

Tudor Lady's Ensemble

Smock, Kirtle, Gown and French Hood

Inspired primarily by the Portrait of Mary Tudor, Queen of France with her husband
Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk

Lady Cynthia Anne of Silver Lakes
Barony of Stierbach
Cynthia Sutton
1435 Aquia Dr.
Stafford, VA 22554
208-283-8428

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Summary

I first fell in love with the look of the Tudor gown when I watched “The Six Wives of Henry VIII” on BBC in the 1980s. Specifically, I found the bell sleeves and French hood of Anne Boleyn to be graceful and lovely, and, after watching the series, I immediately set about to put one together. I was sixteen, and did not own or know how to use a sewing machine, and could only use whatever fabric my mother was willing to give to me, and the only image that I had was from my school library’s sole book that included drawings of sixteenth-century dress.

The resultant hand-sewn costume was made of a white linen tablecloth, a pink bedsheet, cardboard, and some metallic gold ribbon, and I wish that I had a picture of it! I wore it proudly to a fighter practice, and, upon meeting me, the woman who became my children’s godmother told me, not unkindly, “I can help you fix that.” Thirty-five years later, I decided to revisit the dress of that period, to make an attempt to do better than tablecloths and pink bedsheets.

I have done some sewing between now and then, and, luckily, even own a couple of sewing machines. I have also looked at many portraits of the time, as well as reading a fair amount about life in general at the court of Henry VIII. Although I do still find his six wives fascinating, I decided to use as my primary inspiration the portrait of his sister, Mary Tudor, Queen of France, with her husband Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, generally dated at the time of their marriage, 1515. There are several copies, with various touch-ups done to make her look more beautiful according to the dictates of the time, but all of them depict her wearing the same gown: black velvet, decorated with pearls and gold ouches, with a French hood. I decided to create an ensemble, to include a linen smock, a brocade kirtle, a velvet gown, and a French hood.

As I made this ensemble, I envisioned the person wearing it, and determined that she would have been a lady of the court of, first, Henry VIII, and then followed Mary Tudor to France, and then back to England. The look I liked best was from around 1515-1520, with a square neckline, bell sleeves, and a French hood. I already had the book *The Tudor Tailor*, but decided that I wanted to coordinate what they

had to say about the Henrician gown with both the Margo Anderson and Kimiko Small's *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe* pattern, and Maria Hayward's *Dress at the Court of King Henry VII*.

To begin from the inside layer, I constructed my smock from 3.5 oz. handkerchief linen, and used linen thread for both seams and finishing. I used a pattern that I had previously drafted based on several smocks from the early sixteenth century. Although this garment is the closest to the body, I constructed it second, as I wanted to match the neckline up exactly with my kirtle. I initially attempted to sew the entire smock by hand, but discovered that my skills with linen thread on linen fabric were not up to the task. All seams are sewn on machine, but the cuffs, neckline, and all hems were sewn by hand.

If I were to have created a truly complete ensemble, I would have made a red petticoat to be worn under the kirtle. However, as I live in the twenty-first century, and not in England in the Little Ice Age, I elected not to include this layer.

The kirtle is made of red and gold synthetic silk brocade, and, again, I used a pattern that I had drafted previously for a sixteenth-century side-laced kirtle. As with the smock, the seams are sewn on machine, but the bodice and skirt are attached by hand, and all finishing is done by hand, and the lacing holes were made using silk thread. The bodice is lined with 5 oz linen, and the skirt is unlined: this is for practical purposes, as I often wear a just kirtle when I perform at the Maryland Renaissance Festival, and lining makes even one layer unbearably hot. The neckline and hem are edged with black silk taffeta, and the neckline is decorated with pearls and gold ouches sewn to the taffeta.

The gown is made of cotton velvet, though I would have preferred silk velvet. However, budgetary concerns as well as the health of my marriage prohibited my purchasing eleven yards of fabric at \$35/yard for this project, and so I went with black cotton velvet. The pattern for the bodice was based on the kirtle pattern, but pieced to match the shapes of the pattern in the *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe*. I used the trained skirt pattern pieces from that pattern, as well as the belled sleeve pattern.

The bodice and skirt are lined with red linen, and the belled sleeves are lined with black silk taffeta. The bodice has canvas interlining. The undersleeves are attached, and are the same red and gold brocade of the kirtle, lined with handkerchief linen, edged with black silk taffeta, and connected with ouches that match the kirtle neckline. There are false puffs along the bottom edge of the undersleeves, also made with handkerchief linen. As with the kirtle, seams were sewn on machine, but the bodice and skirt were attached with hand sewing, and all finishing is done by hand. There are stays reinforcing the lacing holes, and the lacing holes are done with black silk thread.

The French hood coif brim and paste were based on a combination of the *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe* French hood design and the Tudor Tailor pattern from the book. I used buckram edged with armature wire for the base, then sewed canvas and linen over those pieces, using white silk taffeta for the outside of the paste. I used the bag pattern for a coif I had made previously, and the veil pattern from the *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe*. I had purchased one yard of black silk velvet for my embroidered book cover, and just happened to have the perfect amount left for the veil, which I lined with silk. The lower biliment is pewter beads with gold electroplate, attached directly to the coif brim, and the gold pleats are metallic silk organza. The upper biliment base is black silk velvet over canvas, and the decoration is made from the same pearls and ouches on the neckline of the kirtle.

All of the materials, patterns, and stitches are as close to what I understood to be done in period as possible, within my limitations of time, budget, skill, and understanding. I would dearly love to create another Tudor ensemble, and plan to in the future. I would like to take more time for decorating the smock, with either whitework or blackwork, and I would also like to try my hand at decorating the edges on the sleeve turn-backs, as can be seen in some French portraiture. I would also like to make fur turn-backs – and, perhaps, add the red petticoat layer.

N.B. Due to the unusually large number of images needed for virtual documentation, I have chosen to label the images that are not my original photographs, and only those of my photographs that require labeling for clarity.

Research

When I decided to build a Tudor gown for the Persona Pentathlon, I found that every step of the way involved many, many choices, in ways that had not been true of other sewing projects. When I joined the SCA in 1985 (A.S. 18), my primary concern in making garb was that I *have* some garb, that it fit, that it not fall off of me, and that, preferably, it even might look somewhat decent. For Christmas in 1986, my mother bought Doreen Yarwood's *Encyclopedia of Costume*, and I thought I had died and gone to costumer's heaven!¹ I also got a Singer Merritt 2404 sewing machine that year - and used that same machine for many of the seams in this ensemble.

My usual inspiration for making garb was a specific event – and it was almost inevitably an event that was coming up soon, and for which I *actually* had neither enough time nor proper materials nor skill to make what I wanted. This became even more true after I was married with three children – garb for five! In fact, between the time I had my first child in 1990 and about 2009, I probably attended about five events. As my children grew older and a little more independent (but, sadly, not terribly interested in the SCA), I pulled out what garb I had, and, newly armed with the internet and a better understanding of how to do research, I promptly gave away almost all of my old garb, and set about attempting to rectify what I had left.

I was spurred on to begin new garb by my best friend from high school, who decided somewhat out of the blue that she wanted to go to her first SCA event – and that it was going to be Pennsic. She flew from California to Idaho, and we both flew to Pennsic – the prelude to which was making garb that would not be dreadful in the heat. This did *not* include a Tudor ensemble....but it did involve my picking up more sewing and drafting skills.

Several Pennsics later, and now living on the East Coast, I have what I feel is a reasonable amount of summer-appropriate garb (yay, Roman!) for myself and my husband, and have been itching to create the court garb that got me wanting to sew

¹ I am not sure who was checking out all of the costume books at every public library on the Monterey Peninsula, but the books I wanted were literally *never* in, even when I put them on hold....

in the first place. I have been compiling books and materials for years, and had the idea that I would use only items that were already in my stash to make the Tudor ensemble – and that was mostly possible!

While there are many lovely ensembles in portraits from 1510 - 1520, the painting *Mary Tudor and Charles Brandon* from 1515 has most of the details that I wished to make: the square neckline, the design of the undersleeves, the cuffs of the smock, the black velvet with pearls and ouches, and the French hood.



Figure 1 - *Mary Tudor and Charles Brandon* after Jean Clouet or Jean Perréal, c. 1515. Oil on panel, 62 X 55 cm, Bedford Estate.²

² Celia Fischer, "The Queen and the Artichoke: A study of the portraits of Mary Tudor and Charles Brandon," *The British Art Journal*, Spring 2002, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 2002): 21. There are scholars who believe that this portrait was actually painted in the 1530s.

While working on the pieces for this ensemble, I found that it is much easier to find clear information from many sources about English clothing patterns from about 1540 onwards, and that it is more difficult to pin down patterns and extant examples from earlier Tudor clothes. For the clearest information about 1520-1521, *Dress at the Court of Henry VIII* was most useful, though, as that book does not contain details about patterns, I used patterns for later garments that were similar, and altered them as necessary to create the earlier look.

Materials and colors prior to the 1530s can be seen in portraits, and in the chapter “Female Fashions at Henry VII’s Court” in *Dress at the Court of Henry VIII*, there are account entries that list materials purchased for women at the English court, including fabric and color: “A warrant for Princess Mary dating from 8 April 1535 included 14 yards (12.8 m) of black velvet for two kirtles with sleeves of the same velvet...and 14 yards (12.8 m) for two kirtles with sleeves of the same satin.”³ The colors listed most often in the account lists for kirtles and gowns are black, white, crimson, gold, and silver, and the materials are velvet, silk, satin, cloth of gold, and pearls⁴. Smocks were made “almost exclusively from bleached white linen,”⁵ as were caps and coifs.⁶ French hoods were

...decorated with jeweled borders, either set in gold or stitched onto a textile band. An example of the latter was kept in Henry’s removing coffers: ‘v peces of golde for women’s habilementes sewd upon white satten garnysshed with small dyamountes and Rubies lacking stones in dyuers places thone of them hauing and edge of perle lackibg diuers perles.’⁷

To fit the colors and materials listed most prominently, I chose black velvet, black silk taffeta (not being able to locate sarcenet), red and gold synthetic silk brocade, white silk taffeta, white linen, red linen, black, white, and gold silk threads, linen thread, pearls, gold-plated pewter beads, and gold ouches with black glass jewels.

³ Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII*, New York: Routledge, 2017: 164.

⁴ Ibid, 162-166.

⁵ Ibid, 160.

⁶ Ibid, 171.

⁷ Ibid, 171-172.

The pattern on my brocade is a variation of a pomegranate, fitting the pattern of Structure II in figure 1. The pomegranate motif “held its own for over a century and a half as the most important textile design in production – naturally, though with variations.”⁸ The pattern is similar to those depicted, below, with pomegranate and acanthus motifs, very little dimensionality, and the gold figures on a red background.

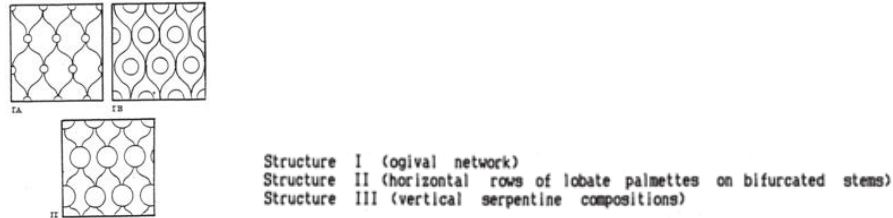


Figure 2: Some variations on the Pomegranate Motif.⁹



The brocade used for my kirtle and sleeves, prior to cutting



Figure 3 - Portrait of a Conduttiero, c. 1500¹⁰



Figure 4 - Portrait, c. 1520¹¹



Figure 5 - Silk brocade with gold thread, 16th Century¹²

⁸ Fanelli, 194.

⁹ Rosalia Bonito Fanelli, “The Pomegranate Pattern in Italian Renaissance Textiles: Origins and Influence,” *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, (1994), 203.

¹⁰ Detail, *Portrait of a Conduttiero*, Giovanni Bellini, 1495-1500, oil on panel, 51 X 37 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ *Portrait*, Unknown Netherlandish Artist, oil on oak, 41.3 x 32.4 cm, National Gallery, London, UK.

From Wikimedia Commons: “Early sixteenth-century portrait of a noblewoman holding a jar. Labelled in the 19th-century as Mary Tudor, Queen of France (1496-1533), daughter of King Henry VII of England, wife of Louis XII and Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk. Other suggested sitters include Eleanor of Austria and Catherine of Austria, Queen of Portugal, and Isabella I of Castile.”

¹² Textile, silk with gold thread, 16th century 99 x 56 cm, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

In order to make sure that the three necklines – the smock, the kirtle, and the gown – lined up accurately, I constructed the kirtle first. I have made several sixteenth-century kirtles, and with each one, I improved something about the fit and historical accuracy. The most recent one I had made laced at the sides, with a fully square neckline, and was slightly higher-waisted than previous kirtles. I loved the fit of the waistline and the side laces, but to make it suitable for 1520, the back neckline needed to come to a **V**, as seen in the drawing by Hans Holbein of an English Lady from c. 1527, rather than square, as seen in the Eleanora of Toledo bodice from c. 1562 detailed in Janet Arnold's *Patterns of Fashion*.



Figure 6 - Drawing, Hans Holbein, c. 1527 ¹³



Figure 7 - Drawing of Eleanora of Toledo bodice, c. 1562 ¹⁴

Using the bodice pattern from my previous kirtle as a base, I traced it onto muslin, and then changed the shape to fit the pattern pieces as shown in the *Tudor Tailor*, and the *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe* pattern. After sewing it and making some small adjustments in the armhole and shoulder seams, I had my new bodice pattern. I used it to cut out interlining from canvas, and then the lining of linen, and sewed channels for light boning. Then I cut out the brocade pieces, working carefully to book-match the pattern, and hand-stitched the edges in to place.

¹³ This image is no. 1895,0915.991 in the British Museum. In *Dress at the Court of Henry VIII*, Mary Hayward lists the date as 1527, but the British Museum dates it as c. 1532-1535.

¹⁴ Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion: The cut and construction of clothes for men and women c 1560 – 1620*, Hollywood, CA: Quite Specific Media Group, 1985: 103.



I did not have quite enough of the brocade to make the skirt as full as I wanted¹⁵, so I did not cut the skirt on an angle. I left the seams open 9" from the top for lacing, and pinned and sewed the pleats. Then, I bound the seams, finished the edges for lacing, and hemmed the skirt. I also chose not to line the skirt, for comfort.



In period, the practice was to use the most elaborate fabrics to be placed over the kirtle's skirt in the front, where the gown's split skirt would show the kirtle underneath (this triangle was called a frontspiece), and the undersleeves that show

¹⁵ It was picked up at Pennsic from a Laurel's de-stashing, and was about 3 yards, 54" wide.

beneath the gown's sleeves.¹⁶ However, as I often wear only the kirtle, I chose to make the entire kirtle of the brocade, as well as the undersleeves.

Next, I created the neck edging from silk taffeta for decorating, and sewed the ouches and freshwater pearls in place. I used only two pearls between each ouch, as seen in the 1525 portrait of Katherine of Aragon.



Figure 8 - Katherine of Aragon, c. 1525¹⁷



Having finished the neckline decoration, I proceeded to attach it to the kirtle.¹⁸ I was undecided about whether to place an ouch at the V of the neckline, and initially did, but after consulting the Holbein drawing again, I decided it would have made a

¹⁶ Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII*, New York: Routledge, 2017: 165.

¹⁷ *Katherine of Aragon*, Lucas Horenbout, 1525, watercolor on vellum, National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹⁸ ...as I was attaching the decorated neckline edging, I wished that I had done a smaller fold over when finishing the kirtle: something to know for next time!

bump in the gown neckline. I added the lacing holes, and then put the kirtle on to my dressmaker's dummy.¹⁹



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Next, I set about making the smock²¹. The pattern is primarily from the Tudor Tailor, as that was the source I used for three sixteenth-century smocks and shirts that I have made over the years, but before making up this one, I also looked at Janet

¹⁹ Her name is Auntie Grizelda.

²⁰ Note: the kirtle does not fit Auntie Grizelda quite correctly, as I am a bit...squashier...than she is...

²¹ When I use the word smock, I mean an undergarment for the upper body that angled, or A-line side seams, whereas when I use the term shirt, I mean a garment whose side seams are straight.

Arnold's *Patterns of Fashion 4*, and *Dress at the Court of Henry VIII*, as well as the smock pattern of Margo Anderson/ Kimiko Small.

The shirt's sleeves I liked the best were fairly full, and so I used those sleeves as a pattern for my smock. However, I decided that I wanted a thinner neckline edge than that shirt, and that I wanted to add side gores.



Shirt that I used for sizing the new smock



I sewed the straight seams on my machine, using French seams, and then hand-finished the edges, putting the neckline in place. When I had sewn it all together, I placed it on Auntie Grizelda under the kirtle – and discovered that the kirtle showed in the back in an unaesthetic way. I decided to remove it, and lower the neckline in the back. I also got one of Those Ideas, and decided that I might do some whitework on the edge. I had never done whitework before, but this entire project is filled with things I have never done before, so I decided to try my hand.

I first tried silk on linen, and determined that my meager skills and embroidery were not up to this task. I made a second attempt, using linen thread on the linen, and that was somewhat better, but I did not care for how abysmally messy the back was, nor for the design that I chose. I elected to save that for a time when I can consult with those with more knowledge and experience with early sixteenth-century whitework. I am also intrigued by what appears to be a trend of some sort of black border on the edge of the smock's neckline of English Tudor Gowns in portraits between 1510 and 1550. I consulted the hive-mind that is the Facebook Page

Historical Hand Embroidery, and after many, many answers as guesses, no less a person than Kimiko Small declared herself mystified. Is it a picot stitch? Some version of French Knots? Beads? I could find nothing in the resources I have, nor discover what resource might give a clue. I have decided that this will be my next project: making a smock with whitework, and whatever that black edge is.



Incorrect neckline



Whitework attempt 1: silk on linen



Whitework attempt 2: linen on linen

Gallery of Mysterious Black Edging in Portraits



Fig. 9 - Detail, *Lady Guildford*, 1527²²



Fig. 10 - Detail, *Mary Rose Tudor* 1514²³



Fig. 11- Detail, *Katherine of Aragon*, 1525²⁴



Fig. 12 - Detail, *Jane Seymour*, 1536²⁵



Fig. 13 - Detail, *Katherine Parr*, 1545²⁶



Fig. 14 - Detail, *Princess Elizabeth*, 1546²⁷

²² *Mary, Lady Guildford*, 1527, Hans Holbein, oil and tempera on panel, 87 X 70.5 cm, St. Louis Art Museum.

²³ *Portrait*, 1505 (?) – 1515 (?) Michael Sittow, oil on wood, 28.7 X 21 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

²⁴ *Katherine of Aragon*, 1525 Lucas Horenboult, watercolor on vellum, National Portrait Gallery, London.

²⁵ *Jane Seymour*, c. 1536, Hans Holbein, oil on panel, 89.5 X 64.5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

²⁶ *Katherine Parr*, 1545, attr. Master John, oil on panel, 71 X 37 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.

²⁷ *Elizabeth I When a Princess*, c.1546, William Scrots, oil on panel, 108 X 81 cm, Royal Trust Collection, London.

After (reluctantly) leaving the Mysterious Black Edging rabbit hole²⁸, I sensibly stitched a plain edge on to my smock, and it was finished.



It was now time to make the gown. I decided to make the gown with a train, and to fully line the entire gown with red linen. I also decided on belled sleeves, lined with black taffeta, and held back with ouches to match the neckline decoration.

One of my biggest worries in making this gown was that I would cut the pieces of velvet the wrong way, and end up with the nap running two different directions. To avoid this, I cut all of the pieces at once – and narrowly missed making a different mistake: I almost cut the bodice from the same pattern as the kirtle. As I was picturing the gown going over the kirtle, I remembered the seams in the back, and that the kirtle bodice pattern did not have those seams. I cut out the *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe* bodice pattern pieces to use as a basis, sewed it up, fitted the pieces, and was ready to cut out the gown.

This was the first time I had used a commercial pattern to sew garb, and, once I got used to the tissue-paper pattern pieces, it was rather nice not to be constantly checking and re-checking my measurements! Before I used the pattern, I read all of the instructions, historical background, and the Techniques Manual, to make sure that I understood how it worked. I also read through the pertinent parts of *The Tudor Tailor* and *Patterns of Fashion*, drew the pieces on the velvet in chalk, went away, took a deep breath, and then finally cut out the pieces. I did the same with the red

²⁸ Okay, but have you seen some of the portraits by Corneille de Lyon? Are those *feathers* at the neckline? I *will* be revisiting this.

linen, and then the bodice pieces of the canvas interlining. I finished the cutting-out process by cutting out the black silk taffeta lining for the sleeves.

I sewed the interlining of the bodice to the lining, and then pinned the velvet bodice pieces into place. Then I remembered the cording that was to go along the edges, and the reinforcement at the **V** of the gown, unpinned it, put the cord and reinforcing tape in place, re-pinned it, and hand-stitched it into place, using velvet ribbon as edging.



Next, I made the lacing holes using black silk thread, and then sewed down all the edging.



At this point, I had to make some decisions about the undersleeves. My ensemble was modeled on portraits of the early end of Tudor gowns, and based on those portraits, the width of the undersleeves was not as large as gowns from the 1530s and onward. I initially cut out the foresleeves using the pattern from the *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe* instructions, but as I looked at portraits, and read through *Dress at the Court of Henry VIII*, it seemed possible, and even likely, that the undersleeves would be full sleeves, and not just foresleeves tied in place on the outer sleeve, as is supposed with later, wider undersleeves.

I read through *Patterns of Fashion*, the historical information in *The Tudor Tailor*, and in *Dress at the Court of Henry VIII*, and every article and website I could find, and the conclusion I reached was: no one really knows how the foresleeves were attached to the outer sleeve. The portraits of Jane Seymour (1537) and Princess Mary Tudor, princess of England (1544) show sleeves that seem narrower at the upper sleeve than the earlier portraits of Anne of Brittany (1508), Mary Tudor, Queen of France (1515), and Katherine of Aragon (1520). Certainly, as the foresleeves became wider and more elaborate, the logistics of how they stay in place are an interesting puzzle! However, the earlier gowns have sleeves that are reasonable to imagine as either being tied or pinned to the kirtle, or even attached to the gown by either tying or sewing. That sleeves were separate from kirtles is evident in the account listings of materials for wardrobes, as sleeves are always listed as a separate item from the kirtle.



Fig. 15 - Anne of Brittany, c. 1508²⁹



Fig. 16 - Mary Tudor c. 1515³⁰



Fig. 17 - Katherine of Aragon, c. 1520³¹

²⁹ Detail, *Grandes Heures of Anne of Brittany*, Jean Bourdichon, c. 1508, Bibliothèque National de France, Paris.

³⁰ Detail, *Mary Tudor and Charles Brandon* after Jean Clouet or Jean Perréal, c. 1515. Oil on panel, 62 X 55 cm, Bedford Estates; not reliably dated from 1515.

³¹ Detail, *Katherine of Aragon*, unknown artist, c. 1520, oil on oak panel, 520 mm x 420 mm, National Portrait Gallery, London.



Fig. 18 - Jane Seymour, c. 1536³²



Fig. 19 - Princess Mary Tudor, c. 1544³³

I decided to go with a full-length undersleeve, rather than a half-sleeve tied or sewn on halfway down the outer sleeve, as made sense with the very wide undersleeves in later Tudor portraiture. Having already cut out undersleeve halves according to the pattern, however, and having book-matched them, I found myself having to Frankenstein pieces together to create the whole sleeve. I did so, and edged the sleeves with black silk taffeta in the same way that Mary Tudor, Queen of France's sleeves are edges with gold-decorated trim. I then added false puffs of the same linen as the smock, and ouches, allowing enough width at the wrist for the cuff of the smock to be seen.



³² *Jane Seymour*, Hans Holbein, oil on panel, 65.4 X 40.7 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

³³ *Queen Mary I*, Master John, c. 1544, oil on panel, 711 X 508 mm, National Portrait Gallery, London.

I attached the inner sleeve to the outer sleeve, and the attached both to the bodice.



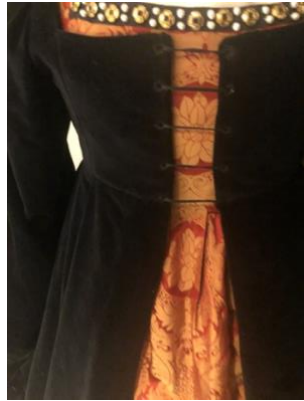
I suspect that however undersleeves were attached in period – whether sewn, pinned, or tied - that they were done so in a way that allowed them to be detached again fairly easily, so that the kirtle and sleeves might be worn under another gown without having to completely disassemble the gown. Although I find it likely that this kirtle will only ever be worn with sleeves when also wearing the gown, I did not finish the inside seam of the gown completely with seam binding, in order that the undersleeves could be separated without incredible difficulty, if needed.



I then attached the fully-lined skirt to the bodice, using the Hanging Pinch Pleats described in the *Tudor Lady's Wardrobe*.³⁴ I then hemmed the trained skirt and

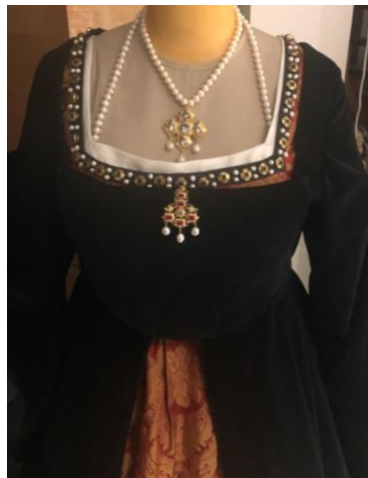
³⁴ Margo Anderson and Kimiko Small, *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe*, Woodland, CA, Historic Costume Patterns, 2009: 125.

lining, attached them at strategic places along the hem, and laced the gown into place on Auntie Grizelda.³⁵



The next step was to make the plastron, which, as can be seen thanks to Hans Holbein's amazing brushwork, is then pinned into place over the lacing. I have not pinned this in place as completely on Auntie Grizelda as I would when wearing it, as the angles are rather wrong for her shape.

Under this ensemble is a farthingale, which was famously brought to England by Katherine of Aragon when she arrived in England in 1501. A mention is made of women wearing them in 1519,³⁶ and so I am choosing to include it in my ensemble.



³⁵ Auntie Grizelda, darn her, is not only less squishy, but she is my size about twenty pounds ago, so the pieces don't line up quite as they should on her.

³⁶ Hayward, 162.

With the smock, kirtle and gown finished, it was time for the French hood. I had made a French hood a few years ago according to the *Tudor Tailor*, and, while it was okay, when I looked at portraiture of the time again, I was not satisfied with the size, angle, decoration, or structure of the hood.³⁷



At the Maryland Renaissance Festival³⁸

The French hood is mentioned as far back as 1495 in account lists for the household of Henry VII, for clothes for his children.³⁹ While Anne Boleyn is often credited with popularizing the French Hood, it was worn in some fashion by many in the Royal court, and evidently brought from France in its familiar form in 1515 by Mary Tudor, Queen of France, upon her return to England. Jane Seymour, the immediate successor to Anne Boleyn, “forbad her attendants to wear the French hood,”⁴⁰ presumably because it was so strongly associated with Anne Boleyn. The court appears to have recovered from this injunction, however, as the vast majority of portraits of the English court from 1538 onward show women wearing French hoods. The look was fashionable throughout Europe, and stayed in fashion in some form until all but disappearing from English portraits after the advent of the reign of Elizabeth I in 1553.

³⁷ In other words, I hated it every time I looked at it – though it did fit well, and was very comfortable.

³⁸ My husband cannot resist mugging for the camera. We won’t talk about his hat, or doublet, made in 1996...

³⁹ Hayward, 88.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 171.

Here are some portraits that show a line of evolution of the French hood as it appeared in various places in Europe:



Fig. 20 Margaret of Austria, c. 1490⁴¹ Fig. 21 Anne of Brittany, c. 1495⁴² Fig. 22 Mary Tudor, c. 1510⁴³ Fig. 23 Isabella of Hapsburg, c. 1515⁴⁴



Fig. 24 - Unknown Woman, c. 1520⁴⁵ Fig. 25 - Madame de Canaples, c. 1525⁴⁶ Fig. 26 - Princess Mary Tudor, c. 1525-1529⁴⁷

For the French Hood pattern, I used the pattern from *The Tudor Lady's Wardrobe* to make muslin pieces, and pinned them on to a Styrofoam head, and then trimmed to get the drape and angles that I wanted. I cut base pieces from canvas and linen, sewed them together, and stitched armature wire in place on the edges. Then I cut out the linen pieces for the coif brim and the bag, pinned them into

⁴¹ *Margaret of Austria*, c. 1490, Jean Hey, oil on wood, 32.7 X 23 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

⁴² *Anne of Bretagne*, c. 1500, Jean Perréal, Miniature, National Library of France, Paris.

⁴³ *Portrait*, 1505 (?) – 1515 (?) Michael Sittow, oil on wood, 28.7 X 21 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. There is a fair amount of question about this portrait: it is sometimes labeled as a portrait of young Katherine of Aragon, and sometimes as Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII.

⁴⁴ *Isabella of Hapsburg*, Master of the Legend of Magdalen, c. 1515, oil on panel, 33 X 23 cm, Czartoryski Museum, Krakow.

⁴⁵ *Unknown Woman, Formerly known as Margaret Tudor*, c. 1520 Unknown French Artist, National Portrait Gallery, London.

⁴⁶ *Madame de Canaples*, c. 1525, Jean Clouet, oil on panel, 36 X 28.5 cm, National Galleries, Edinburgh.

⁴⁷ *Queen Mary I*, c. 1525, Lucas Horenbout, watercolor on vellum, National Portrait Gallery, London.

place, and sewed them. Then, I added the beads for the lower biliment, pleated the metallic silk organza, and pinned it into place, adding a silk ribbon to neaten the inside.



Next, I cut and sewed the white silk taffeta pieces for the paste, and stitched those into place. I chose white for the paste, as I noticed that all of the pastes for early French hoods were almost exclusively white, though there were a few that were red. After that, I sewed the black silk velvet hood to its silk lining, and finished

the edges. The biliment was cut out from the same black silk velvet as the hood, and sewn to a canvas strip, with armature wire to help its shape. Then the decorations were put in place, to match the neckline of the kirtle.



After the veil and upper biliment were attached to the paste, I attached the paste to the coif, and it was finished.





Gown without plastron, worn as shown in Holbein portrait of Thomas More's Family

Detail, Sir Thomas More and Family⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Rowland Lockey after Hans Holbein the Younger, *Sir Thomas More and his Family* (Nostell Priory version, 1592).



Holbein's study for the original painting of the family of Sir Thomas Moore

I enjoyed stretching my drafting, sewing, and research skills to the limit in doing this project! The primary thing that I would change it to fit the gown better to the kirtle: I do not like that the kirtle shows under the neckline of the gown. I don't know that there is any way to fix that for this ensemble: chances are good that I will create another gown to fit this kirtle, and another kirtle to fit this gown⁴⁹. My next project will be to make a matching ensemble for my husband, to replace the one that I made for him in 1996. After that, I *will* discover what the Black Dots are, and create a smock with either whitework or blackwork to go under this kirtle, and probably a red silk petticoat, as well⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ ...or who knows, maybe I could shed some pounds...but it is far more likely that I will sew more garb.... :D

⁵⁰ ...in fact, I have already obtained red silk taffeta for this purpose...and I might make another French hood, using some of the red silk taffeta for the paste, as I have seen in some portraits.

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