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ST. ELISABETH

“FIERCE” DRESS VARIANT

The cutting diagram discoveries inspired by Saint Elisabeth, Saint Clare of Assisi, and other extants from 1221-1300 that led to an easier rectangular dress and tunic pattern from experimental research.

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ST ELISABETH DRESS VARIANT

What is this “dress variant?”

This is experimental research for the reverse engineering of several contemporary “extant” (existing from that time) dresses and pieces of dresses to figure out how they were constructed, and most importantly, how they were laid out in the cutting diagrams.

These outfits use rectangular construction, which is a modern term for laying out the pieces on rectangles to get the most out of a limited loom width for the time. (This time period is 1225 – 1300, so loom widths are maximum PUTTHATHERE.) Modernly, our fabric goes as wide as 55/60,” which requires us to understand how to stack the rectangles sideways so that we use all the length and width.

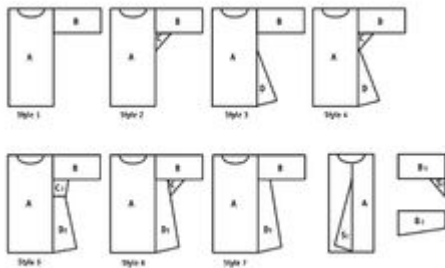


Figure #: Rectangular tunic layouts

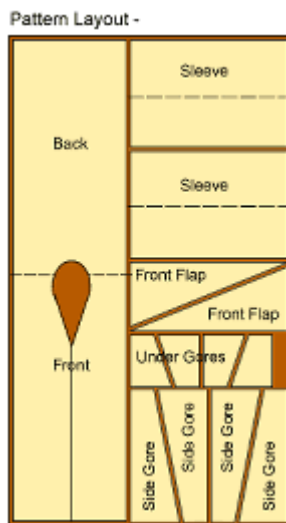


Figure #: Rectangular Cutting Diagram, the “pattern.” Notice how this is efficient with space.

Normal rectangular construction can get fairly complicated, with extra geometric shapes for the waist cut-ins, armpit gussets, gores (large triangles to add width to the skirts) and much more.

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Oh boy. Math.

Well, I'm pretty darn good at putting one together, but I screw up my math several times trying to get my measurements mapped onto the triangles and other shapes. Plus, the super-fitted aspect of some rectangular patterns were not good for changing sizes over time.

Hence, the great search for Something Better started, about ten years ago, resulting in this cutting diagram and assembly method. We will never know for certain exactly how they assembled their extant surviving pieces (because cutting diagrams were not preserved and cloth extants are reassembled by museums and not entirely intact).

This cutting diagram and assembly I'm proposing, the "St. Elisabeth 'Fierce' variant," can't be a replica. But it can be a practical, comfortable, easier version of rectangular construction and the final version, assembled, has all the drapery wrinkles in the same places as the sketches, illuminations, and paintings.

This is encouraging.

It's also super economical. Each person has to adjust their cutting diagram to their personal dimensions (which is why muslin is so good for the cheap mockup to be made first), but once you dial that in, you may use only 50 percent of the material you would use for a cotehardie. In my personal case, 5'7" tall, I use 3.25 yards for a full dress that puddles on the floor, and about 2.1 yards for a long-sleeve tunic to just below the knees.

My favorite part – it's super comfortable. I use linen, a period fabric of the time, and the more you wash linen, the softer it gets (unless you get a strange batch). It takes dye wonderfully, providing us a rainbow of colors for the time period, and layers up very nicely in multiple weights. You can also use wool, which has a huge variety of weights and weaves and colors. I do not use a lot of wool, because I'm allergic to it.

Best of all, the deeper sleeve openings are more flattering to some figure styles, and it is extremely comfortable. My arrangement of the triangles, either option A or option B, gives you a complete range of motion in the arm. This engineering required a design leap of faith, multiple extant sources, and much experimentation, so it's a "variant," not the final answer (if we ever get one).

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Solving the Problems

PROBLEM ONE – TWELFTH NIGHT, WHAT TO WEAR?

I wanted something nice to wear, a dress, for Twelfth Night. But I didn't want to strangle my armpits with a super tight sleeve (cotehardies, I'm looking at you!), and I wanted it to be as period as possible. So cotehardies wouldn't work, and I don't do late period clothing.

PROBLEM TWO – RECONSTRUCTING A COOL DRESS

I found the original Carlson sketch, redrawn from the original Hausherr sketch, drawn from St. Elisabeth's shredded gown (pieces taken for relics and then badly repaired by a museum later). So my sources appeared to be in bits and pieces.

PROBLEM THREE – STRAIGHT REVERSE ENGINEERING FAILED

I found evidence of other SCA people and archeologists all trying to remake this dress based on the shredded extant or the sketchy sketches. They all had varying lengths of success, but none really looked quite right in the sleeves – they did not match period drawings and illuminations.

Strategies that solved it:

1. Tried multiple different cutting diagram layouts from the sketches. Failed.
2. Tried injecting historical rectangular design into the dress. Failed.
3. Checked NESAT article on archeologists who reconstructed it; they did not share their cutting diagrams and reported it tight in the armpits. Fail.

At this point, I started playing around. I found other extant pieces that were contemporary, like Saint Assisi, and studied their seams and overall fit. I studied any visible seam lines in period art of the time, including illuminations and statues. And I bought a bolt of muslin and just started chopping it up in different ways to get the rectangles to work again.

I discovered these things:

- The width of the sleeve opening dictates the length of the sleeve gore.
- Symmetry in cutting diagrams for rectangular dictate that the wobbly triangles in the Carlson drawing maybe regular triangles. And they might fit on either side of the sleeves in the cutting layout, saving fabric and making the math work out nicely.
- Those two sleeve gores can be placed in the back of the sleeve for depth and motion. If you don't need both in the back, then like St. Clare of Assisi, put one in the body as a gusset and one in the back.
- There is simpler math to this rectangular cutting diagram than the ones I tried before.

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This gave the look of the fluffy sleeve that's tight from elbow to wrist, does not require buttons or ties to close.

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Historical Dresses of the Age

Saint Elisabeth was separated into many pieces after her death, along with the official bedraggled dress she chose from her large clothing collection to be buried in. Even her skull was sent to one place, her body another. Saint Clare of Assisi also got her clothing removed and preserved. Today there is this garment of Saint Elisabeth, shown in figure #. This was probably not her only layer she was wearing as accounts of the time say that her dress, as she lay in state for four days before burial, was cut up by the faithful (along with some body parts).¹



Figure 4 - Dress of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia, Church St. Martin, Oberwalluf. (Photo: K. Kania). It's wool on the outside and lined and trimmed with linen. The dress is a funny shape in the front from well-meaning modern "repairs."

¹ Elliot, *Proving Woman*, chapter 4.

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Figure 5 - One of the garments of St. Clare of Assisi

Saint Clare of Assisi (1194 – 1253) also has a very similar garment, nearly complete, also with easy to see seams. The bottom level of this dress is nipped at by samples for relics as well. She is contemporary, so was also used as a resource for the engineering of the cutting diagram and fit.



Figure 6 - More clothing from Saint Clare of Assisi.

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You can see the wide sleeves that narrow down to the wrist, and the cloak that would be floor length (the dresses puddle for fancy occasions, like the one in the middle). The other two are floor length and no further. Both of these extant examples are very helpful in figuring out the patterns that were used to create them and the look of the age.

DRESSES OF THE AGE

In this time period, the fashion was this particular bat-winged dress with tighter sleeves from elbow to wrist, length to the floor, loose fit and belted around the waist. There are numerous examples in art.

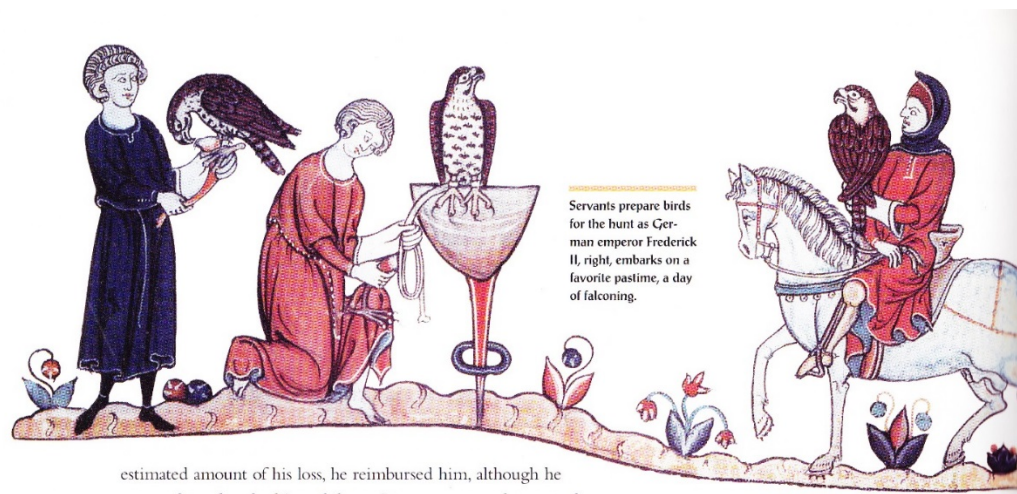


Figure 7 - Illustration of Frederick II, 1194 – 1250 Italy. Note the sleeves are baggy until the elbow and will even sag over the elbow. This is from the cut. There are also minimal buttons (5 or less) or no buttons on the sleeve ends.



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Figure 8 - Grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift, c.1300-1325 (Cod.Pal. germ. 848, Ruprecht-Karls-Universitat Heidelberg). From a Book of Love. Notice the teardrop shape to the sideless surcoat, the baggy sleeves to the elbow.



Figure 9– Illustration from Matthew Paris, showing the loose upper sleeve.

These ensembles usually include a cloak, be it lined with fur for outdoor or warmth, or linen for presumably inside wear.



Figure 10 - Drawing by Villard De Honnecourt, Thirteenth century, Paris, Bib. Nat. ms fr. 19093 f. 27. (Photo: Flammarion)

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Figure 11 - The Margrave Ekkehard II and Uta, west choir, Naumburg Cathedral, c. 1249-55

HISTORICAL FABRICS TO USE

In this time period, there would be a variety of materials to choose from for your layers and your clothing pieces. Here are the ones that came up in the research:

Fabric Descriptions in this time period

Fabric period name	Description	Used For	Notes
Linen, fine	High quality linen	Underlayers, dresses, tunics	Can also be used for hoods.
Fustian	Cotton, cotton with hemp, cotton with linen	Doublets, summer outer garments, winter underwear	Thick, durable twilled cloth with a short nap.
Serge	Wool with faint diagonal stripe	Thick to paper thin, used for numerous applications	Finer versions reserved for the upper classes.
Thick Linen	Rough and thick	Aprons, bags, etc.	Common

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Cotton	Rough and thick	Doublets, fancy outerlayers	Rare, from Egypt, and very expensive.
Silk taffeta	Also called cendal or sendal	Line silk or wool, or make accessories or flags	Usually from Italy.
Silk Brocade	Patterned, thick	Outer and inner layers, very expensive	Very rare, only nobility.

Source: Piponnier, Dress in the Middle Ages.

Linen was the common choice for the first layer. Linen weavers worked to order, usually privately and off the written records, making them somewhat difficult to track. However the aristocracy made purchases in regions where weaving of high quality linens attained an almost industrial level: Flanders, the area around Cambrai, Brittany, and above all Holland and Germany, with linen from Konstanz.²

HER TAILORS AND LADIES

Keeping in mind until the last year of her life, Elisabeth was noble and a Princess, with a staff and people making her things for her. This would include tailors coming to the Marburg or other castles and bringing fabric, cutting out the pattern, and sewing it for her on the spot.

² Piponnier, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, p.22.

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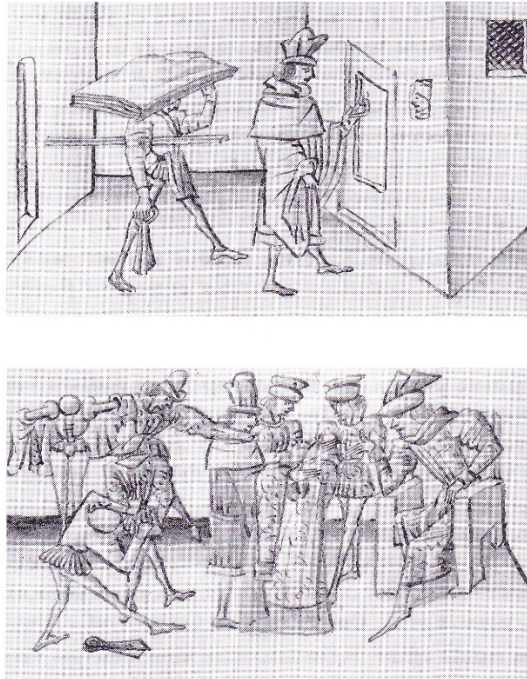


Figure 12 - A tailor and his assistant calling at a private house. (*Livre du Roi Floriment*. *Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fr. 12566, f.139 and f.92v, 1418*.)

The prince's tailor or furrier exercised his art for a strictly limited number of people. Each adult member of the ruling family would have his own staff, and most of those in receipt of fabrics from outside would have their clothes made away from home, if they were not highly placed enough for their own private tailor.³

CLOAKS/MANTLES

A large majority of the outfits also include a light cloak or a lined cloak, depending on the time of year and temperature.

These were most likely a half-circle or three-quarters circle cloak.

³ Piponnier, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, page 29.

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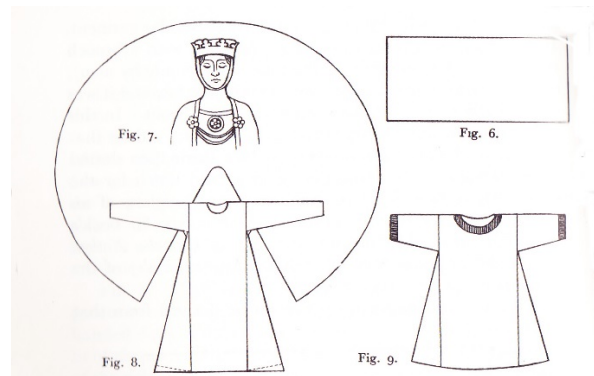


Figure 13 - Cloak design from Mary Houston's Medieval Costume.

The mantle could be plain, trimmed, or highly embellished, such as the accounting of one from Richard I, "which is said to have been nearly covered with half moons and shining orbs of solid silver, in imitation of the system of the heavenly bodies."⁴p.24, Giles, Edward, *Art of Cutting*.

⁴ Giles, *The Art of Cutting*, page 24.

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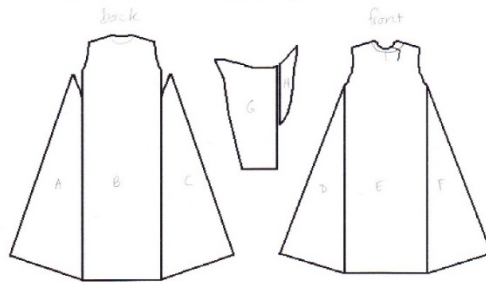
Extant Reverse Engineering Design

The gown of Saint Elisabeth has a drawing of the pattern pieces, displayed on the internet by a Marc Carlson, that looks like Figure #. He redrew the Hausherr drawing of the actual relic dress, also pictured in this paper.

Some Clothing of the Middle Ages -- Kyrtilles/Cotes/Tunics -- The Gown of St. Elizabeth ... Page 1 of 2

Kyrtilles/Cotes/Tunics

The Gown of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia



This garment is dated to before about 1230, and is made from course wool, and lined with brown linen. The neck hole is very small, and there may be a small opening on the left shoulder, bound with linen.

All measurements of surviving material, not of complete garment.

- Length in front: 135 cm 53.1"
- Length in rear: 143 cm 56.3"
- Sleeve length: 24 cm 9.5"
- Chest width: 25 cm 9.75"
- Hip width: 73 cm 28 3/4"
- Hem: 203 cm 80 7/8"
- Approximate loom width: 103 cm 40.5"

Thread Count

- Warp is 9 Z-spun threads/cm
- Weft is 22 Z-spun threads/cm

This page was last modified 22 April 2003

<http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~marc-carlson/cloth/elizabeth.htm>

1/8/2004

Figure 14 - Carlson Drawing "after Hausherr"

That's the sketch that clicked. I realized from all the illuminations and sculptures I'd seen that the extra triangles in the back of the sleeve was how they got that specific baggy sleeve look that is so iconic to the 13th century. And, it would be really comfortable to wear and work in.

Armed with my lessons on rectangular construction, I set about experimenting to get this dress to work.

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CUTTING DIAGRAMS

First, I'd need to figure out the cutting diagram. That's what rectangular is truly all about; using the least amount of fabric through geometry. A good cutting diagram can save you yards of fabric and put all the pieces in the right places.

I cut out the paper of the extant sketch of the dress, and scooted them around until I had a rough idea how it might work, then drew it up.

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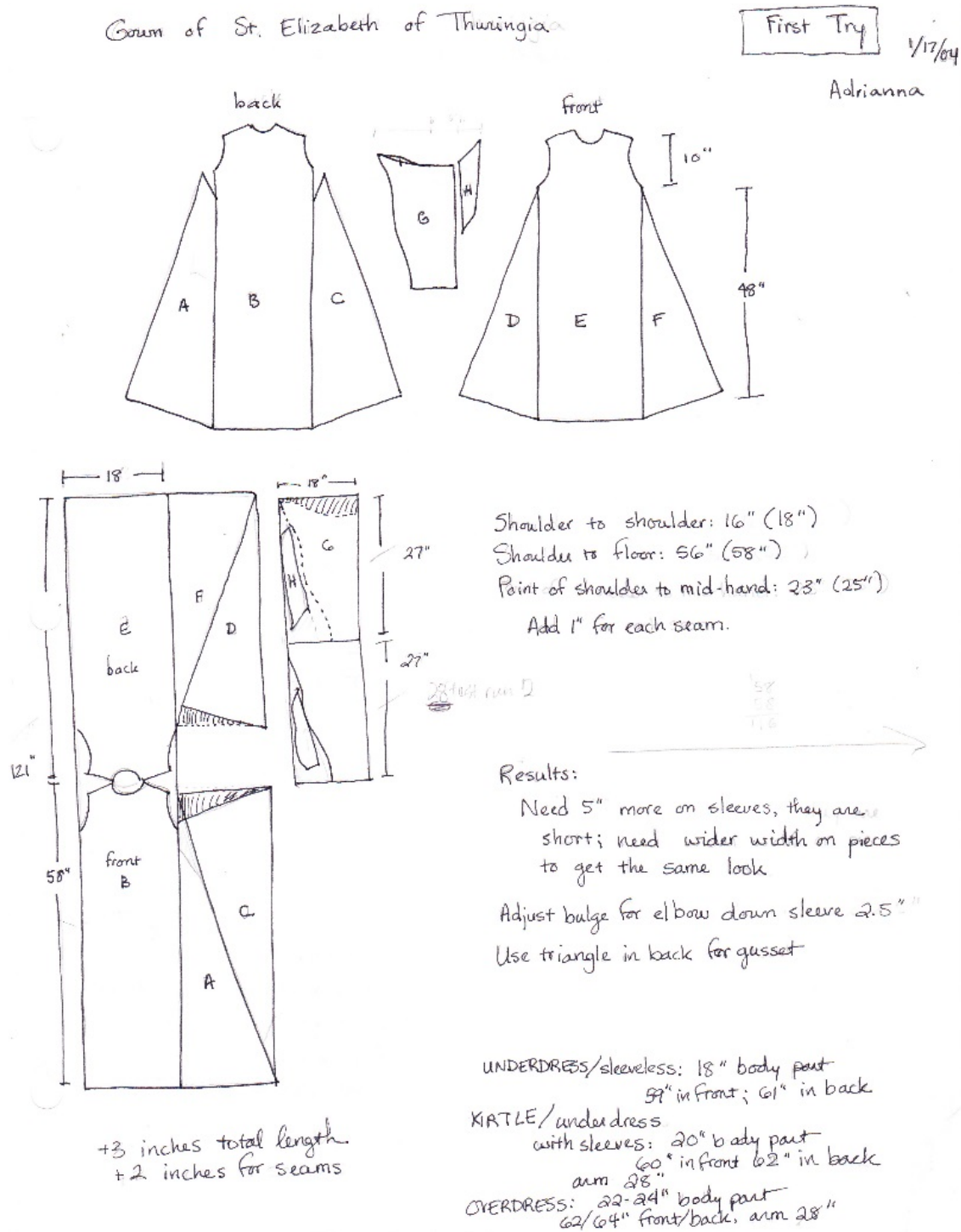


Figure 15 - The first attempt at a cutting diagram.

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This dress didn't fit right at all. I think my math was off. I got frustrated and didn't touch the project for a while.

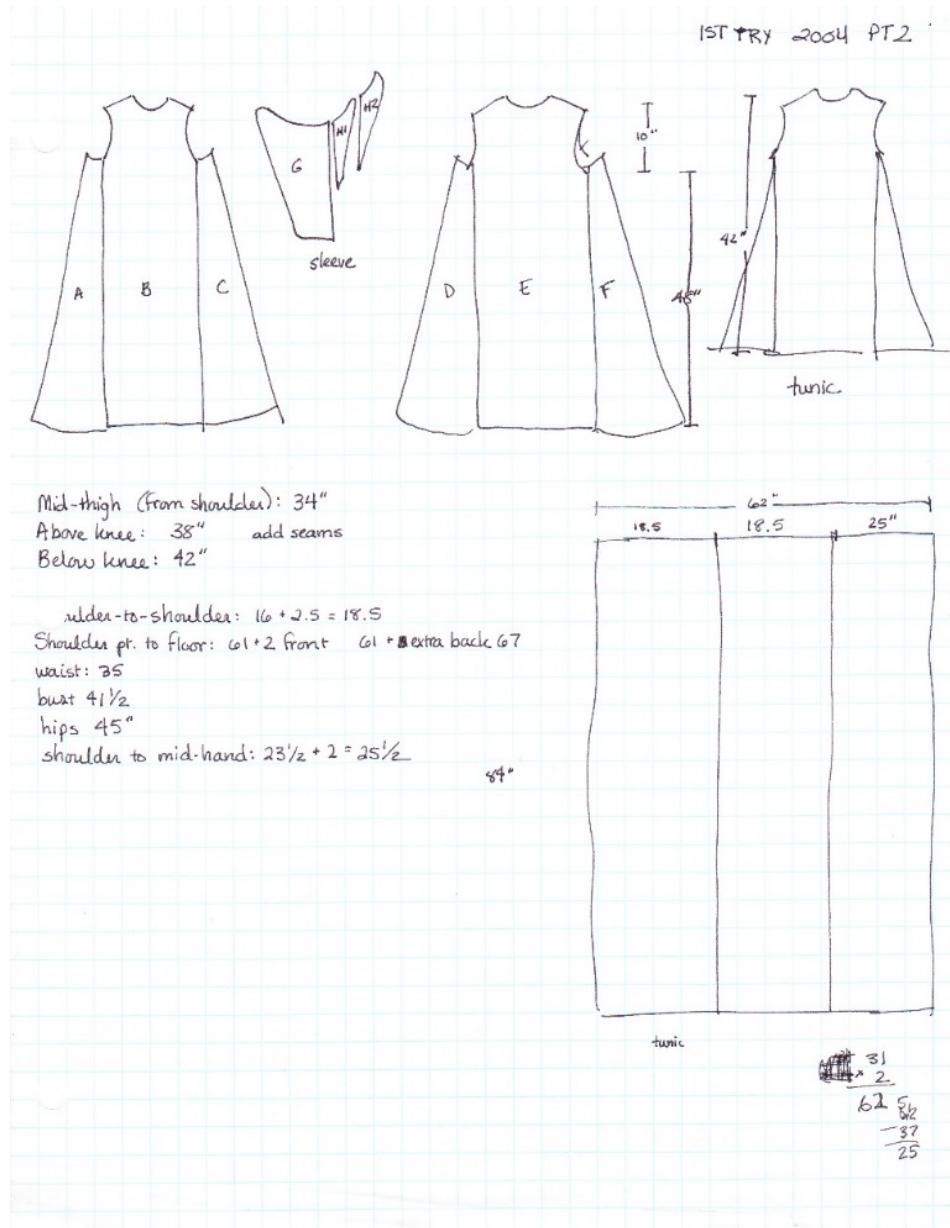


Figure 16 - Redoing the first try diagram, I realized that two skinny triangles in the sleeve would be more effective than one wobbly one from the Hausherr drawing.

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TRY, TRY, TRY AGAIN

The sleeve in the drawing has just one sliver of pattern on the back. If you add a second sliver to make it a full triangle, you get the two-triangle system I have in the current pattern, and it fits the cutting diagram perfectly.

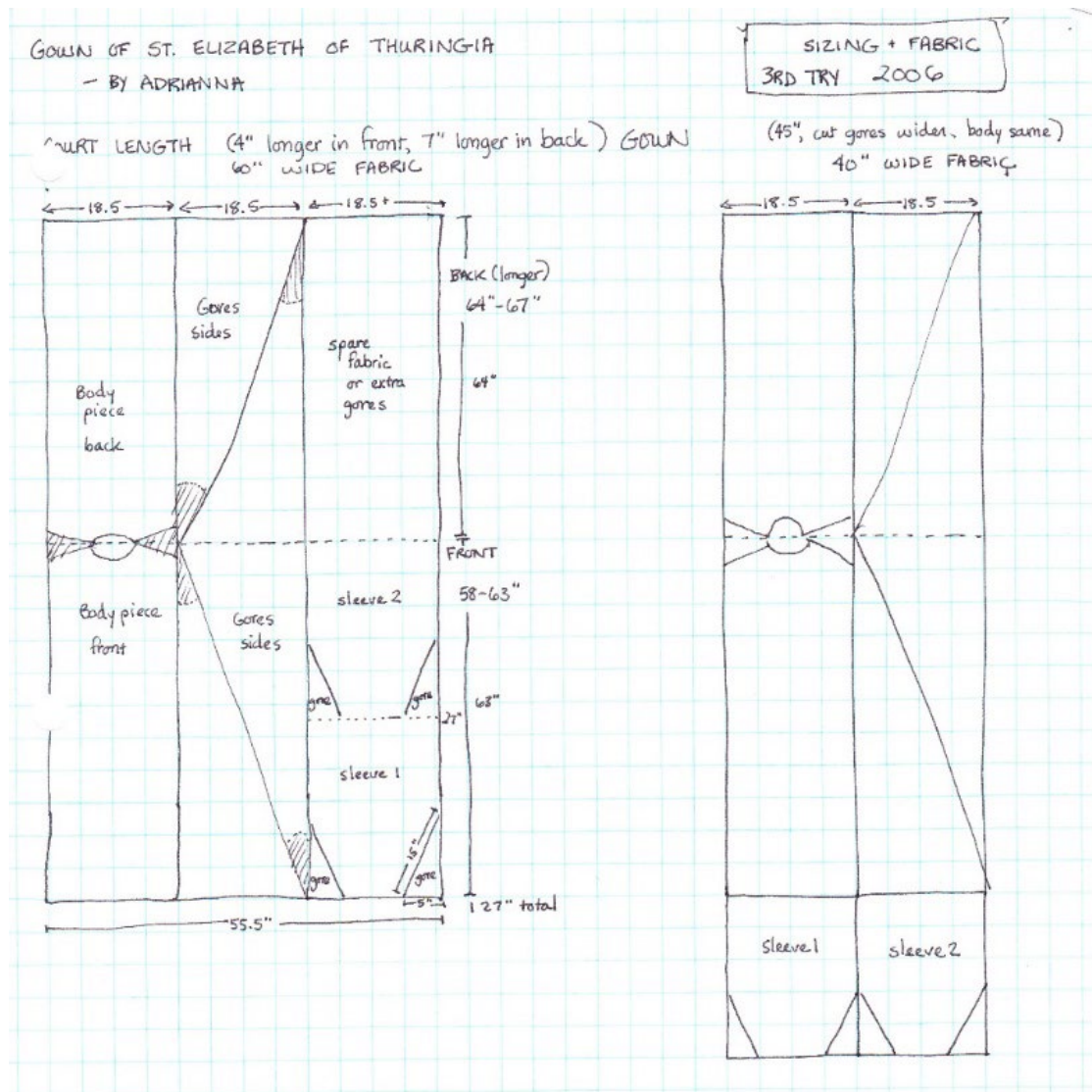


Figure 17 - Third try, 2006, of the cutting diagram. This one is much closer!

Finally everything started working and I got some comfortable dresses out of it with the correct look. This math is how I figured out the batwing sleeve to the elbow.

Math:

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A = Distance between elbow and wrist

Same as:

B = distance between elbow and lower batwing arm meets body piece.

The extra triangle gores for the sleeve, which go on the back of the arm, have points that meet the elbow, no lower, which creates the snug forearm and “batwing” sleeve.



Figure 18 - Navy Blue Three from the front, showing the loose-to-elbow sleeve.

There are many reasons that second triangle is not on that original Carlson drawing:

- Artist error. It is a redraw. Carlson said he deliberately didn't copy it exactly from Hausherr's drawing.
- It has a wobbly edge, not straight. The museum says the extant has some damage.
- She was so tiny she may not have needed two triangles there.
- It might not have used a second triangle. But other dresses of the time did, so it's not a huge leap to add one, especially when the cutting diagram is symmetrical.

I was worried that I was leaping to conclusions with inadequate data, so I checked another example, the gown of Saint Clare of Assisi, dated to 1253. It has pieces in the sleeve too, which also widen it out from shoulder to elbow.

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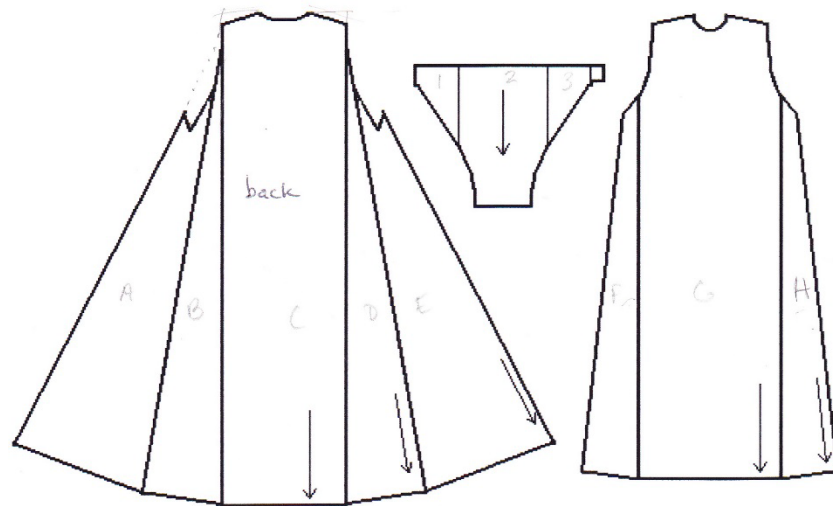


Figure 19 - The sketch of the gown of St. Clare of Assisi

ARMSCYE FORWARD TECHNIQUE

In the long span of this project, new research was found that might help the fit of the dress even further.

Instead of measuring your bust all the way around, and then dividing that up to do the calculations, measure it from your side seam to your side seam.⁵

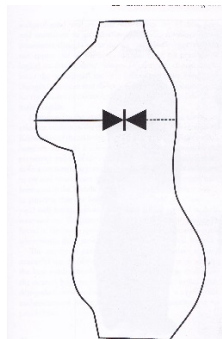


Figure 20 - The side seam mark on the left side of a lady. This would be front and back measured from the sides. (Drawing by K. Kania.)

There is very little to no shaping in the back, just a deep scoop in the front that goes really low. On a document dated 1300 – 1325, the Grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift, (the couple hugging illustration in this doc), you can see the deep armscye for the sideless surcoat, the first instance of sideless surcoats.

⁵ Kania, *NESAT X* / p. 147

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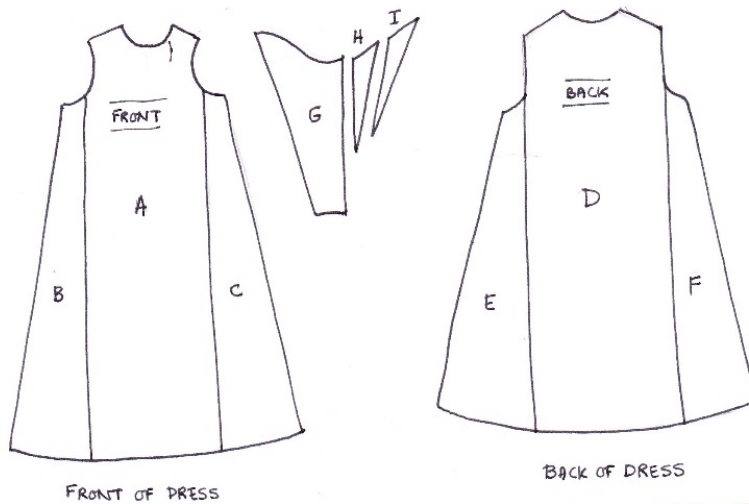
Initially, this could be from just leaving off the sleeves, and that would be the shape left over.⁶ It's a subtle and small change, but I don't agree with it; if you shift the width of the body block to wider than your shoulder to shoulder measurement, it's going to fit funny (baggy and tent-like). That will also starve either the width of your sleeves (bad idea) or the width of the gores (not a great idea). I think the best idea to incorporate this is shave a bit off the armhole from mostly the front body panel, instead of leaving it square in shape.

THE WINNING CUTTING DIAGRAM

Here's the final cutting diagram that I am very happy with, with adjustments. This is measured to fit me, at 5'7". If someone else needs this pattern, it will need to be re-measured; I am including my measurements to show where they go on the rectangles in the cutting diagram (a piece of information typically missing in the articles).

⁶ Anderson, *NESAT X / Perfect Picture*, p.6

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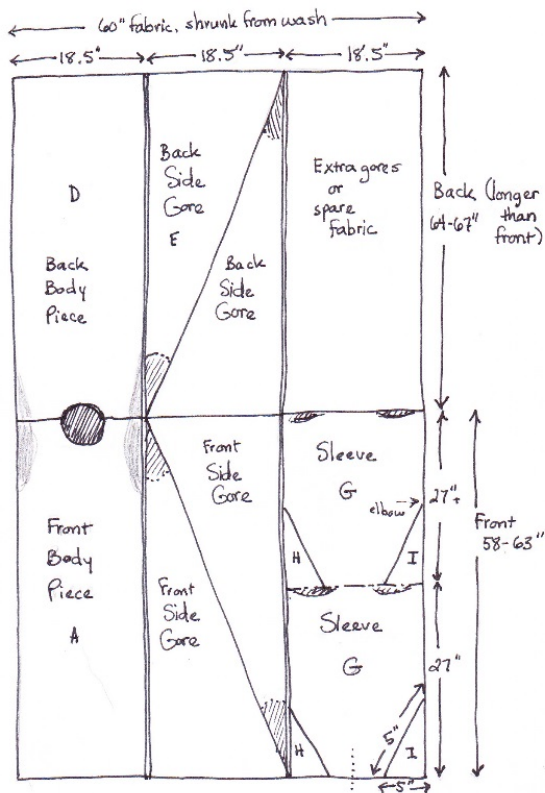


Adrianna the Fierce's
PATTERN ANALYSIS
from St. Elisabeth of Thuringia
(version 5.0)

Measurements are for 5'7"
and need to be adjusted
to each person.

Court Length:
4" longer in front
7" longer in back

Uses 3.6 yards of fabric.



TO CALCULATE CUTTING LAYOUT:

1. Take shldr to floor and add seams to get height of A and D. Add any inches for train.

Me: 61" A = 63" D = 67"

2. Take shldr to shldr, add seams, and get width of rectangles into modern 55/60" fabric.

Me: 16" Three rect 18.5" across

3. Check sleeve length. Take shldr pt to knuckles (or wrist), to get height of G rectangle. Make sure you map two sleeves!

Me: 23.5" + 2" seams = 25.5" (wrist)
27.5 (knuckles)

4. Sleeve gores: measure center of sleeve end to insure wrist and closed fist will fit. On me, this makes bottom of gore 5" (with 2" seams).

Reconstruction of St. Elisabeth Pattern

Figure 21 - The Cutting Diagram that works!

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Fabric and Tools

The advantages of a rectangular construction garment is that typically, it uses a lot LESS fabric than the typical beginner “snow angel” tunic, where you fold your not-period-width fabric in half, wave your arms on it like a snow angel, and cut it out, leaving huge tear-drop shaped portions of waste. That method takes about 5-6 yards.

However, going rectangular construction, I made a floor-length dress with extra in the back to train, with no leftovers, in 3.5 yards of linen, prewashed. That saves money and materials. And I’m still refining the cutting layout and tweaking the system, so I might get it down to 3 yards soon. Tunics would be less yardage, of course.

However, it takes a while to get the math right, for me anyway.

PATTERN TESTING GARMENTS TABLE

Garment Nickname	Date made	Result	Notes
Muslin One	1/17/2004	Math was off	Math wrong on shoulder width. Too much ease added.
Sage Green Two	1/17/2004	Too wide	6’ height and big waist. Gave away.
Navy Blue Three	1/6/2006	Just right	So comfortable!
White Linen Four	2007	Just right	Underlayer for a black/white combo
Black Linen Five	2009	Tight on boobs	Tried to make flattering to bust. Ugh.
Shiny Brown Six	2017	Great!	Hand-sewn version with add’l research

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Figure 22 - Navy Blue Three, White Linen Four, Black Linen Five.

FABRIC AND MATERIALS

For the first iteration ever, I use muslin or a bargain print fabric (one had pumpkins!). For the dresses I hoped to wear, I used linen. (I'm allergic to wool.) Later when I get this fine-tuned, I can try one in fancy brocades.

These are designed to be the middle layer of an outfit, comfortable in the summer. Their length varied, but would eventually be trimmed up for the outdoors, or tacked up for summer, let out in winter.

Materials List

1. 3.5 yards of linen, 55" wide. I use an extra yard if it's 45" wide.
2. Linen thread. (I used cotton/poly thread since I am on a budget.)
3. Measuring tape. Helps if someone assists in getting your measurements.
4. Paper, pen, needles, pins, dedicated fabric-only scissors, and the usual sewing accessories.
5. Any trim, fancy facing, cording, braided edging, or other embellishments. (Note, my dresses are not embellished yet; I wanted to get the pattern figured out first.)

Note that the upper/warmer layer of this pattern would most likely be a wool, brocade, or other heavier fabric for layering against cold. The cloak would go over all of it. There are heavy cloaks with fur lining for winter, and light linen cloaks for indoors in warmer weather.

For my first try at any pattern, I use a scrap fabric for practice first, such as muslin or bargain print cotton.

All fabric is prewashed just like it would be after an event, with a short stint in the dryer to insure that any shrinkage is done before the cutting and sewing.

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Figure 23 - example of linen natural dyes available at the time.

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Procedure / Assembly

The first step in any rectangular construction I do is to get out the measuring tape.

STEP ONE – PAPER, MATH, AND CUTTING DIAGRAMS

Measurements and Ease

Here's my basic measurements chart:

- A. Shoulder point to shoulder point: _____
- B. Point of Shoulder to base of garment: _____
- C. Shoulder to natural waist: _____
- D. Shoulder point to end of sleeve: _____

(Can be wrist, knuckles, or elbow. I mark all three for reference.)

- E. Bicep circumference when flexed, dominant arm: _____
- F. Fist circumference: _____
- G. Torso, from side seam to side seam, front over widest bust points: _____
- H. Torso, from side seam to side seam, across the back at the same height: _____

Math Bits

Gore Length: (B minus C) = _____

Gore width: Whatever fabric is left available

Arm Triangles: Also determined on the cutting diagram naturally.

Now you apply any additional measurements for seams and ease. I do big seams, 1" total. Some people make their seams as small as 1/4." Ease is the amount of extra fabric for movement or comfort, a personal thing.

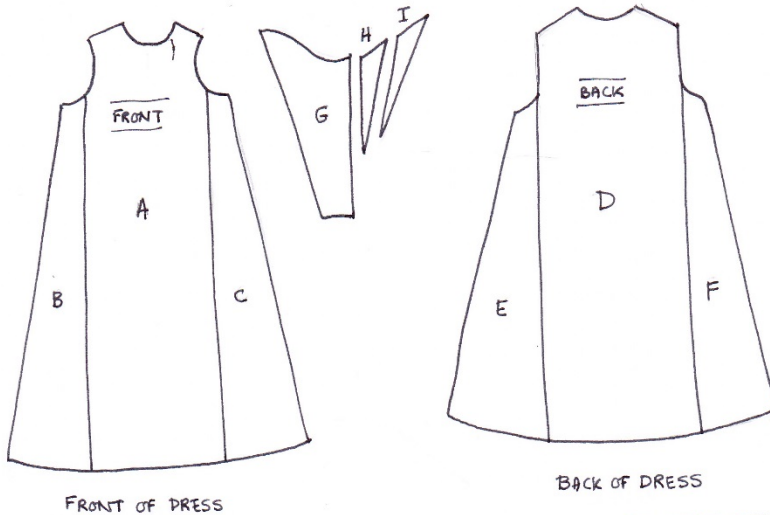
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RECTANGULAR CONSTRUCTION			
WEARING EASE	UNDER	GOWN TUNIC	COAT
FITTED	3"-4"	3.5"-4.5"	5.5"-6.5"
SEMI FITTED	4.5"-5"	4.5"-5.5"	6.5"-8"
LOOSE FITTING	5.5"-6"	5.5"-10"	8.5"-12"
VERY LOOSE FITTING	>8"	>10"	>12"

ALTHEA RIZZO ALFALFAPRESS.COM

Figure 24 - Ease chart by Althea Rizzo

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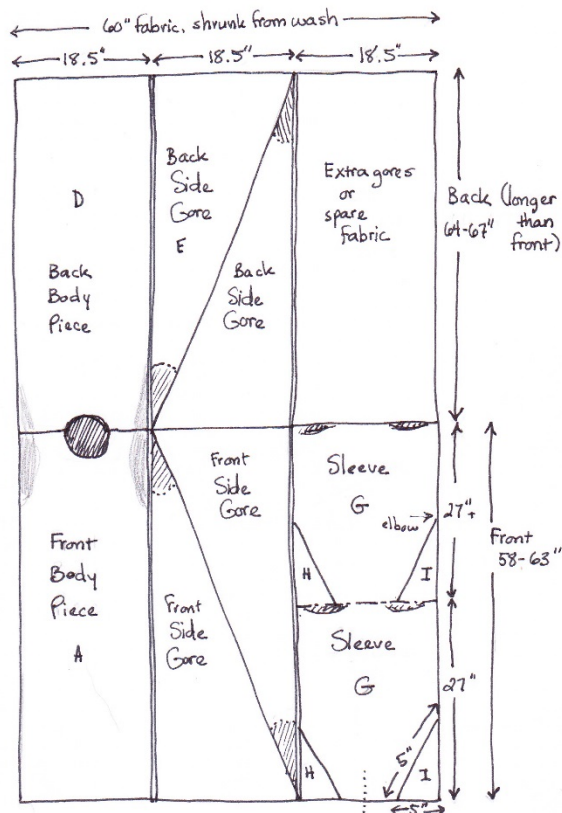


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Reconstruction of St. Elisabeth Pattern

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Figure 25 - The final recalculated cutting diagram!

Now you know how much fabric you need.

STEP TWO: WASH FABRIC, CUT IT OUT

This step requires some bravery, but once again into the breach my friends! I can't say this enough: Make the first version in cheap fabric. Things go wrong with the math on rectangular in a hurry.



Figure 26 – Dress number six being cut out of the linen in the cutting diagram shape.

My size and shape require 3.5 yards to make the entire dress, with a few scraps left over. Making the first one out of the same width of muslin will tell you how much fabric to acquire for the fancy dress.

To mark my fabric for the rectangles, I put the fabric on a hard, smooth surface – my big table – and I marked the rectangles with a bunch of yardsticks taped together, then chalked it. I turned the front gores sideways, to match the Hausherr grain lines in the drawing Hausherr did from the extant (not the Carlson sketch, which is off). This also allowed me to use less fabric.

I also had to write FRONT and BACK on the body pieces with chalk. I always get those confused if I don't. All arm bits are left straight at this point. I want to get the shoulders and gores attached before I reshape the armpits.

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STEP THREE: PIN PIECES TOGETHER TO CHECK FIT

Before anything else happens, I like to pin it together to see if it will fit comfortably, including making a larger neck hole so I can pull it on over my head if it's a one piece.

I pinned it together, made some adjustments, cut my neck too big (of course), then made some more adjustments. My shoulders are not the same height. I got it where I wanted it.

STEP FOUR: SEAMS

The seams I like to use are the flat fold and French pocket seams. I use the baste stitch for assembly in a hurry, and backstitch when I have more time. This time I used a running stitch with a backstitch every four stitches for anchoring. On the waist up, I used only backstitches for extra strength.

I made the front "puddling" length, and the back is "train wreck" long, at the moment, so I can decide to cut it up, temporarily hem it up, or trim it. If it will be an outdoor event dress, it'll get higher; court dress, puddling is fine.

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Figure 27 - Pieces laid out on the floor to help with attachment process, all wrong side up. The small pile of fabric to the left is the leftovers from 3.5 yards!

Sew these first (while it is all flat):

- Gores to front panels; gores to the back panels
- Gores to the backs of the sleeves

While it is in this state, I pinned the front and back together and adjusted the neck opening, and shoulder slope. Then I sewed these:

- Neck opening (facing, trim, tiny rolled hem, etc)

Next, I lay it flat and adjust/cut the slight angle for the sleeve holes in the body/gore pieces, and a slight angle in the sleeve pieces where they will attach to the body.

Then I sewed the sleeves to the body, and sewed the sleeves shut, checking that I can still wedge my closed fist through the tightest part. Then I sewed the body shut on the two remaining seams.

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The last thing to sew is the hem. Ideally, I like to let the dress hang or drape for a day, to settle all the seams, and then mark the hem and sew it.



Figure 28 - Front of White Linen Four showing the seams

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Figure 29 - Back of White Linen Four, showing the two triangles in the sleeve.

STEP FIVE: HEM

I've learned over the decades that it's best to assemble your garment, hang it on a hanger or dress dummy, and leave it for a day or two to "relax." It will actually change shape a bit as it settles into the new seams and gravity pulls it down. After this, then you hem it!

I do believe it is possible to hem a dress yourself, there are devices to help you, but this is where friends are awesome. You can stand up totally straight, breathe normally, and get the bottom marked with chalk or tape or pins, then fix it yourself. For linen, I just double roll a rather generous hem, and this is where you decide if you put a train on the back or "puddle" the fabric all around the bottom, like depicted in period.

Conclusion

It's encouraging that I'm getting results that match period art in look and feel and drape. Also the results match the two textile archeologists (NESAT X). I may have finally found a dress flexible enough to handle everything. I'm very excited about how little fabric it takes to make one, and how 13th century they look when completed. They are also really comfortable.

Using ILS (Inter Library Search and loan) and seeing the extant initial sketch of Hausherr was a game-changer. The Marc Carlson web re-sketch is way off. Hausherr had grain lines and you could see how much of the garment was missing that was helpfully "repaired" or "replaced" by the museum person in 1959. This makes my solutions for this pattern very highly likely, especially my double triangle in the back of the sleeves. The armscye-forward technique (with sizing the front panel a little skinnier) also worked brilliantly and changed a potato-sack dress into a flattering dress with just a few minor adjustments.

I do think I found my answer to how to get the look and possible answers on how the Assisi and Elisabeth clothing was patterned and assembled. It was a great research and experimentation project spanning many years – and many piles of test clothing – to get here. Worth every minute.

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Lessons Learned

Whenever you go out of your comfort zone, you learn good and bad lessons, or find new projects to do later, or hit some walls. This project was certainly no exception.

Itchy Itchy!

Yep, still allergic to wool. Using linen as my base layers.

Uh, Math.

Not my strong suit, and I miscalculated many times, but eventually it all got sorted. Grid paper is my best friend.

White Linen Must be protected

White Linen Four has damage on the bottom of the skirt from yellow paint. It happened during one of the residential moves. Okay, so all future linen is carefully packed up in a protective trunk when moved!

Bad Sources

Thursfield, Sarah. While this book has its merits, the sleeves on this particular gown are not helpful and waste a lot of fabric (not rectangular or triangular).

Flap in the Front

If I was re-creating Elisabeth's burial garment, it would require an additional panel, the size of the front panel, to do the flap in the front, visible on her extant garment on display. This allows for an extra high neck and no need to pull it over the head, which may have had its reasons. No one else recreating the dress made this panel, including the archeologists. They did not mention it either.

It's very thick wool, lined with linen, so I suspect it's an outer layer, to keep her warm. That would also make sense with a wrap-on approach instead of over-the-head.

UPDATE: The "flap in the front" is a "repair" made by a museum conservationist in 1959, including the linen trim and additional sewing, fabric, and other modifications. (As seen in the Hausherr sketch of the original pieces.)

Sideless Surcoat and other layers

All this research spawned numerous new projects, of course, such as matching cloaks, embellishments, brocades, and sideless surcoats.

Button Variant

Next I want to try the variant with 5 buttons just on the end of the sleeve, near the wrist. I also want to make the buttons-on-shoulder cloak.

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Appendix A: Hausherr and the original pieces sketch

From the source, **Geschichte, Kunst, Die Zeit der Staufer: Katalog der Ausstellung Stuttgart 1977**, Volume I.
The following pages were of interest:

- Page 439 – Armreliquiar (metal reliquary in an arm shape for St. Elisabeth)
- Page 613 – Fabric remnants (possibly related or concurrent)
- Page 614 – Picture (relief) of Saint Elisabeth and more concurrent fabric remnants
- Page 615 – Figure 16, original Hausherr drawing
- Page 620, 621 – Side picture of extant dress and relevant text (in German)

These books are a four volume set that specializes in this area and historical timeline for Germany, with maps, paintings, sketches, architecture, and more. They are available over ILS and inter-library loan.

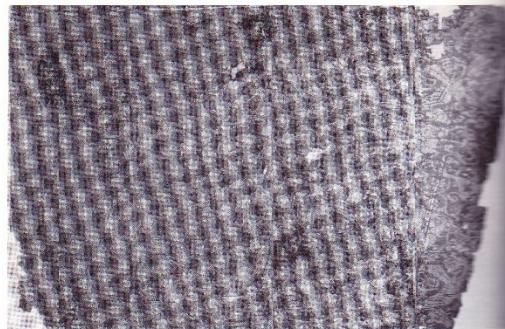


Fig. 15
Detail eines Seidenfragmentes. Syrisch-ajubidisch, 12.-13. Jh.

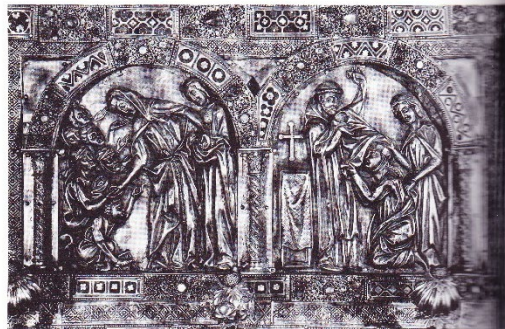


Fig. 17
Zwei Reliefs des Elisabeth-Schreins in der Elisabethkirche zu Marburg. Nicht ausgestellt.

674

Figure 30 - Page 614, the relief of Saint Elisabeth.

ST ELISABETH DRESS VARIANT

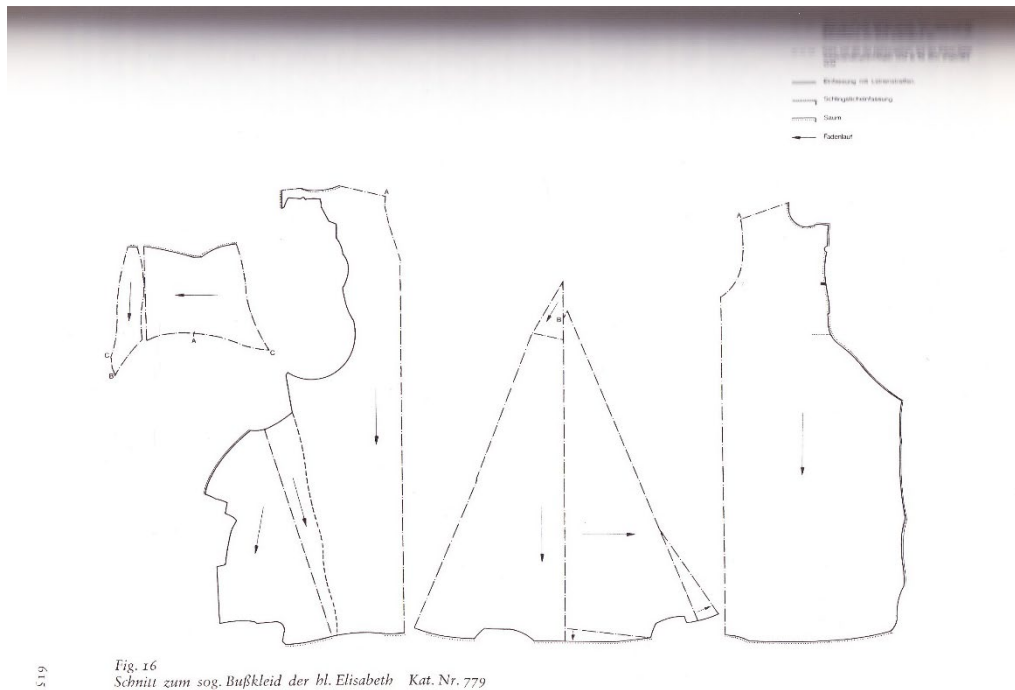


Figure 31 - The Hausherr drawing of the remnants of the extant dress.

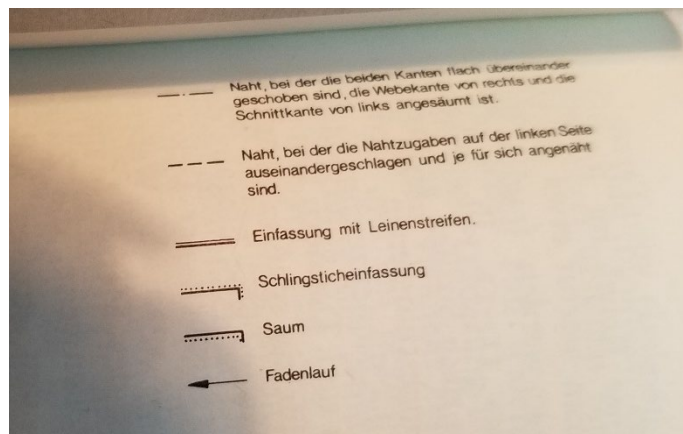


Figure 32 - detail on the sketching legend for the Hausherr drawing.

ST ELISABETH DRESS VARIANT

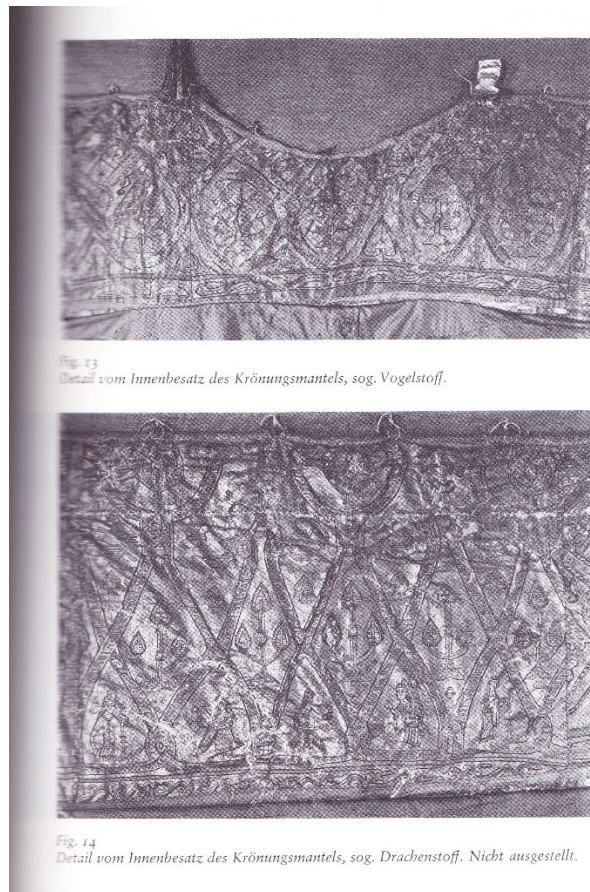


Figure 33 - Page 613, fabric remnants up close. Amazing detail work.

The text for the entries didn't scan well, so I copied it in German and then translated it. Note, I don't read or write German. Yet.

HAUSHERR TEXT (IN GERMAN)

Fig. 15 Detail eines Seidenfragmentes. Syrisch-aijubidisch, 12.-13. Jh.

Translation: Detail of a silk fragment, Syrian - Aujibid

Fig. 17

Zwei Reliefs des Elisabeth-Schreins in der Elisabethkirche zu Marburg. Nicht ausgestellt.

Translation: Two reliefs of the Elizabeth Shrine in the Elisabethkirche at Marburg. Not issued.

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Fig. 16

Schnitt zum sog. Busbkleid der hl. Elisabeth (Kat. Nr. 779)

Translation: Cut to the so-called Busbkleid of the hl. Elisabeth

Text above:

.- Naht, bei der die beiden Kanten flach übereinander geschoben sind, die Webekante von rechts und die Schnittkante von links angesaumt ist.

seam where the two edges are pushed flat on top of each other, the web edge of the right and left of the cutting edge is aumt.

__ _ Naht, bei der die Nahtzugaben auf der linken Seite auseinandergeschlagen und je für sich angenäht sind.

Seam, in which the near seams on the left side are thrown apart and are always sewn.

Seam where the seam additions on the left-hand side apart and beaten and sewn on each for search.

=== Einfassung mit Leinenstreifen.

Bezel with linen strips.

Cover with linen stripes ..

“mount with linen stripes.” (word for word translation)

(dots above solid lines) Schlingstitchefassung

Stitching kit

Sling stitch bezel

(dots below line) Saum

hem, folded and stitched down edge of cloth, edge of a garment, seam, stitches used to fasten two pieces of material

ST ELISABETH DRESS VARIANT

hem, line, fold and sew down the edge of a piece of cloth; tarry

hem

(Arrow) Fadenlauf

grain, texture, weave

Original text:

Text about entries:

779.

Sog. Bubkleid der hl. Elisabeth. (bukleid)

Wahrscheinlich I. Drittel 13. Jh.

L. vorne 135cm, hinten 143 cm, Armel 24 cm, B. Brust 25 cm, Hüfte 73 cm. W. Saum 203 cm.

Von links Aufgerauhter, naturfarbener, braunlicher, Wollstoff, Webstuhlbreite ca. 103 cm, aus Kette (ungefarbter brauner Wollfaden, einteilig, Z, 22 pro cm) und Scub (ebenfalls ungefarbter brauner Wollfaden, dicker, Z, 9 pro cm), in Kettkoper 2: 1, Z. Das Gewand ist praktisch nur zur Hälfte erhalten vorne ist vom Halsusschnitt ausgehend bis zur Hüfte der rechte Teuk entfernt.

Die Rückseite ist ähnlich reduziert, das Rückenteil besteht jedoch aus vier zusammengesetzten Flickern Der Armel ist verkürzt. Die Oberfläche des Wollstoffes ist durch and durch mit Lochern versehen und nachgedunkelt, die Schnittkanten sind sehr unregelmäßig, der stoff ist stellenweise sehr stark ausgezogen.

Nahte: einfache, übereinandergelegte Kanten, überwiegend mit weibem Leinenfaden zusammengenäht. Die Schnittkanten sind bei faden zusammengenäht. Die Schnittkanten sind bei der Reduzierung des Gewandes mit blauen Schlingstichen oder braunem Leinenband eingefabt. Darunter noch Reste eines alten braunen Leinenfutters.

1976 im Württembergischen Landesmuseum restauriert. Dabei gereinigt und mit einem braunen Stoff unterlegt, der Saum mit einem braunen Leinenstreifen eingefabt. Das Textilatelier stellte zur gleichen Zeit den abgebildeten Schnitt her (Fig. 16).

Der Legende nach soll der hl. Franziskus das ausgestellte Gewand der hl. Elisabeth geschenkt haben. Ortlicher Überlieferung zufolge gelangte das Gewand der Heiligen (1231) zunächst in das Deutschordenshaus nach Weißenburg im Unterelsaß und von dort dann in das Frauenkloster Tiefenthal bei Eltville, das zunächst nach der Benediktinerinnenregel, später (seit 1242?) nach der Zisterzienserinnenregel lebte. Seit einem Gütertausch im Jahre 1237 hatte das Kloster enge Beziehungen zum Deutschen Orden, der bis 1273 die Aufsicht in weltlichen Dingen führte.

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Zwei Jahre nach der Heiligsprechung Elisabeths wird das Kloster 1237-1238 auch Elisabethenthal genannt. 1234 war das von Elisabeth gegründete Marburger Hospital in den Besitz des Deutschen Ordens übergegangen. Als Kloster Teifenthal 1803 aufgehoben wurde, schenkte Furst Carl von Nassau-Usingen der Pfarr-kirche in Oberwalluf diese Reliquie.

Be idem Gewand handelt es sich um ein für das hohe Mittelalter so typisches Schlupfgewand, der sog. Cotte oder roc. Diese tunicaähnlichen Kleider waren mit geraden Vorder- und Rückenbahnen gearbeitet, die Rockweite wurde durch seitlich eingesetzte Keile, die sog. Giren, gewonnen. In ähnlicher Weise wurden die Ärmel erweitert. Entgegen den üblichen Rekonstruktionszeichnungen ist dieses Gewand (vgl. Schnittzeichnung) in den Schultern, an Ärmel- und Halsausschnitt der Körperform angeglichen. Der senkrechte Vorderverschluss liegt in der Höhe des Schlüsselbeines und war – den Resten nach – mit Bandchen oder Schlaufen und Knöpfen verschlossen.

Weltliche Kleidung des 13. Jh. hat sich nicht erhalten. Das einzige vergleichbare Gewand aus dieser Zeit ist die sog. Tunica der hl. Klara (1253) in S. Chiara in Assisi, die 1348 zum ersten Male in einem Inventar Erwähnung findet. Den Abbildungen nach handelt es sich wie beim Elisabeth-Gewand um eine Tunica mit seitlich eingesetzten Giren und fledermausartigen Ärmeln in naturfarbenem Wollstoff. Bei den Nähten muß ebenfalls ein helles Garn verarbeitet worden sein.

Geht man von der Annahme aus, daß beide Gewänder tatsächlich von den heiligen Frauen stamen, so mußte das der Elisabeth vor 1231, das der hl. Klara vor 1253 entstanden sein. Diese Datierung findet eine Bestätigung durch Darstellungen in der bildenden Kunst. Die Figuren des Naumburger Lettners z. B. tragen offensichtlich in etwa diese Art con cottes in dickem Wollstoff mit fledermausartigen Ärmeln. Ein drittes Gewand dieser Zeit ist die Kutte des hl. Franziskus (1226), eine in der Basilika von San Francesco in Assisi hoch verehrte Reliquie.

Das Gewand wird in einem flachen Rahmen aufbewahrt, so daß die Form nicht zu erkennen ist, jedoch der graubraune, Wollstoff: er ist etwas feiner in der Struktur und etwas heller im Farbcharakter als das Elisabeth-Gewand. Die Nahte mit dem hellen Abheftgarn entsprechen den Nähten bei idem Gewand der hl. Elisabeth.

Die hl. Elisabeth erbaute im Jahre 1228-1230 in Marburg ein Franziskaner-Hospital und soll in den Dritten Orden des hl. Franziskus eingetreten sein. Den Quellen nach soll Elisabeth eine tunica grisea getragen haben, wobei griseus eine breite Skala von dunkleren Tönen bedeuten kann. Eine Einkleidungs-Szene wird auf dem Deckel des Elisabethenschreins (Fig. 17) und auf den Glasfenstern in der Elisabethkirche in Marburg dargestellt, und zwar streift Pater Konrad der knienden Elisabeth über ihre elegante fürstliche Tracht ein schlichtes tunicaartiges Gewand.

M. Herchenroder, Der Rheinguakresi (Kdm. Des Landes Hessen), München 1965, 285, Abb. 745. – Eine ausführlichere Untersuchung in R. Gronwoldt, Miszellen zur Textilkunst der Stauferzeit (in Vorbereitung). – Zur Geschichte von Tiefenthal: Handbuch der historischen Stätten 4 (Hessen), Stuttgart 1960, 399 f. – K. H. Lampe, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Deutschordensbesitzes in Nassau, Nassauische Annalen 81, 1970, 19 f. (Hinweis U.

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Arnold). – Zu Assasi: E. Tea, Il Camice di Santa Chiara in Santa Chiara d'Assisi – Studi e Cronaca del Centenario 1253 – 1953, Assisi 1954, 148 f.

Oberwalluf bei Eltville, Pfarrkirche St. Martin.

HAUSHERR ROUGHLY TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH

Suction Bubkleid of St. Elisabeth. (Bukleid)

Probably 1st third 13th century

L. front 135cm, rear 143 cm, arm 24 cm, B. chest 25 cm, hips 73 cm. W. hem 203 cm

From left roughened, natural-colored, brownish, wool, loom width approx. 103 cm, from chain (uncoloured brown wool thread, single piece, Z, 22 per cm) and scub (in uncoated brown wool thread, thick, Z, 9 per cm), in warp knit 2: 1, e.g. It's just the way it's going to be.

The reverse side is similarly reduced, but the back part is composed of four assembled patches. The arm is shortened. The surface of the woolen material is perforated by perforations, the edges of the edges are very irregular, the fabric is very thick in places.

Seams: simple, superimposed edges, overlaid with female linen thread. The cutting edges are sewn together at thread. The cut edges are trimmed with blue sling stitches or brown linen band in the reduction of the garment. Among them are the remains of an old brown linen fleece.

1976 restored in the Württembergisches Landesmuseum. When cleaned and covered with a brown fabric, the hem is felted with a brown linen strip. At the same time, the textile stitcher places the illustrated cut (Fig. 16)

Two years after the canonization of Elizabeth, the monastery was also called Elisabethenthal (1237-1238). In 1234, the Marburg hospital founded by Elisabeth was passed into the possession of the Teutonic Order. When monastery Teifenthal was abolished in 1803, Furst Carl von Nassau-Usingen donated this relic to the parish church in Oberwalluf.

This garment is a so-called slip-wall, so-called Cotte or roc, which is so typical of the high Middle Ages. These tunic-like garments were worked with straight front and back webs, the skirt width was won by laterally inserted wedges, the so-called Giren. In a similar way the arms were extended. Contrary to the usual reconstruction drawings, this garment (cf. intersection drawing) is aligned in the shoulders, at armholes and neck cut-outs of the body shape. The vertical front closure lies in the height of the clavicle, and was closed by means of ligaments or loops and knobs.

Secular clothing of the 13th century has not survived. The only comparable garment from this period is the so-called Tunica of St. Clara (1253) in S. Chiara in Assisi, who for the first time in an inventory finds a mention in 1348. The illustrations show, as in the Elizabeth dress, a tunica with laterally inserted girdles [gores] and bat-like armlets in natural-colored woolen material. A light yarn was also used for the seams.

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If one assumes that the two panel actually belonged to the holy women, that of Elizabeth before 1231, that of St. Clare before 1253. This dating finds a confirmation by means of representations in the fine arts. The figures of the Naumburg rood screen, for example, obviously bear this sort of con cottes in thick woolen fabric with braid-like armlets. A third aspect of this period is the cloak of St. Francis (1226), a relic of the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi.

The garment [Assisi's] is kept in a flat frame, so the form is not visible, but the gray-brown woolen material: it is somewhat finer in the structure and slightly brighter in color character than the Elizabeth robe. The seams with the light sewing thread correspond to the seams in the garment of St. Elisabeth.

The St. Elisabeth built a Franciscan hospital in Marburg from 1228 to 1230, and was to be included in the Third Order of St. Francis. According to the sources, Elizabeth is said to have carried a tunica grisea, whereby griseus can mean a broad range of darker clays. A clothing scene is depicted on the lid of the Elisabethenschrens (fig. 17) and on the glass windows in the Elisabethkirche in Marburg, and Father Konrad strokes the kneeling Elizabeth over her elegant princely costume with a simple tunica-like robe.

M. Herchenroder, *The Rheingauakresi*, Munchen 1965, 285, Fig. 745. - A more detailed undercrowding in R. Gronwoldt, *Miscellany of the textile art of the Staufer period* (in preparation). - History of Tiefenthal: *Handbook of the Historical Sites 4* (Hesse), Stuttgart 1960, 399 f. - K. H. Lampe, *Contributions to the History of the German Order in Nassau*, Nassauische Annalen 81, 1970, 19 f (Note U. Arnold). - To Assasi: E. Tea, *Santa Chiara d'Assisi*, Santa Chiara d'Assisi - Studi e Cronaca del Centenario 1253 - 1953, Assasi 1954, 148 f. Oberwalluf near Eltville, parish church of St. Martin.

(Translation by Babylon Online.)

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Appendix B: Additional Information on Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia

IT'S A LOVE STORY

Elisabeth deeply loved her husband, and they were raised together as children, marrying when he was 21 and she was 14. While they were still children, they grew up in the court of Thuringia together, which at this time was famous for its magnificence. ⁷ The center feature was a castle of the Wartburg, near the Thuringian Forest at Eisenach, where Landgrave Hermann lived surrounded by poets and bards. This is the most forested section of Germany.

Ludwig protected her when they were children and again when they were married. ⁸ They had three children:

- Hermann II (1222-41)
- Sophia (1224-1284), married Henry II, Duke of Brabant
- Gertrude (1227-1297), abbess of the convent of Altenberg near Wetzlar

Gertrude never saw her father. Ludwig, in 1227, started on a crusade with Emperor Frederick II on a crusade to Palestine, and died that same year from the pestilence. She was beyond distraught. She took even more severe vows of abstinence and swore off material things.



Figure 34 - Saint Elisabeth relief at her grave at Sint Elisabethskerk grave Netherlands.

She moved to Marburg with her spiritual guide, Conrad and her four handmaidens. Rumor has it her family caused her so much grief that she was thrown out of the castle, but opinions on this differ. She became a Franciscan tertiary, the first of Germany, built a Franciscan hospital at Marbug and swore off material possessions. She tended the sick personally until she died at age 24, with miracles attributed to her and her

⁷ Bihl, *St. Elisabeth*.

⁸ Bihl, *St. Elisabeth*.

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hospice. She was canonized in 1235. Before she died, she instructed her handmaidens to save all her tattered old garments for people to cut up into relics later.⁹

MIRACLE OF THE ROSES

As the legend goes, when Saint Elisabeth was leaving the castle to bring bread to the poor, she hid the bread in her cloak as she left. Her husband stopped her at the gate, and demanded to see what she was hiding inside her cloak. She opened the cloak, but instead of bread, it was hiding white and red roses.



Figure 35 - stained glass of Saint Elisabeth – no date, suspect 16th century.

This image of roses in her cloak is very predominant in art depicted Saint Elisabeth. There is a lot of art, especially at the turn of the century, when more churches and hospices were built in her honor.

PATRON SAINT AND PILGRIMAGE DESTINATION

She was canonized in only four years, being declared by the Pope as one of the most pious women of all time. A magnificent gothic church was built in Marburg for her, called the Elisabethkirche. Marburg became the center of the Teutonic Order, which adopted St. Elisabeth as its second patroness. The Order remained in Marburg until it was broken up in 1803 by Napoleon I of France.

⁹ Elliot, *Proving Woman*, chapter 4.

ST ELISABETH DRESS VARIANT

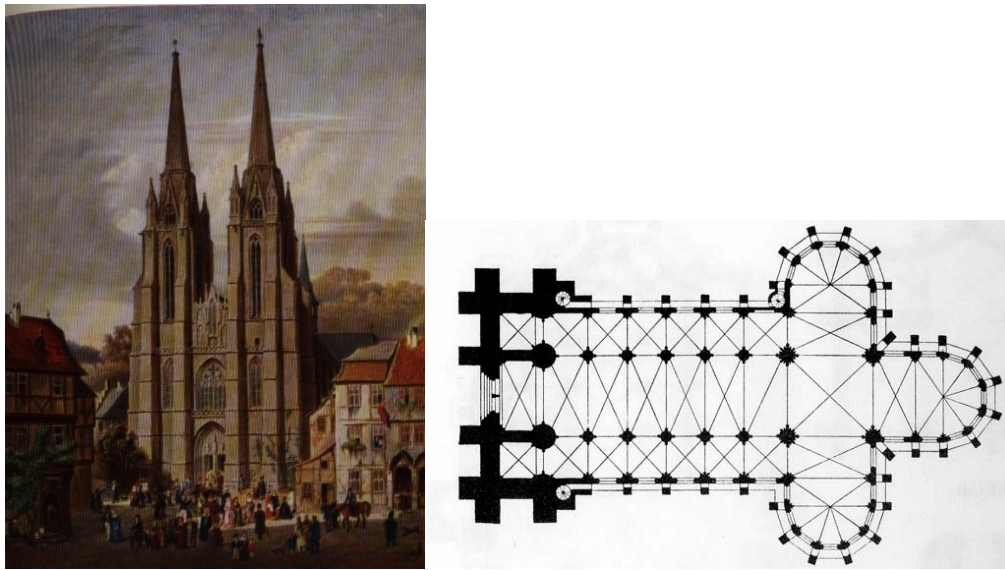


Figure 36 and 37 - Elisabethkirche and floor plan.

Elisabeth's shrine became a major pilgrimage spot in the 14th and 15th century, until Philip I of Hesse, one of her descendants, led a Protestant reformation and raided her church, demanded that the Teutonic Knights hand over her bones, to disperse her relics and put an end to the pilgrimages.



Figure 38 - The reliquary for Saint Elisabeth's bones.

ST ELISABETH DRESS VARIANT

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Suggestions, comments, corrections, more information, photos, latest variants, cute cat pictures "helping," additional copies: please contact Adrianna the Fierce, deunanB@gmail.com.