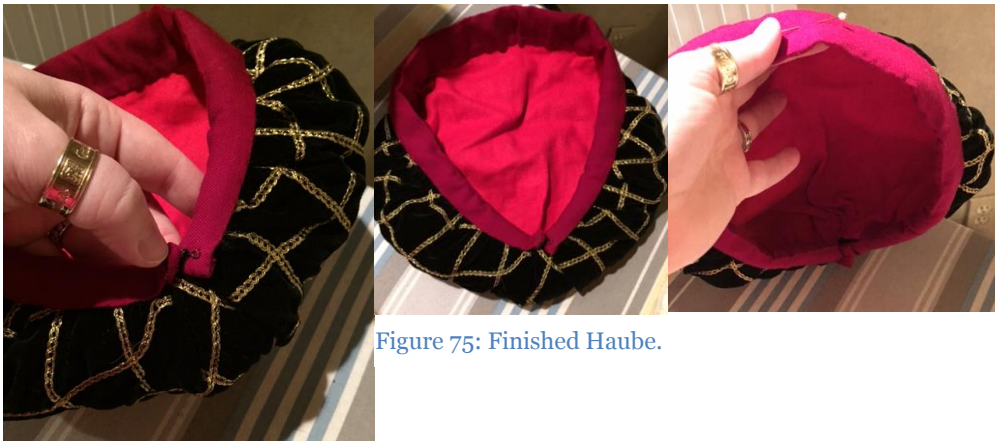

Figure 75: Finished Haube.

Kuhlmaulshues

Kuhlmaulshues are seen frequently throughout portraiture and extant examples have been found of this distinctive low profile wide toed shoes worn by the Germans. See Figures 76-83. Variations of the shoes include the barely covered toe, to more of a mule like shoe with slashing along the top. Extant shoes are often made of leather, and some even include protrusions on the sides of the toes. These shoes were often made of cow hide leather, with leather soles, with or without straps.[46]

I purchased my shoes from Native Earth, which includes the slashing on the top for fashionable German Saxon purposes and Vibram soles, which while not period, are highly practical for walking various terrains and running after children.

Figure 76: Cranach, Lucas. "David and Bathsheba" c. 1526

[46] Chesholme

Figure 77: Cranach, Lucas. "The Altarpiece of the Holy Kinship." c. 1509.

Figure 78: Lucas Cranach the Elder and Workshop. "Feilitzsch Altarpiece: St. Catherine." c. 1512

Figure 79: Workshshop Lucas Cranach the Elder. " St. Barbara.: c. 1510.

Figure 80: Detail from Figure 53

Figure 81: Cranach, Lucas. " Christ and the Good Samaritan." c. 1525-1537

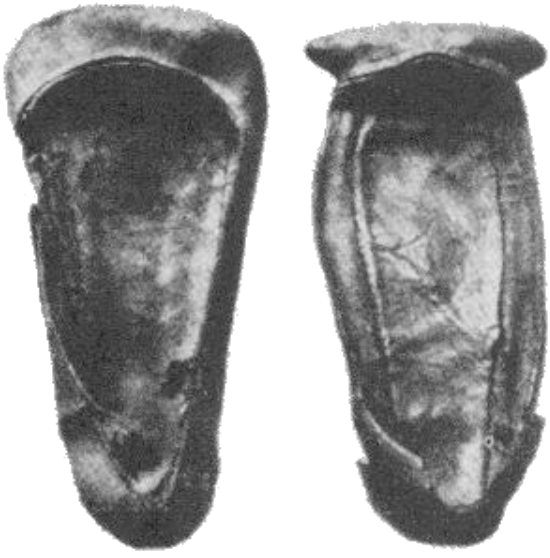

Figure 82: Kuhmaul slipper shoes. Heilgenstrum Faehnlein Guild Forms.

Figure 83: German shoes c. 1510-1560. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum.

Jewelry/Accessories

Rings were worn on all fingers, at the base as well as at the joint. See Figures 3,4, 7. Gold chains were a symbol of rank and class, governed by sumptuary laws of Maximillian, are often seen on the women who are Noble or Sub-Noble and worn as a point of distinction. See Figures 1,3,4, 6. Extant bracelets have also been found from this period, although they aren't seen in portraits or other paintings.

Earrings however were banned by sumptuary law in Nuremburg.[47] While this dress if for the Ducal state of Saxony, I have not found a single pair of earrings represented nor have I found any extant earrings for Germany during this time period.

I have chosen to maintain wearing various sentimental pieces of modern jewelry, such as my wedding ring, a ring given to me by my grandmother, etc. The thumb ring, a gift from my husband, is very close to period poesy rings. I have also included other rings that are similar to period rings.

Figure 84: 16th Century German Rings. V&A Museum Collection.

Figure 1: Signet Ring. German. Museume # M.258-1962. C. 1475-1525. V&A Museum Collection.

Figure 86: Ring. German. Museum # M. 182-1937. C. 1500. V&A Mueseum Collection.

Under Society sumptuary rules I am unable to wear an unadorned gold chain, as I do not hold the rank of Knight. However, I do wear my Laurel medallion chain in place of the gold chains worn by the German Saxon women. A chocker style necklace, adorned with pearls and gems, is also worn to hide the closure

[47] Greenfield

of the partlet. I purchased the links from Drachenstein Treasures, had pearls added to the bottom of the links, and then put a piece of gold metallic silk behind it to create the look of a solid piece.

I also wear a thin leather belt with the gown with decorative brass fittings. While not a necessity, several portraits are seen without, a belt is handy not only for hanging a purse, but to use to hold up the skirts in bad weather or a site with lots of stairs.

Figure 2: Buckle and belt-end. German. Museum # 37&A-1894. c. 1520-1530

Conclusion

This gown was ultimately my elevation gown to the Order of the Laurel. I love everything about it, and while there were lots of trial and error both in making it and the gown predecessors leading up to it, I feel like a German Saxon lady while wearing this dress and love the compliments I get while wearing it. Especially the ones that think I look like Snow White! See Figure.

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