

THE GERMAN RENAISSANCE WARDROBE

by Baroness Genoveva von Lübeck

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The German Renaissance (roughly 1485-1560), also known as Early Modern Germany, is a period of flamboyance and intricateness of dress in certain classes, while others continue to wear basic, simple clothing. There is no one single costume for this period, as styles varied in time and place. There are some iconic “German Ren” dress styles, however, many of which we’ll cover in this document, along with those that are less flashy. At this point in time, clothing enhances the natural shape of the human body, unlike later in the 16th century when we begin to see corsets and padding.

Materials: Wools, linens, silks (smooth, non-nubby silk or symmetrical brocades and damasks), velveteen (cotton), leather, fur, feathers (ostrich and peacock).

Colors: Undershirts (smocks) are always white or off-white. Outer clothing for nobility and the wealthy who could afford to re-dye their clothing tended to be bolder colors, such as red and black. Yellow was a particularly fashionable color, based on inventories in Basel. Middle and lower classes would have been more likely to wear faded earthy tones, such as orangey reds, dusty roses, mustard yellows, medium to light browns, medium to light greens. Medium to light blues are also possible, but they tended to be more of a male color. Red is a classic color for German woman of this time period, but men also wore it.

German Clothing Terms:

Mundane/English Term	German Term	Material	Lining	Fastenings	Notes
Chemise/smock/shift	Hemd (unterhemd, frauenhemd, halshemd)	Linen (white or off-white)	None	If needed at collar, small cloth button, cord, or hooks/eyes	Necks and wrists were usually pleated (smocked), high and low necks
Underwear	Unterhosen	Linen	None	Cord ties	Always white
Socks/tights	Hosen/Unterhosen/ Strümphe	Linen, wool, or soft leather		Garters (ribbons/fabric)	If striped, the stripes should go vertical not horizontal.
Pants/Trousers/Trews/Slops	Hosen, Bruche/ Bruech	Wool, linen, linen canvas, leather		Eyelets with cords to attach to wams	Often slashed to show the layer underneath
Hat	Beret	Wool, leather, fur		Cords or hat pins	Often decorated with ostrich feathers and a dangling token or coin. Range greatly in size.
Veil	Schleier	Linen			Maybe intricately embroidered, some were even pleated

Cap/Caul/Coif	Haube	Silk, linen		Pins	Usually gold/red silk, which created the goldhaube
Snood/Hairnet	Haarhauben/ Haarnez	Silk, linen, wool			Often black
Jacket/Doublet	Wams, Schozwams	Wool, linen, linen canvas, leather		Buttons, eyelets with cords to attach to hosen	Often slashed, and sleeves may be paned or slashed, closed in the front or the side
Jacket without sleeves/ Vest/Jerkin	Lederwams	Leather		Leather ties	
Kirtle/undergown	Unterkleid	Wool interlined with stiffened canvas	Linen	Spiral laced eyelets, pins	Often guarded at the bottom (a strip or two of contrasting color fabric)
Bodice (with or without sleeves)	Joppe, Leibchen/ Lieblein	Wool, linen	Linen	Spiral laced eyelets, hook and eye	
Petticoat	Unterrock/ Reifrocke	Wool, linen		eyelets, ties	Often guarded at the bottom
Dress (overlayer)/gown	Rock	Silk damask, velvet, wool	Linen	Hooks and eyes, cords in eyelets or rings	Often guarded at the bottom (a strip or two of contrasting color fabric)
Partlet	Goller	Linen, wool, or fur	Same	Hooks and eyes	Shoulder length cape, often richly decorat- ed
Coat	Schaube/Schaub, Harzkappe	Wool, fur, silk	Same		Sleeves were often hanging
Corset/Pair of Bodies	Unterrock, Korsett, Meider	Linen or fustian	Same	Hook and eye or spiral-laced eyelets	There is no evidence German women wore stiffened/boned corsets until very late in the century, when their clothing began to look very Elizabe- than
Shoes	Schue, Ränder, Kuhmaulschuh (cow mouth shoe)	Leather			Cow-mouth shoes were most popular (similar to today's Mary Janes)
Pattens	Unterschue	Wood			Wood clog under- shoes
Apron	Schurz	Linen		Fabric ties	Usually pleated (smocked) at the top

Soldier's Coat/Dress	Waffenrock/ Wappenrock	Wool		Hooks and eyes, ties	Often guarded at the bottom (a strip or two of contrasting color fabric)
Breeches (baggy, paned), trunk hose	Pluderhose	Silk, wool, linen	Silk, linen	Hooks and eyes, ties	Knee length, very tight in derrière, em- ployed codpiece
Cloak (long, circular)	Glocken, Heuke	Wool, silk			
Cape (short, shoulder)	Toghe, Goller, Mantel	Wool, linen			

General 16th c. German Terms of Interest:

Burgomeister/Burgermaster - Mayor

Fähnlein - Military unit/company

Fraulien - Unmarried/unattached woman (bottom of the pecking order in a group)

Gulden - Gold coin

Kleid - Dress in general

Kleidung ordnung (Kleyder Ordnung)- Clothing ordinances (sumptuary laws)

Hure - Campfollower; women in a Landsknecht Fähnlein, including a sister, wife, or daughter (literally means whore, but while they were likely some prostitutes among them, they were certainly not all)

Landsknecht - Soldier of the land/mercenary

Pater Noster - Rosary (also called Bäterlein)

Tross - Baggage train in a Landsknecht army (often used in "trossfrau," which refers to a wife/woman who follows in the baggage train.)

Wasche - Underwear (literally, "the wash")

Zopfe - Fake braids

Zweihänder - Large, two-handed sword



Sumptuary Laws:

An overview of the German Renaissance Wardrobe would be remiss without mention of sumptuary laws for clothing (*kleidung ordnung*), which are dress code rules intended to regulate personal dress based on social, religious, economic, and moral grounds. Laws varied from region to region, but Imperial ordinances covered a broader swath. In Nürnberg, for example, non-noble women were forbidden to wear cloth of gold or of silver, velvet, satin, or other silk material, as dressgoods or trimming; sable of martin fur, as material or lining; coats of camel's hair; linings of taffeta or other silk in their mantles; and pearls, which, however, young maidens might wear if they followed a prescribed manner. Men were forbidden to wear cloth of gold or of silver, velvet, and scarlet; ermine, sable, and weasel fur; gold lace, and pearls. Other materials were limited to only small amounts on a collar or sleeve. Other items were restricted by their value, such as wearing only goller whose value does not exceed two gulden or a schleier that had six or less folds and cost no more than six gulden. Breaking these laws usually meant fines, which essentially meant that if you could in fact wear many of these restricted items if you were wealthy enough.

Interestingly, the Landscknecht are said to have been exempt from sumptuary laws in a special decree by Maximilian I at the 1530 Augsburger Reichstag as an acknowledgment of their short and brutish lives.

Head coverings:

Heads were nearly always covered in one way or another during the German Renaissance period. Only the very young would be out and about with undressed and uncovered hair. What you wear (or do not wear) on your head is very important.

Women: Your marital status dictated your hair style and head covering—women were categorized into three groups: maidens, married women, and widows. Most women would braid their hair and cover it at the very least. Younger women, maidens, and some *trossfrau* typically braided their hair and wore at least a beret. Married women were more likely to wear a schleier (veil), with or without a beret. Widows wore schleier. It's my understanding that if you lost your virginity, you wore a schleier, married or not.

Men: Head coverings depended on socioeconomic status, and there is a great variety. The wealthy and powerful wore berets and fur hats. Landsknechts wore schlappe (coifs) and large hats (tellerbarrets). Lower classes wore simple woolen hats and hoods.

Here are the categories of haube (headcoverings) I've observed from period woodcuts and paintings:

Bundhaube (coifs/arming caps)



Stuchlein and wulsthaube (veils and support caps)



Gebende (headwrap with chin strap) — this is really an alternate way of wearing a schleier (veil)



Beretts (round caps with brims)



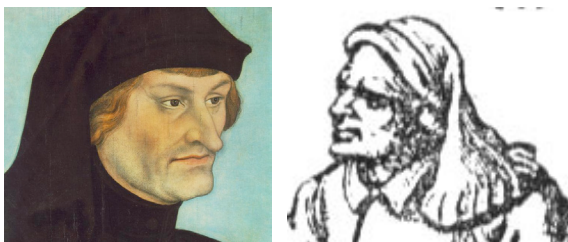
Goldhaube and Haarhauben (hair caps/cauls)



Haarband (black headband, used mostly by young, unmarried woman of the middle or lower classes)



Gugel/Kogel/Kugel (hoods)

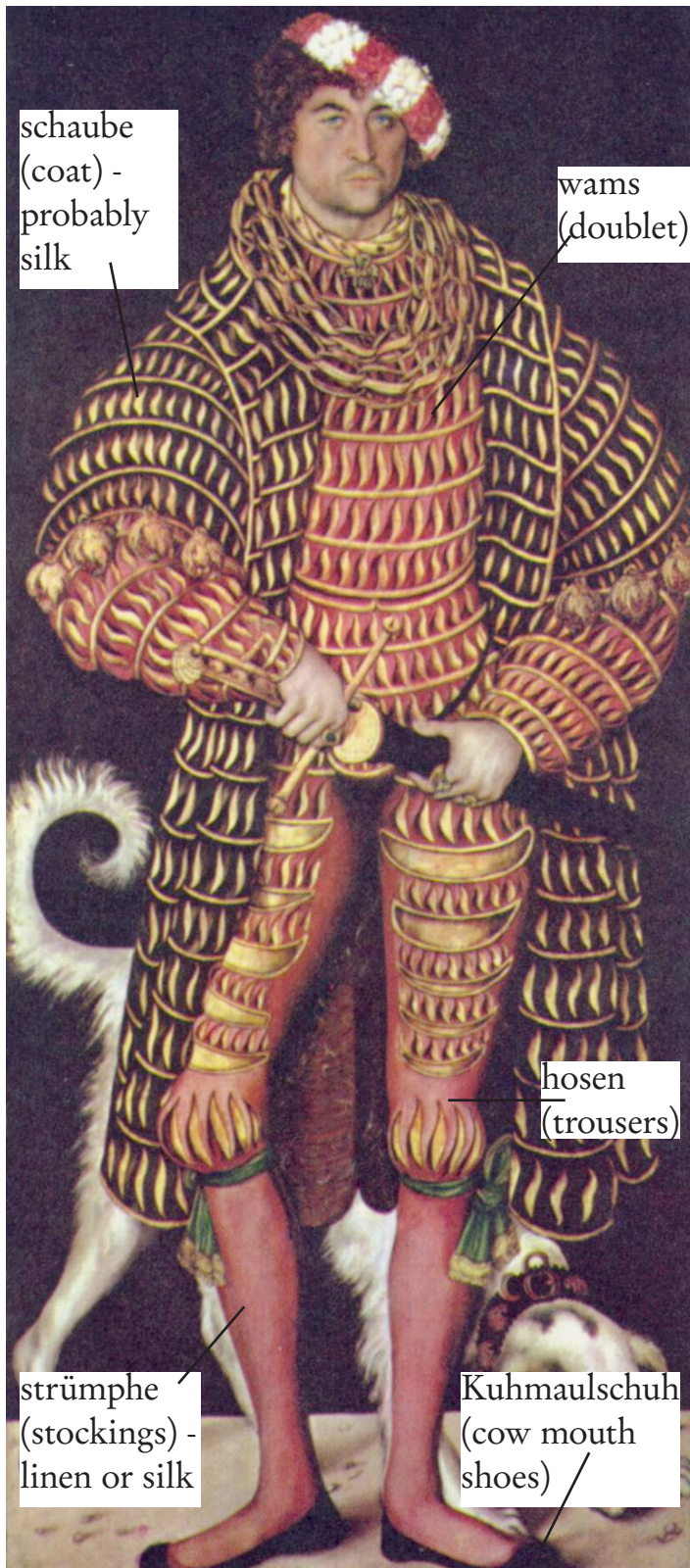


Helm (helmets)



GERMAN DRESS - NOBLE MAN & WOMAN

This is one representative of a German nobles. The portraits below are Heinrich IV, Duke of Saxony and Duchess Katharina of Mecklenburg, wife to Duke Heinrich. You can view in a larger size online at <http://www.lucascranach.org> or http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cranach,_Lucas_d._%C3%84._-_Doppelbildnis_Herzog_Heinrichs_des_Frommen_und_Gemahlin_Herzogin_Katharina_von_Mecklenburg_-_1514.jpg.



GERMAN DRESS - MIDDLE CLASS MAN & WOMAN

This is one representative of a middle class German male. The double portrait below is by Christoph Amberger in 1525 and depicts a man and woman (no other names are known). A larger view can be found at <http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=59>. Amberger was a painter of Augsburg in the 16th century.



GERMAN DRESS - LANDSKNECHT MAN & WOMAN

This is one representative of a Landsknecht (military) male and a trossfrau (camp follower female). The large image below is by Edward Schoen and depicts a Landsknecht and his wife. You can view a larger version at <http://www.virtuelles-kupferstichkabinett.de/?selTab=3&subpage=search¤tWerk=30338>



GERMAN DRESS - WORKING CLASS MAN & WOMAN

This is one representative of a lower/working class (peasant) man and woman from about 1540. The male is A Man at Market, looking to right, circa 1532-1550 (No. 256, Loftie). The female is A Woman at Market, looking to left, circa 1532-1550 (No. 257, Loftie). Both woodcuts are by Hans Sebald Beham and are believed to portray individuals in Frankfurt.



haube (hat)

schaube (coat)

Stiefe (boots)

Schaubelein
(jacket)

Schue
(shoes)

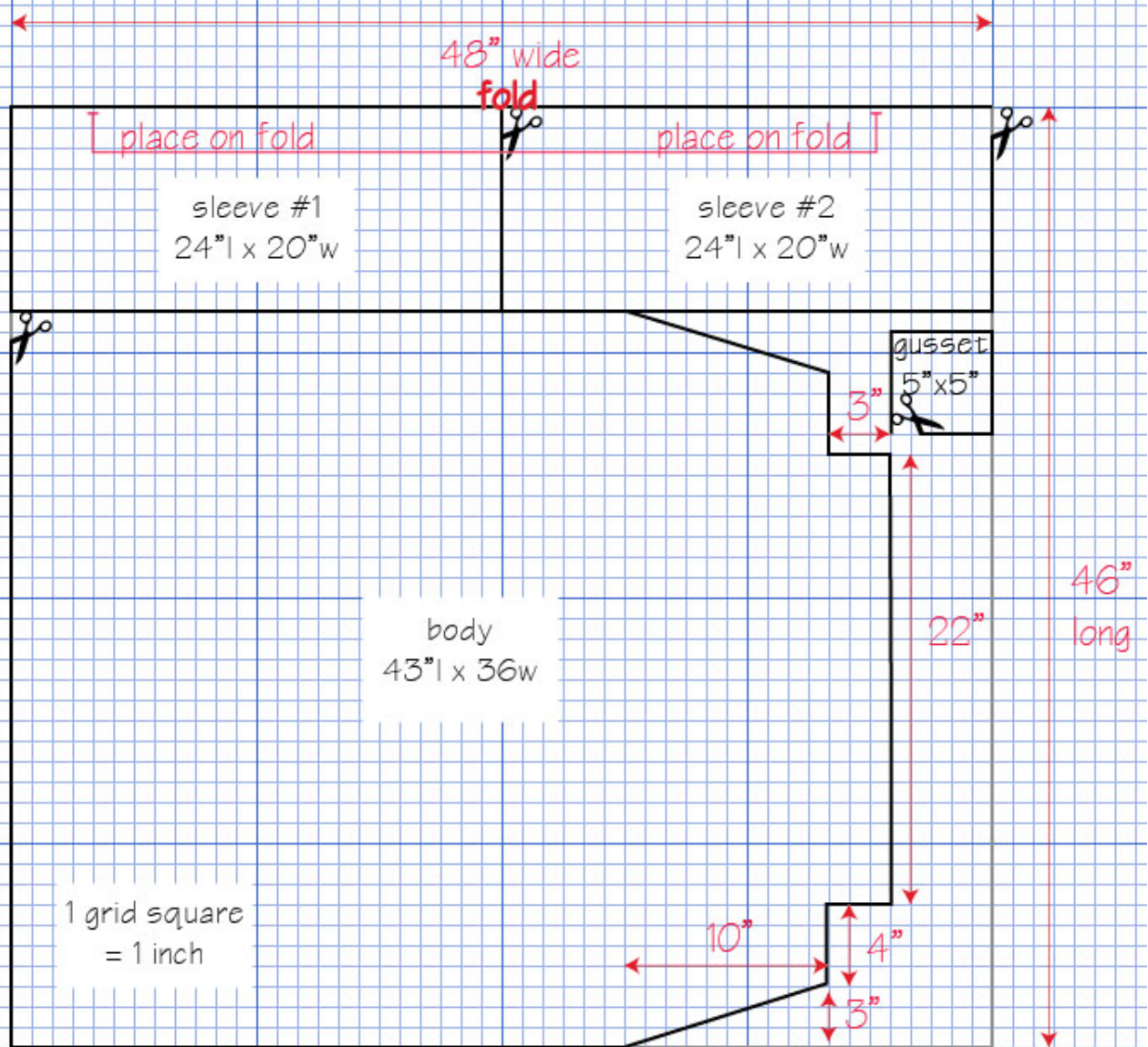


gebende

Note: Peasant shoes were considerably different than the other classes, and by all accounts this was a source of pride for them.

Genoveva's Collared Smock Pattern

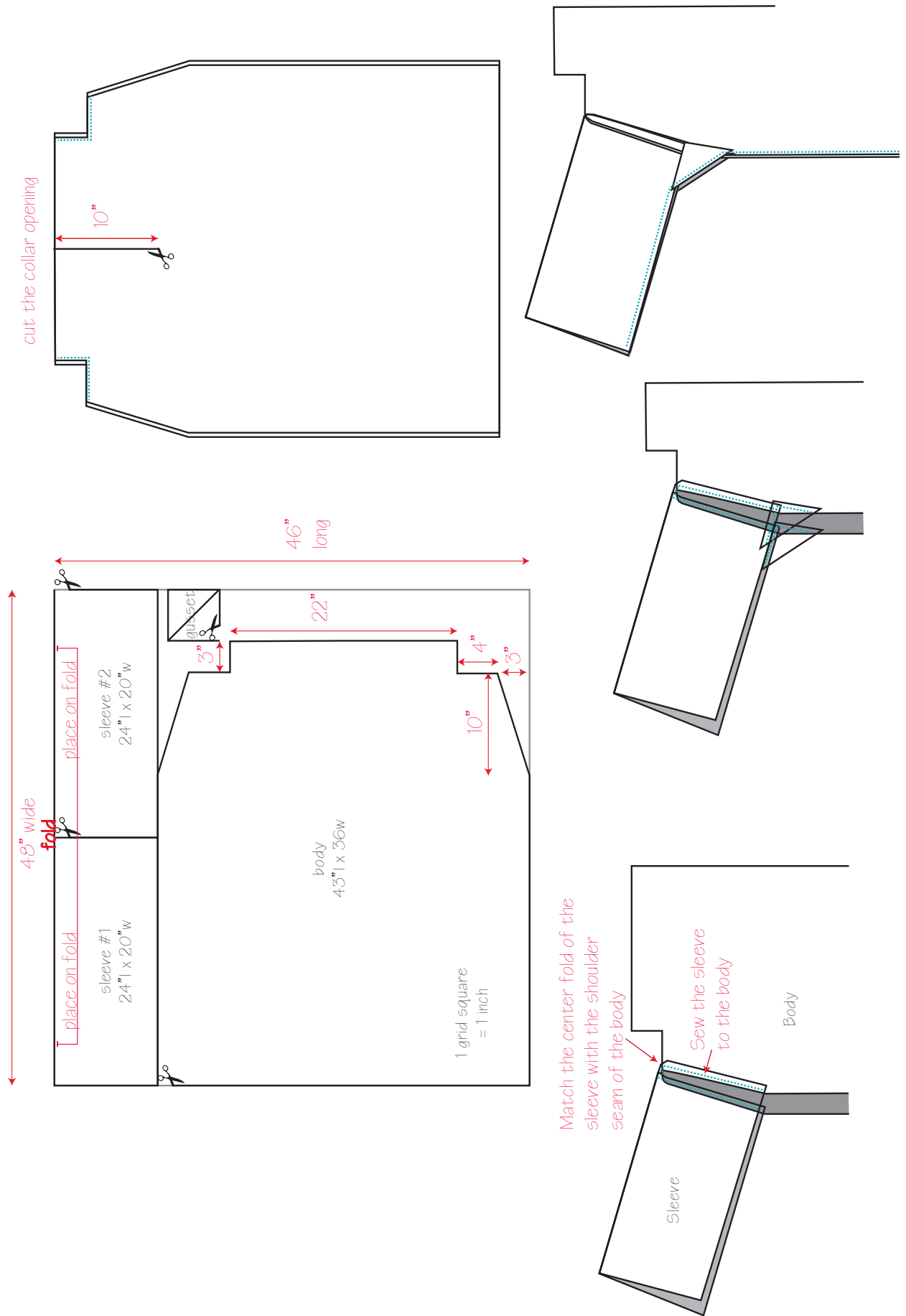
Use an 92" long ($2\frac{2}{3}$ yards) piece of linen or tissue linen that is at least 48" wide, fold it in half, and cut as shown below.



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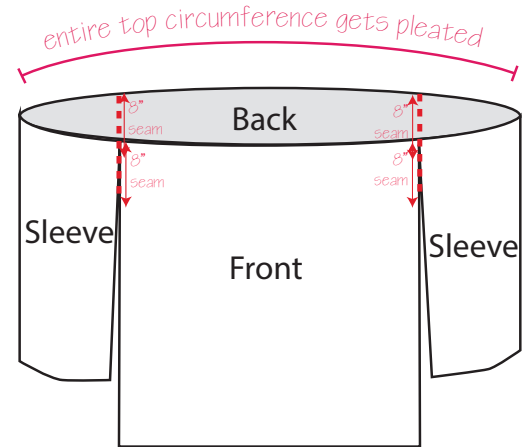
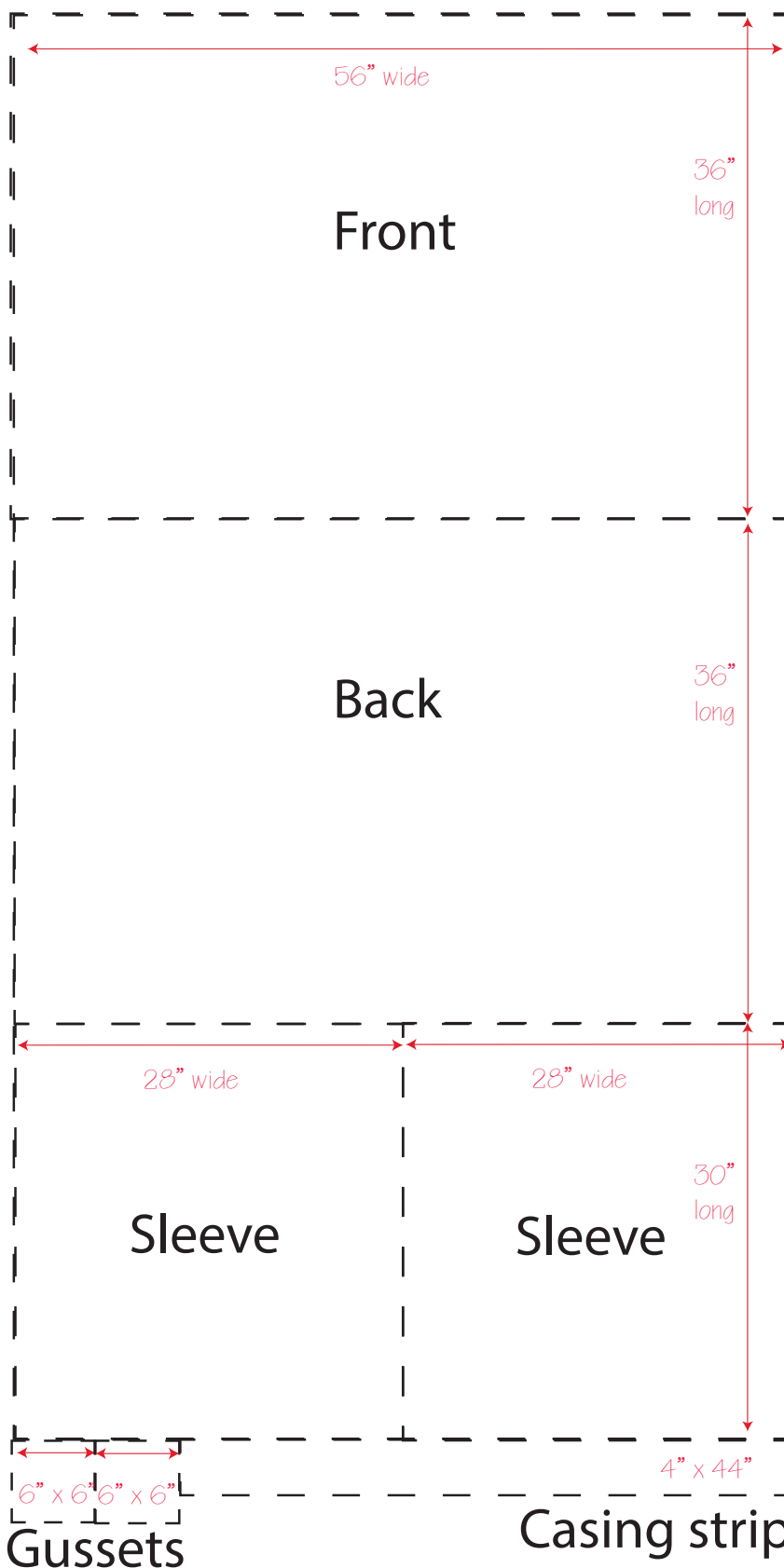
Genoveva's Collared Smock Pattern

Use an 92" long (2 2/3 yards) piece of linen or tissue linen that is at least 48" wide, fold it in half, and cut as shown below.



Genoveva's Low-Neck Smock Pattern for a 16th c. German Hemd

Material: Linen • Seam Allowance: 1/2" seam allowance factored in



Pattern Notes:

This is my pattern for a low-neck smock. The shirt is constructed of four rectangular panels (front, back, and two sleeves), plus a gusset under each arm. The four panels join one another in a circle, creating a large neckline to pleat down to size.

Size: This pattern should fit most adults, as the smock is not form-fitting. It's important to use all this material, even if you are a slender person, so that you can get enough pleats into your neckline. If you really want to size down, measure your neckline where you want your finished smock to lie and divide your measurement by 43.5"/110cm -- the result is the percentage at you can cut out your fabric.

Sleeves: You want longer sleeves than you might expect so that your material can puff out in any slashed/paned garments you wear (your pleated wristband will keep the sleeve from falling down your arm). My shoulder-to-wrist measurement (point of shoulder along the slightly bent arm to the wrist) is 23" -- if your measurement is longer, cut longer sleeves.

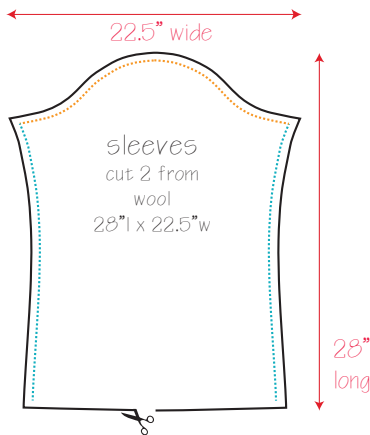
Rise: You could also make the smock longer, if you wish -- I chose to keep this knee-length so that it would not show when I kirtled (hiked up) my skirts.

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Visit <http://germanrenaissance.net> for more details on constructing this smock

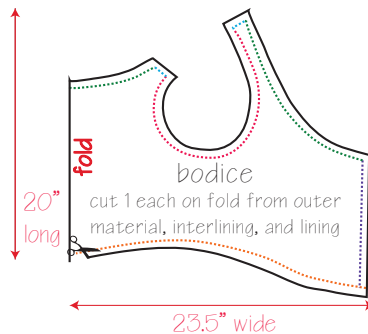
Genoveva's German Gown Pattern

For material list and assembly directions, see

<http://germanrenaissance.net/german-gown-pattern-and-assembly-notes>

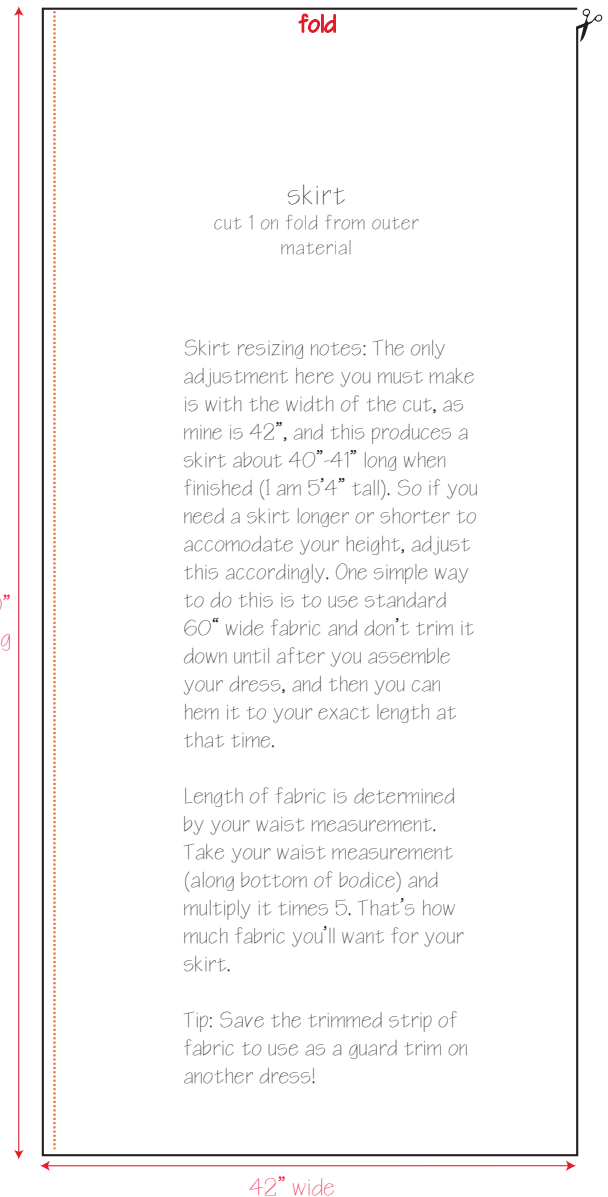


Sleeve resizing notes: This sleeve is very comfortable on my arm with a 16" bicep. Measure your bicep and widen or narrow as necessary. The sleeve should come down to your knuckles when finished—my shoulder tip to knuckle measurements is 26", so measure yours and add/reduce as necessary. If you modify the sleeve cap (top edge of the sleeve), note that it has about 2" of ease in it and that you'll need to also modify the armhole on the bodice by a similar amount while retaining same ease in the sleeve cap (meaning the armhole's measurements should be 2" shorter than the sleeve cap).



Bodice resizing notes: This bodice is made just for me, so expect that you'll need to adjust it a fair amount. Measure your waist, divide it by two, and adjust the width of the pattern above by that amount. Cut the adjusted pattern out of muslin, try it on, and have a friend fine tune the pattern from there. For a more exact fit, use the instructions at <http://www.elizabethancostume.net/kirtlepat/index.html> to make a bodice, then adjust the cut lines of the straps, neckline, and waist to match those above. If your sleeve is wider or narrower than mine, you'll also need to adjust the armhole so that it matches up with the sleeve cap -- if you need help doing this, I recommend you read <http://www.threadsmagazine.com/item/5052/on-fitting--sleeves/page/all>

This German bodice is intended to have narrow straps that sit right on the edge of your shoulder.



Skirt resizing notes: The only adjustment here you must make is with the width of the cut, as mine is 42", and this produces a skirt about 40"-41" long when finished (I am 5'4" tall). So if you need a skirt longer or shorter to accommodate your height, adjust this accordingly. One simple way to do this is to use standard 60" wide fabric and don't trim it down until after you assemble your dress, and then you can hem it to your exact length at that time.

Length of fabric is determined by your waist measurement. Take your waist measurement (along bottom of bodice) and multiply it times 5. That's how much fabric you'll want for your skirt.

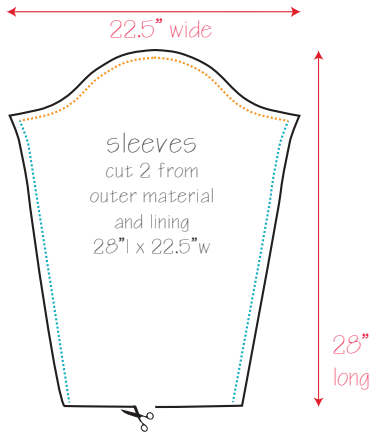
Tip: Save the trimmed strip of fabric to use as a guard trim on another dress!

Also note that I have my bodice pattern a smidge wider than necessary so that I can adjust the front perfectly snug (and supporting) later in the assembly process. I find this very helpful!

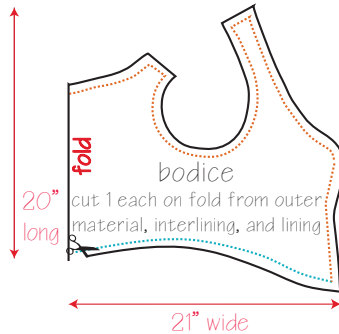
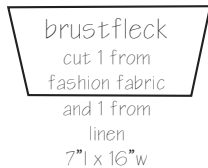
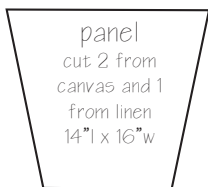
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Genoveva's Saxon Gown Pattern

Materials: Outer material of velveteen or wool,
with bodice lining of linen and
bodice interlining of linen or cotton canvas
Patterns have 1/2" seam allowance factored in



Sleeve resizing notes: This sleeve is very comfortable on my arm with a 16" bicep. Measure your bicep and widen or narrow as necessary. Sleeve should come down to your knuckles when finished—my shoulder tip to knuckle measurements is 26", so measure yours and add/reduce as necessary.

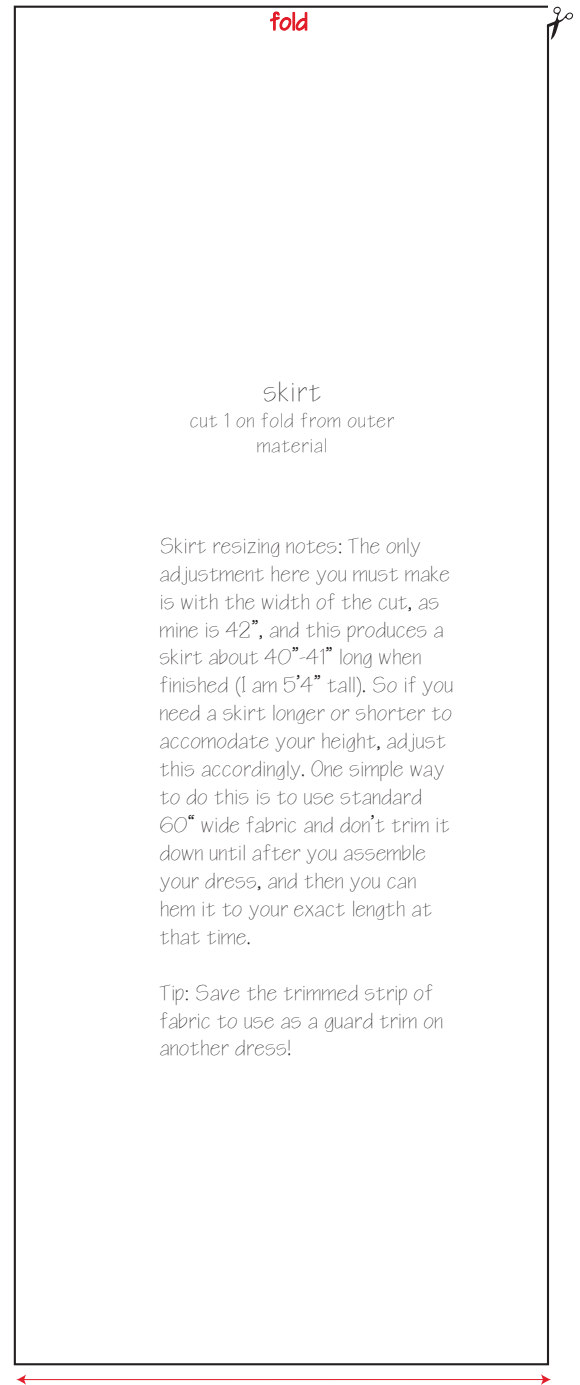


Bodice resizing notes: This bodice is made just for me, so expect that you'll need to adjust it a fair amount. Measure your waist, divide it by two, subtract 3, and adjust the width of the pattern above by that amount. Cut the adjusted pattern out of muslin, try it on, and have a friend fine tune the pattern from there. For a more exact fit, use the instructions at

<http://www.elizabethancostume.net/kirtlepat/index.html> to make a bodice, then adjust the cut lines of the straps, neckline, and waist to match those above. This German bodice is intended to have straps that sit right on the edge of your shoulder.

Also note that I have my bodice pattern has a curve over the chest, which you may wish to enhance or reduce based on your chest proportions.

110" long



Skirt resizing notes: The only adjustment here you must make is with the width of the cut, as mine is 42", and this produces a skirt about 40"-41" long when finished (I am 5'4" tall). So if you need a skirt longer or shorter to accommodate your height, adjust this accordingly. One simple way to do this is to use standard 60" wide fabric and don't trim it down until after you assemble your dress, and then you can hem it to your exact length at that time.

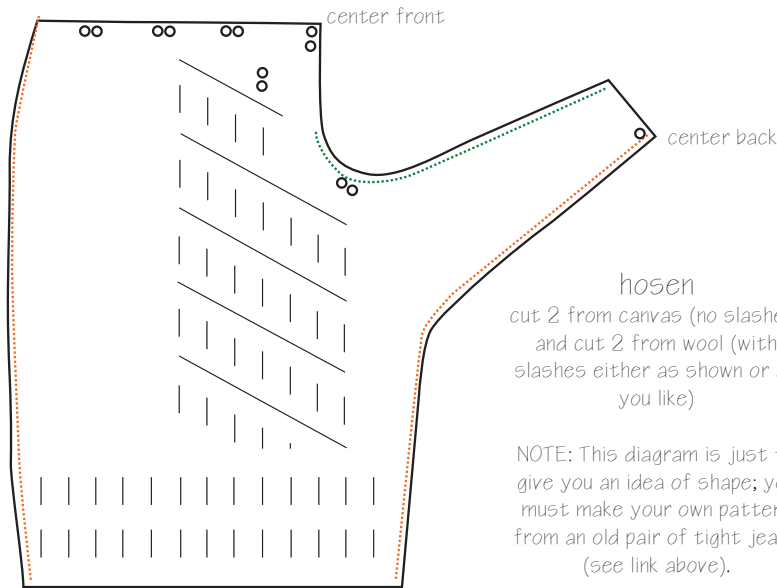
Tip: Save the trimmed strip of fabric to use as a guard trim on another dress!

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Gregor's Landsknecht Hosen Pattern

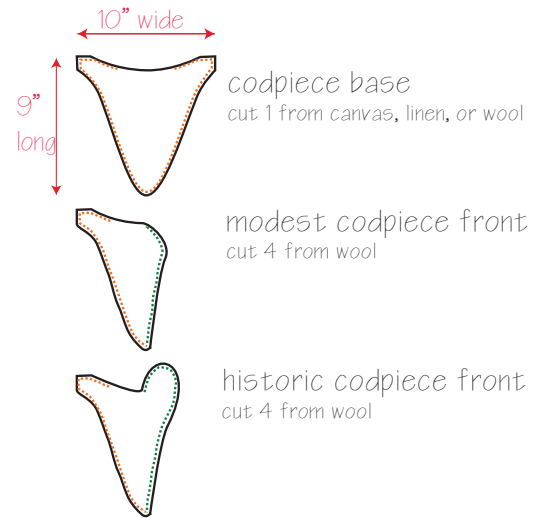
For patterning and assembly directions, see

<http://germanrenaissance.net/landsknecht-hosen-how-i-make-gregors-slashed-german-trousers-pants>



Cut four legs (two from canvas in your base color, two from wool in your contrasting color, or mix and match). Sew canvas pieces along green dotted line (flat felled seam), then along orange seam. Slash wool pieces as desired, then sew along dotted line, then along orange seam. Put wrong sides together, fold over top edges and fly, and sew down. Place eyelets at spots shown on diagram above. For the knees, pull up on the wool layer about 1" right at the knee so that the slashes curve out. Pin the wool down to the canvas layer between the two sets of slashes at the knee and sew down. Fold the edge of the wool under at the bottom, position on the canvas layer so the bottom set of slashes curves out like the top set, pin, and sew. (Note: You'll either want to fold the canvas up and sew down or cut off the excess -- you do not want the canvas to show at the bottom edge of your hosen.)

To wear your hosen, attach laces to each set of eyelets. Use laces to fasten codpiece to hosen. Step into hosen, pull up, and tie the laces to matching points on your wams (doublet). No wams? You can run a length of strong cord through all your lacing points and tie like a belt to keep them up and together, but you may want to put a sturdy leather belt on top as well.



Cut one codpiece base regardless of front style. For either front style, cut 2 from wool in primary color and cut 2 from wool in contrasting color (cut 4 total). Sew two fronts together along the green dotted line, right sides together, to make bottom front. Slash the other two front pieces as desired, then sew right sides together to make top front. Place bottom front over the top front, then place both on top of the codpiece base. Sew along the orange dotted line, leaving a 4" opening at the top. Turn inside out. Stuff with old wool or wool roving, then handstitch the top closed. Put in three hand-sewn eyelets (lacing points) as shown below (small circles), then attach to your hosen with cord strung through these eyelets to matching the lacing points on your hosen.



Note: You may need to size this down for a smaller person. Even though the codpiece only covers (not holds) the family jewels, it will still look odd (and probably be uncomfortable) if it is too large for the person.

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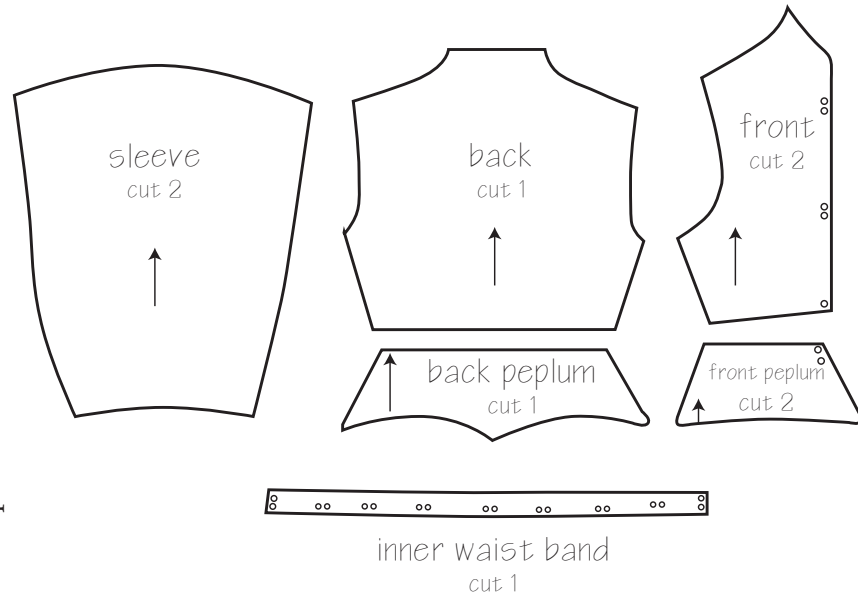
Genoveva's Wams (Doublet) Pattern

Materials: Linen

Patterns have 1/2" seam allowance built in.

Note: Pattern is adapted from the Alpirsbach monastery find of an extant linen doublet.

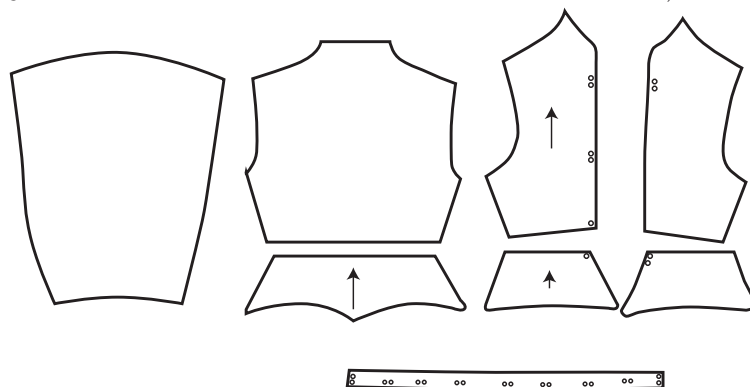
The pattern below is sized for my 10-year-old son who is very tall for his age (97th percentile in height and weight).



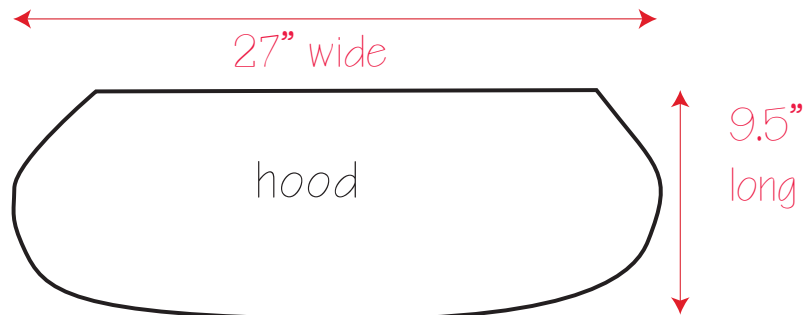
Scale: 1 grid square = 1 inch

Note: If you size this up to an adult size, keep in mind that the torso would likely need to be somewhat longer (depending on the individual).

For reference, this is the original extant doublet pattern and scale, which is said to be for a 10-14 year old boy (my 10-year-old is significantly larger and longer than this, but the proportions are right with it's shorter torso than you'd see on an adult).



Genoveva's Haube (Cap) Pattern



21" wide (or head circumference from
top of head to back of neck)



back band



front band



crown

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Further Reading to Learn More about the German Renaissance Wardrobe:

Articles

“Renaissance Fashion: The Birth of Power” by Ulinka Rublack (published in History Today Volume 61, Issue 1 2011) - <http://www.historytoday.com/ulinka-rublack/renaissance-fashion-birth-power-dressing>

“The first book of fashion” by University of Cambridge - <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/the-first-book-of-fashion>

Blogs

<http://scagermanrenaissance.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.curiousfrau.com/> (Marion McNealy's web site)

<http://jillwheezul.livejournal.com> (Katrine de Saint Brieuc's web site)

<http://amiesparrow.wordpress.com> (Amie Sparrow's web site)

<http://whiljascorner.wordpress.com>

<http://cerridwencreations.weebly.com> (Cerridwen verch Ioreword's web site)

<http://research.fibergeek.com> (Sylvie la Chardonniere's web site)

<http://myra.hem.nu/costume/>

Discussion Areas:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/GermanRenCostume/info>

<http://www.landsknecht.org/>

Photo Galleries:

<http://www.pinterest.com/jillwheezul/>

<http://www.pinterest.com/curiousfrau/>

Books:

Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe by Ulinka Rublack (Oxford University Press, January 2012)
Landsknecht Woodcuts: Kriegsvolker im Zeitalter der Landsknecht edited by Marion McNealy (Nadel und Faden Press, December 2013)

Patterns of Fashion 3: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women by Janet Arnold (Drama Publishers, May 1985)

Patterns of Fashion 4: The Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women by Janet Arnold (Costume and Fashion Press, October 2008)

The Tudor Tailor: Reconstructing Sixteenth-Century Dress by Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies (Costume and Fashion Press, April 2006)

This document is a work in progress! View more images, details, and patterns at my web site:

<http://GermanRenaissance.net>

And feel free to e-mail me with questions at genoveva.von.lubeck@gmail.com

