

The Russian Coat...and Variations
for the Practical Clotheshorse

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So...you want to check out Russian?

The great element of the basic "Russian" coat is the pattern's versatility to span nearly a thousand years of history. From India to the Middle East and north through the Hungarian plains into the area comprising modern day Poland, the Russian coat pattern with its variations have been found in nearly every area that was overrun by nomadic horsemen. Its permutations engender the personal and stylistic preferences of the various ethnic and regional peoples who used it. For this reason and in response to numerous requests, I have included some brief comments on the historical factors that shaped the Russian version of these garments.

For the modern costumer with the conveniences of central heat and central air conditioning; the ease of care, access and regulation of body temperature are intrinsic qualities in the structure of this garment. For the practical clothes horse, its length and fabric versatility covers a multitude of sins. It can be constructed of cotton or linen for summer comfort, be woolen or lined with fur (real or fake according to your ego and fanaticism) for warmth in the winter or brocaded and pearled for glittering glory and ostentation. I can personally attest to its fighter proof qualities for the lord or lady fighter who enjoy boots, sweats and a dry T-shirt after a tourney. Unlike a tunic, heat regulation is only a matter of loosening a sash, flicking open a couple buttons or unlatching a frog or two.

Basically, this course will probably be attended by costumers who have created patterns before and must only switch gears to utilize these ideas. Accordingly, I have shaped the thrust of this class in the direction of the intermediate costumer who may or may not have the desire and patience to teach others in the home Shire or Barony. For the beginner though, I have included Diagrams A-E dealing with measurement of the body and pattern, tricks to deal with pattern creation, the construction sequence as well as ties. Also, thanks to the succinct and invaluable insights of Lord Anders Olafsson of the Principality of Northshield, a newer, more detailed series of illustrations are included in this pamphlet version.

The main problem in finding primary sources to document actual, late-period Russian garments is that they were common in primarily non-western european areas and were rarely written in English or French, much less translated in the Victorian age to glorify the Elizabethan or Tudor epic of fashion. Russian sources of literature, iconology and portraits have always been at the mercy of western editorial tastes and politics, not to mention a late start in printing that really began producing in volume in the 17th century Russia.. In fact, several of the illustrations in this mini-manual are attributable to Western European authors in period who had resided in these courts and later published their memoirs, with a decidedly western slant. Only recently, with the fall of communism, have these petty and superficial barriers begin to drop.

An excellent example of the benefits of this new flow of information is a Russian work, The History of Costume, European Costumes From Antiquity To The 20th Century, by E.V. Kireyeva (Moscow, 1970) with the Moscovy section translated into English by Mistress Taciana Mikolaevna Tumanov of the Kingdom of the East. It contains a wealth of information on the fabrics, styles, hats and accessories for the 1400-1700 time period in Russia. Be warned, some garment elements contained within this work do not appear in icons or other source materials until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as slit sleeves and the tall cylindrical fur hats. Included are woodcuts displaying Russian

ambassadors to the Court often Holy Roman Emperor from Ivan the Terrible and a nice book of costume dealing with Hungarian-Polish fashions (Albert de Bruhn, 1576) -- Diagram F¹, F²

Fabrics

Russians in this period liked big medallion brocade prints, sort of like what you would see on wallpaper in Victorian prints or on your grandmother's couch (no tartans or scenes depicting people or animals though). They also liked color and variety in their fabrics. Almost any shade of red, blue and green was favored with the design picked out in the fabric in either a neutral, contrasting or metallic color. We're not talking neons or fushas here, yellow or white are about the brightest colors used. Cloth with chain-stitched patterns were also used. Applique design cut-outs sewn to a richer fabric was not unknown in this period either, according to one account from Tsar Vasily's court, though I have yet to find independent confirmation of this to date. Remember, there is nothing as drab as a winter in either Scandinavia or Russia and somber, dark colors were used mostly in mourning until the reforms of Peter the Great.

A good guide would be German, Italian or English portraits during the 15th and 16th centuries, since these were the sources of their brocades. Specifically, the fabrics of the Elizabethan and Italian courts are my best guides for the 16th century court costumes that I specialize in. At this period, the Livonian wars were raging in Lithuania and the Russians were locked out of the Baltic markets by the other combatants for thirty years. Their only source of firearms, munitions and most western fabrics were the English traders of the Moscovy Company, and later, the Dutch independent traders of the 17th century. English factors imported trade goods from the port at Archangelesk on the White Sea down into the plain between Moscow and the Ural Mountains. I haven't found any evidence of the use of blackwork embroidery but geometric patterns in combinations of reds, blues or blacks were prevalent in the countryside among the merchant and peasant classes.

During this period, the active trade with the Ottomans and the Italian merchants in the Black Sea colonies were also good sources of brocade fabrics in exchange for luxury furs such as sable. Of the two, Italian brocades were preferred because of the wider width (ave. 39 in. v. ave. 22 in.) and their use of silk in the horizontal threads as opposed to the Ottomans use of cotton threads. The Italians were also the undisputed masters of the "cloth of gold" fabrics mentioned by English travelers at the Czars courts during this period. The brighter Ottoman fabrics became much more popular in the 17th century after English trade tapered off and the Ottomans had drastically reduced or closed the Italian trading colonies operations in the Black Sea. Because most folk in the Society have access to fabric 44-60 inches wide, my patterns for this chapter are built for that width. For the benefit of the purists, I am using simple period patterns which I have referred to as "rectangles, gores and gussets"

I am personally a big fan of velvets, silks and brocades because they are flashy and I like flashy. But don't be misled or led astray by my love of finery. Wool, linen, printed cotton (especially Chinese block prints and Persian batiks), broadcloth and sometimes leather, were worn on the home estates, the hunt and by the nobility, boyars, the Czar's bodyguards (see the Streltsi and Ryandi in the accompanying text), townspeople and peasants. Basically anyone who actually labored or might have their clothes soiled. These lighter fabrics would be our equivalent to comfortable jeans and that worn sweater that your

loved one has tried to throw away before for the Boyers / nobility and durable work clothes for everyone else. They would be used to make the shirts (ruhbakas), caftans (both common and chugas) and the long sleeved coats (okhabens, opashens, ordinyakas and shugas). In the Russian culture of this time, your wealth and importance in society was displayed to everyone by the cut and richness of the clothes you could afford to wear. Correspondence from the English factors in the era of Ivan the Terrible routinely mention the fact that the wealthy would wear four to five layers of clothes year around! They also mention that Ivan had more than twelve hundred coats made out of cloth of gold which he lent to guests for parties and which he expected to have returned, on pain of death !

Russian Coat background & styles

As mentioned previously in the text, a popular style of outer coat common in Eastern Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire used basically two rectangles of cloth like a tabard with gores from bellybutton or armpit level down to the hem. These three areas hosted 200 years of mutual trade and warfare in which ideas and clothing styles were adopted and adapted to local tastes on a regular basis. For instance, the long hem length sleeves so prevalent in these areas are first seen being worn by Albanian, Arab and Persian mercenaries in Byzantine murals in the late 1300's, long before they were common in these three areas in the 16th century.

Russians preferred mid-calf or ankle length coats with 8-12" side vents from the hem on side seams. They used cotton, broadcloth, wool, silk, velvet and bright brocades with the big "medallion" prints of pomegranates, etc. inside interlocking vines (like huge chickenwire). Collars were usually lined with longhaired furs and they commonly used shorthair furs to line the heavy winter coats. Peasants commonly used sheepskin lined coats over a common caftan of wool or linen and wore a ruhbaka (shirt) next to their skin. Tube sleeves 20-24" wide were popular throughout period in various lengths and shoulder opening styles depending on the wearer's class and occupation. For example, elbow length with no collar was preferred by the military and hunters; wrist length, close fitting sleeved caftans were worn underneath outer coats; fingertip length for fancy court coats with tube sleeves and big collars (sailor, shawl, turned down & square with a key hole opening toward the front); midcalf for summer , lightweight court and open armpit coats; hem-line for the furlined shubas with a 2-4" wide rectangular collar lined with fur or large turn down collar in longhaired fur (also trimmed on the inside of cuffs and the front opening edges with longhaired furs) and ornate Persian coats (with bands or loops down the entire front but only buttoned from the waist up, if at all), both of which had sleeves pushed up to the wrist if the hands were being used.

The use of sleeve slits varied along regional and cultural lines. For instance, Russians used both the open armpit and bicep versions, with the latter slowly increasing in popularity and flexible use from the 1620's onward as the former waned. The Ukrainians and Ottomans increased the length of the bicep slit to the forearm, wrist and beyond calling it a contosz, contos and contusz respectively. In the battleground that was the Balkans, the Ottoman border ghaziers introduced the new styles of outer coats. The elbow length sleeves and short stiff collars became the contos. The midcalf length coats with slits at the front of the armpit had hem length narrow sleeves with slit cuffs worn dangling behind the arms and large turn down collars developed into the delia (buttoned with waist slits for cold hands) in Poland/Ukraine and both the ferez in the 16th century(cloth lined with bands and loops

down the entire front) and the ferezja in the 17th century (fur lined with a large cord tie at the neck and front armpit slits) in Russia.

Basic Construction Tips

In period, few garments were lined with anything save the layers of garments worn underneath or fur for warmth. For those of us who wish to have our garments last longer and feel cooler, I suggest using the pattern for the outer fabric as the pattern for the inner lining. Simplicity itself. Both outer and inner shells are constructed using the same simple techniques and pinned together with the seams of both garments facing out Diagram E². Please note the fullness of the skirt from the waist down for ease of movement and dramatic effect. Remember, the Russians of this period highly valued an elegant sweep of the garment, while both standing still and moving.

The common and ancient way is to use straight rectangles for sleeves and the coat body. Then use gores to widen the body and expand the armpit with a diamond shaped "gusset" for ease of movement. The traditional pattern uses three yards of fabric 50 inches or more wide and four yards of common 45 inch wide fabric. An important tip to remember is that Russian coats for both men and women expand sideways. By that, I mean that large chests, barrel shaped thoraxes and guts (like mine) are accommodated by widening the armpit to hem side gores. In diagram B, you will see that the side gores are cut at a diagonal slant. To widen, simply cut that piece down the center lengthwise and attach following the instructions in the diagrams. If it needs to be wider, add fabric as needed. Don't worry if the print of these additions runs perpendicular to the fabric of the rest of the garment, period Russians didn't seem to care and neither should you.

No doubt, some of you will feel the need to hand sew this entire garment. I have never been this crazy, but if you are, then use the locking stitch over an additional thin edging of fabric like bias tape. I mention this because some brocades and silk weaves (real or fake) tend to unravel on the edges with frustrating and sometimes disastrous results.. The bias tape acts as additional support and containment for these edges and curves rather nicely, both for ease of use and availability. If you're compulsive enough to handsew, face it, you don't want to risk all that work with split seams from unraveled edges.

Body Pattern and Tips

Body

For the lands that would become Little Russia and then, Greater Russia; squares, gussets and gores dominated garment construction of all social strata until the beginning of the eighteenth century for the boyars and the twentieth century for peasants. This body pattern is simple.

WIDTH: With the subjects arms hanging straight down the body, loop a measuring tape around your chest and back at nipple level and add 4 inches (to accommodate your shoulders). This total measurement is then divided in half to get the width of the front panel and the width of the back panel.

LENGTH: Put the end of the tape measure on your adams apple and let the length

hang over your gut (if applicable). Trap against the bellybutton (for a person with a gut-like me) or against the waist line (without gut) and mark the length at knee, mid calf or ankle, then add 1/2" for seam allowance.

Cut out (2) rectangles using these two measurements. Warning: the width may seem a little wide at first for under caftans but is a necessity since this is a layered style for a cold climate and lined costumes are a little bulkier than one would consider at first glance. Thick cloth , multi layered or fur lined garments should be widened at the side gores to compensate for the bulkier nature of the material.

Side Gores

If you are using gores to widen the body, you have two options. For the simple caftan next to your shirt (summertime wear common with young men) measure the side of your body pieces from 5" below the bottom of the sleeve to the hem. If you have a big gut or a barrel frame, then continue the gore up to the sleeve with 1-3 inches of width attached to the sleeve. With four of these panels (two to a side) that's 4-12 inches of extra chest girth. Follow the sleeve pattern in diagrams C, D³. For diagonal cut gores, there are three or four sides, depending on whether the top is a point or flat. The side I attach to the body pieces depends on how wide the bottom of the side gore is the diagonal side if the bottom is 8" wide or more and the straight cut side if the bottom is less than 8" wide. This bottom side should NEVER be + 12" wide. Always try to leave the last 12-14" up each side seam unsewn for side vents to ease movement. In period, three or four frogs would have been used on each vent with the last fourth of the distance to the hem unincumbered. With side gores that is up to 48" of extra hem width beside the front and back panel width and the 12 inch side vent. That gives the wearer than same stride that most long distance runners use.

General tips

The outer coats, which have the fancy brocades, velvets or silks have a straight center seam and a 20-30 degree slope from the armpits down to the hem (see diagram D³). This is a very full garment from the arm pits down on the sides and has the advantage of accommodating the largest gut or hips like a houppelande or fit the rare bird with the runners build with equal ease. Yet, it still maintains an elegant cut of line without the bulkiness or weight of a houppelande.

Needless to say, with a heavier or stiffer brocade the slope should be more gentle, roughly half that of a lighter fabric. The heavier fabrics have more drape but tend to stretch out a little bit after hanging. Do yourself a favor, let this garment hang for a week on a hanger in your closet after pinning the front opening.

Buttons, Bobs, Bands & Frog Closures


1. Buttons

If you are one of the multitude who hate frogs , ties and loops in general, there is a simple, period method for doing button holes. First, make the slit towards the seam (parallel to the ground) if you want period and parallel to the seem if you hate losing buttons. If you decide to risk it, take a couple loops of thread the thread attaching the button, especially with heavier and weightier fabrics. Second, use small locking stitches to bind the edges of the slit, very close together. this is a very common method in western european clothes and

migrated into those areas in much the same way as they migrated northward to the Russian interior from nomadic, Persian, Islamic and Byzantine sources and eastward via the Hanseatic League, and later, with contact with the Hungarian, Polish and German forces during the Livonian Wars.

2. Cord Bands & Options

These bands generally stopped at belt level for most people, but during the 1550-1580 period of the Livonian Wars, elements of Hungarian fashions were used in the garments of the nobility and the Tsar's court. This was seen in the use of four inch long bands with a knot behind the loop and 1/2' behind the knotted button down the entire front of the garment from neck to hem (see Boyers visiting German Emperor court picture).

Diagrams  You will notice that most of the coats in the primary text provided will have chest bands with tassels at the end. There is no need to buy these ready made unless you are short of time and don't mind being ripped off. You can make your own in ten to fifteen minutes while watching television for the price of a couple yards of cord from any fabric or upholstery store. My trick is to cut fifteen inches of four to eight mill cord, knot the hell out of the exact center (sewing a pearl into every juncture of two or more cords is optional), measuring six to eight inches out placing both cords side by side and either using a 1/2-1" round bead or tying a knot -leaving 1-1 1/2 inches if cord sticking out the end to fray. Sew the cords together from the "button to the back knot. The other side has a loop big enough to pass the knot through and is closed, not with a knot, but with a couple loops of thread sewn through both cords on that side. Another 16th century method is to close the loop in the cord and use a lighter cord with alot of strength (like artificial sinew from Tandy Leather) as the loop at the end of the cord. This band is measured and knotted exactly like the button side. I have seen icons with these bands an equal distance apart; in groups of two side by side with a 1/2" separation but 2-3" from the next pair; and even a pair (2) braids from the top with a pair at the bottom of the row (at the waist or mid thigh).

Sew the rest down to the finished coat through both inner and outer linings. I like a little overlap of the front closure so I generally leave the loop sticking over the edge enough to run a pencil through it and just barely touch the fabric if the loop is flat against the fabric. The nylon cords are shiny like silk but do not tie tightly because they are stiff fibers and slick. For that reason alone, run a needle and thread through your knots when you complete them. These bands generally start at the neck for caftans and six inches below that for the outer coats to leave the neck closure open to show the coats beneath.

The Neckline

Believe it or not, later nomadic tribes like the Ottoman Turks as well as the earlier Magyar tribes of Hungary in the ninth-eleventh centuries had flap collars like modern dress shirts, only not as stiff. Von Herberstein's woodcuts show a collar folded down like this used by Russians but laying flat and getting most of what little flare it has from the top two buttons-frogs being undone (see Boyers visiting Emperor's court picture). For the proper pattern, extend the outer edge of the collar 1-3" and slope the rest back to the inner edge (still the proper size). The Magyar coat has a fairly stiff collar (like a modern business shirt with squared points) which is decorated with a flowing, repeating design. It is usually of a darker, more luxuriant fabric to match the chest straps from collar to the waist. The Ottoman

uses frogs or buttons to the navel with either short 2-3" cloth straps or none at all. The collar color of the Ottoman is usually the same color as the coat itself.

Russian collars are often left open to show off the coat underneath. Light weight summer coats often had either a diagonal cut collar from the shoulder seam to a point 4-6" inches below your adams apple or a 2-3" rectangular collar with no keyhole opening and turned down and left open. Diagram E, E³ This last style was also often seen in fancy court coats. The collar lining was always a contrasting color (brocade, velvet or silk for court coats with red being the most popular color) and the inner lining had a 6-8" border of this fabric all the way around the edging, even up the side vents. This element was very popular in most nomadic cultures and in areas they passed through or conquered (see Eastern Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire). Another very popular outer coat throughout 14th-17th century Russia had a cloth square collar (like modern sailors) with no keyhole cut for the neck and hung straight down the back from the shoulders and often left unbuttoned to show the rich coats underneath. Another unique part of this particular style is that the sleeves are sewn only 5" on each side of the shoulder seam. The rest of the armpit is left open and the sleeves are tied behind the back under the long hanging collar. Very, very dramatic and widely seen in icons in period.

For a standing collar (kozir) such as would be more common with the under coat or summerwear coat, I usually use a keyhole neck with a three inch collar with a shallow slant on the ends under the chin. Diagram E' It could also have no taper and shaped like a thick smile with flat equidistant ends, an inch wider in the back and tapering to the front. This style of collar is more prevalent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but is a very dashing addition for people who aren't authenticity maevens. It would have been fairly stiff and made of rich brocades or velvets and have an intricate design of either couched pearls or fake gold metallic thread ("samite") either highlighting an existent pattern in the cloth used or making a design of its own. A layer or two of horsehair fabric cut 1/4" smaller than your collar pattern on all sides will stiffen it up nicely (commonly found in most upholstery shops).

The Sleeves

Diagram B

The sleeves should be relatively close fitting for Russian undercoats and a little looser if intended to be actually used on the outer coats. I would measure myself with the undercoat(s) on to insure a proper fit. As illustrated in the supplementary pages, the later period under caftan sleeves favored turn back cuffs with a contrasting and highly decorated material, especially in the areas of southern Russia and the Balkans in close contact with the Ottoman migrations and empire.

Earlier than the 1550's, sleeves were tubes varying in length from the elbow to 6-8" above the hem with armpit gussets for comfort and worn primarily over the shoulders and open or on and buttoned to within the top two or three fastenings. The sleeves were short and full with a normal sized cuff with 1/2 - 2" play in it. They were long enough to cover the fingertips and were merely pushed up on the wrist to free the hand. From a practical standpoint, this allows for warm fingers and the optimum amount of fabric on vulnerable forearms and wrists in bitter cold. The long, ankle length sleeves were popularized indirectly by the Hungarian troops brought with Stephen Bothary to the Livonian Wars when he was

elected King of the Poland-Lithuania. The Polish and Hungarian prisoners taken by Russian forces were routinely paraded through Moscow on their way east to the Ural Mountains and later, the Siberian frontier.

The style of sleeve with a front slit over the length of the bicep was seen as rakish and flashy in the Czar's court. This was an "infidel" style which appeared in Russia slowly with growing frequency beginning after Ivan IV conquered the Port of Askarkan on the Caspian Sea in 1554. Good examples of this style are seen in Turkish portraits by Western artists, including Veciello. In The early 17th century, the slit appeared on the outer side of the sleeve for light summer coats (opashen) and court coats with the start of the Romanov dynasty (+ 1613).Diagram D³.

The period sleeve fitting would be flat across the top with a square gusset (6" by 6" square) shown as shaded. The German merchants of the Hanseatic League operating trading ventures in Russian territories used a design that used the rounded design on the back half of the sleeve top and a smaller downward curve on the front half. This method puts the seem on the back of the sleeve instead of the inside part of the sleeve and negates the need to use a diamond shaped gusset. Beware, this style was unknown in Russia outside of the foreigner quarters of trading towns with alot of contact with the West like Novgorod and Smolesk and was never embraced by the Boyars during period. The length and cut is up to your individual taste and boldness.

My object is to have a fully functional outer sleeve (hence the relatively close fit and light weight of the undercoat's sleeve and fabric). If you use a heavy fabric for the outer coat, then use less of a taper and add 1-2" extra at the cuff than previously suggested. If you line it with a cotton or similar weight fabric for either weight of outer fabric. If you have a close nap fur to line it with (1/2") add 2-3" to the circumference of the entire sleeve for the extra thickness. You should have a functional sleeve and not two huge pockets like a Hungarian Szura coat.

Coat Options for Seasonal Changes

Smart tricks for warm weather Russian

A sly trick for those of you who like the look but really don't want to wear two coats is to make the outer coat with some rich brocade and make two undercoat sleeves to attach in the armhole of the outer coat. This is preferable for summer and spring wear. Or, you can just not line either coat or wear a cotton shirt and an unlined coat over it. To carry this a bit further, for the partially open Ottoman style (or Russian "feryez"), make a undercoat front of lighter weight fabric sewn to the inside of the outer coat down to the waist and have a pleated skirt of material sewn around the waist to the lining material of the outercoat. It won't show but will look and drape like real but free you or your loved one of 4-5 layers of fabric on the torso.

Period method for winterizing your coat

To winterize the coats with slit sleeves (shuga) or armpits (ferezya, opashen or okhaben) buy enough wool to cut out the body patterns, not the sleeves. I prefer to use poly-wool because the high polyester content prevents the extra weight from stretching the wool out of shape if you should get drenched at an event. Next, pin your lining pieces to the wool and cut out the shapes. Then, trim 1/4" from all the edges of the wool lining

patterns, except at the shoulder edges (to help support the lining). Run a couple loops of thread through both layers of fabric to quilt each piece completely. Pull the stitches just tight enough to snug both layers together but not tight enough to "dimple" the fabric.

If you chose a thread that matches the fabric color and put a couple some loops at points 1-3" apart, there should be no "wrinkling" of the inner fabric by the weight of the wool. Only the Russian and Turkish Shugas have multi-layer wool sleeve linings because they are functional and not merely decorative. This method is more affordable than fur lining, both real and fake, and actually smoothes out the drape of the garment. It also leaves the lining fabric free to flex and support the outer fabric, as usual. I can authenticate this process as a period method used by the Streltsi for their coats, but the use of wool is not specifically mentioned. The strength of this method is easy construction by the modern costumer and it doesn't foul the operation of the average sewing machine.

If you don't have the time, patience or interest in using period methods, several iron on adhesives are easily available in most fabric stores. I prefer "WondrUnder" because it contains the most adhesive for the buck. A quick pass over the paperside, peel off and lay the lining fabric on the wool and iron on the highest setting. Instant bonding with the only alteration in the method described above being no quilting with needle and thread. Interling adhesive works also and resembles thick spiderwebs on a sheet but is harder to get a good adhesive stick between the fabrics.

The Sequence of Construction

Diagram C

This is the section where most of you flip to first, like me. If you did then for shame, for shame. If you read it straight through then I suggest that you get up and stretch, get a drink, use the facilities, whatever. Use the same sequence of construction on both the inner and outer linings for the best results. First, sew the two back quarters together from neckhole to hem. I use a zig-zag stitch so that it will flex with my shoulders if by chance it gets pulled tight across your shoulders. If it does that at the start, then you have made it two sizes too small. This should fit one size looser in the torso than it needs too to accommodate a shirt underneath and one size looser than that for personal comfort (3/4-1" total to the patterns outer edges). Add a 1/2-1 inch to all of the edges of the pattern for each layer of coat, depending on the thickness of the fabric used.

Second, sew each front quarter to this back piece at the shoulder from neckhole to armhole. Do it twice with a straight stitch for strength and fabric stability. Third, Attach the sleeves with a zig-zag stitch from front edge to back edge, twice for strength and give. Start on the front side and work your way to the back side of the armhole. Chances are that you will have to trim some fabric at this point from either the back of the sleeve or one of the back panels, hence, starting from the front where it might show to the back where it won't. The longer and more gradual the taper, the slighter the adjustment will show and the less you have to adjust the hem edge. If you guessed collar instead of sleeves, then you forgot that the collar comes last to make any adjustments if your first coat for yourself or someone else isn't perfect.

Fourth, sew the entire side of the coat from cuff to hem. No, I am not crazy. I use a straight stitch for smoothness. This saves both time and bother. This method also makes for a stronger coat, especially if you sew the strip 6-8" on both sides of the armpit once or

twice more. I do mine twice and have never had anyone complain about any of the clothes that I have made them.

Now, put the coat on with the seams on the outside and check the collar fit. The wider part in the middle will account for neck slump so the exact middle of the collar is the place to start pinning the collar on. I generally fold the collar piece in half and place this crease on the center of the back seam., pinning forward. Again, this will insure that both the outerlayer and inner lining will match up perfectly. I use a zig-zag stitch for flexibility because the seam at the back of the neck will get some stress from time to time and needs to be able to give a little. Once around is sufficient. Do both the inner and outer lining. Fifth, start pinning at the back of the collar down each side of the front opening and then around the bottom seam, leaving 12-14" unpinned and unsewn to reverse the garment (6-7" on both sides of the back seam connection to the hem). **Make sure that each lining has the seams on the outside.**

This is where most people screw up because they are tired or too zoned in on the project to notice. Depending on your competence with a sewing machine or a needle and thread, pin the sticky points 1/2" apart. For example, the collar front connection with the coat body, any and all corners, etc. Now is the time to make CONSERVATIVE adjustments to the hem, collar, etc. I use a straight seam from one side of the gap at the hem all the way around the pinned seam to the other side of the gap.

Diagram E²

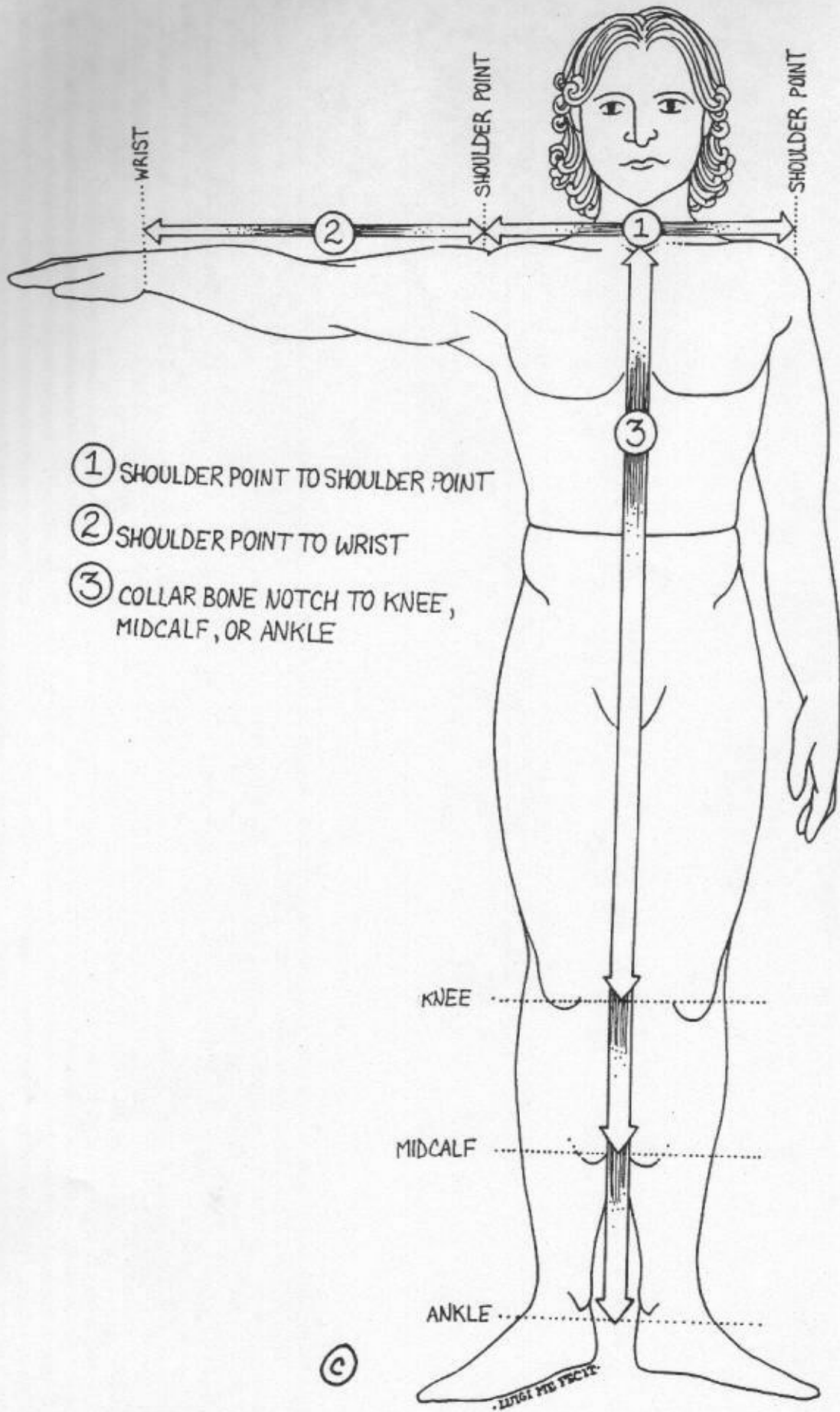
Now reach up through the gap inside of the two layers , grab the collar and carefully pull the garment back through. The sleeves are the easiest because you just grab the cuff edge of the inner lining and push it through to match the outer sleeve. Sixth, snug the seam so that not one little bit remains unturned and either iron the edges or whip stitch them all. I generally do the cuffs after I make sure that the inner sleeve lining isn't bunched up or twisted. I highly recommend turning the edges of the inner and outer linings at the cuffs, pinning them and whipstitching them. It looks better and gives the cuffs a stiffer edge when finished. Of course, if this is an outer coat with longhaired fur at the cuffs, use your sewing machine. After you either iron or sew the edges flat, then make the sleeve slashing and/or chest bands.

I usually whip stitch these parts with a "blind" stitch. That is to say, I roll all the edges and make the stitch through the bottom fold of the fabric and out through the crease. then through the base material at the very edge of the covering fabric. Pull snug and repeat about a thousand times. The first dozen or two stitches are a learning experience but after a thousand or two, you will be a verified expert. If you plan to make your garment's sleeves slashed, now is the time. Find the front part of the upper sleeve running the length of the top of your bicep for the heavy winter coat and the outside for a court or summer weight coat. Place a mark, pin or other marker 1-2" from the top of the sleeve and another 10-12" down the sleeve. Cut both layers of fabric in a straight line between them at the same time. Either roll the edges and whip stitch like the cuffs or make a slash piece.

To make a slash piece, cut two pieces of fabric 2' longer than the slash and 1/2" wider than either needs to be with a rolled outer edge. Place the outer side of the fabric of both face to face and pin together 1/2" from the inner edges the entire length of the slash. Sew the 1" remaining at either end of the strip 1/2" from the edge, directly in line with the pins. **Trim the fabric over the stitches only** as short as possible without weakening the seam. Unpin the fabric after finishing sewing the ends. Place over the slash with the

unsewn part in the slash. Roll these parts over on the inside of the slash so that no seam shows and whip stitch them down. Repeat on the other side of the slash and roll the outer edge of the insert and whipstitch down. Repeat on the other arm.

I use either cording or a fabric of a contrasting color and texture to show "wealth and style". My wife calls this my patented "Sergeant Pepper" look but I like it. For less ostentation, use a similar color or shade. Remember, the Boyers (wealthy merchant or noble class) had no sumptuary laws except for excess use of cloth of gold (except for the Tsar and Upper Clergy) and red boots (formal occasions to ape the rituals of Holy Constantinople and the territorial "Princes") and pearling the entire body of the coat fabric (as apposed to the Byzantine tradition). So pearl and jewel till the oyster beds and your chest of gold runs dry!!



- ① SHOULDER POINT TO SHOULDER POINT
- ② SHOULDER POINT TO WRIST
- ③ COLLAR BONE NOTCH TO KNEE, MIDCALF, OR ANKLE

©

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(1) Measurements for person 5'10" & 200 lbs. w/ medium build

(2) Measured for average Cotton fabric width brocade ave. 54-56" wool ave. 60"

* (3) For hem length sleeves see addtl. drawing below

Same dimensions as =>

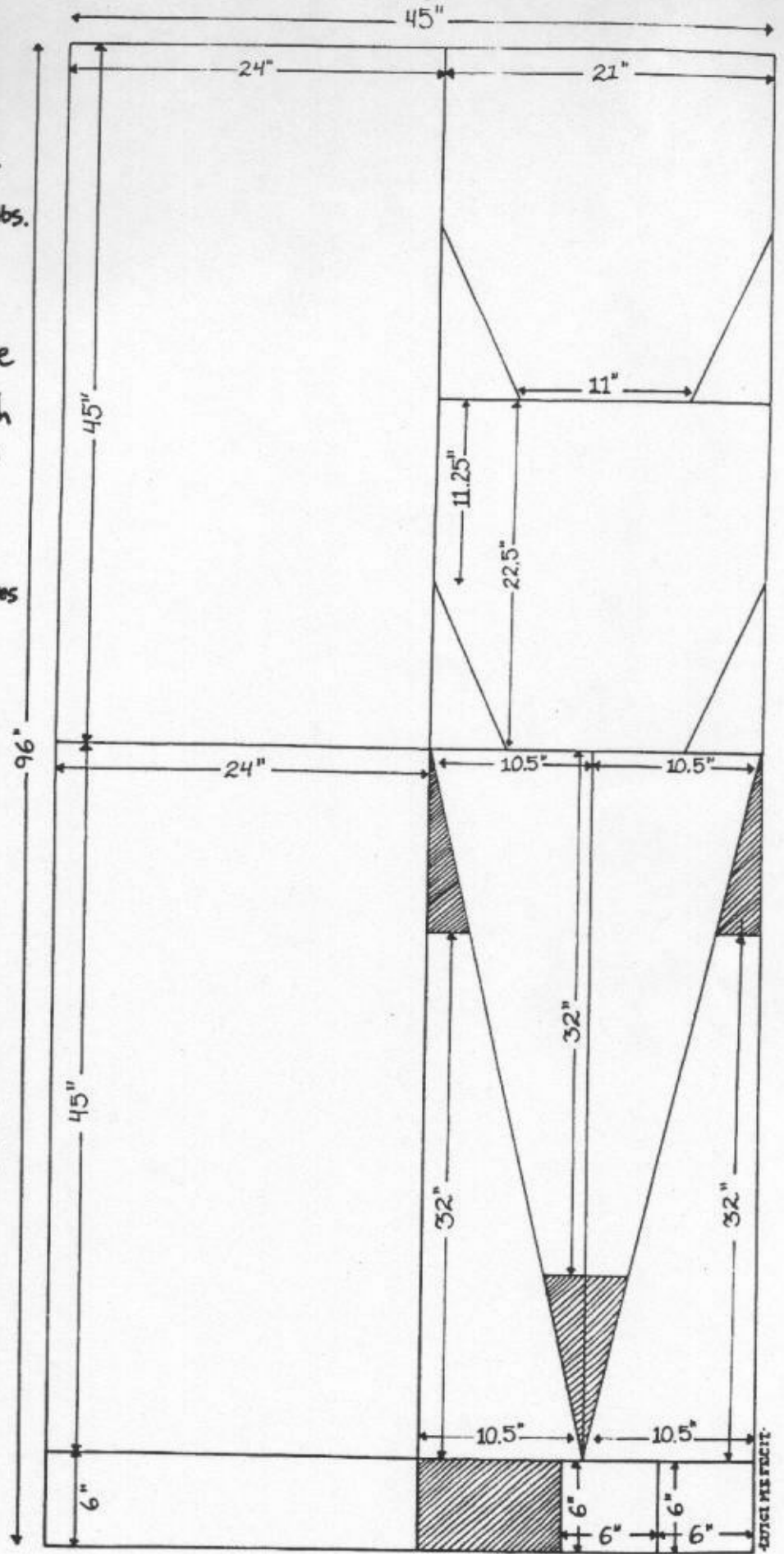
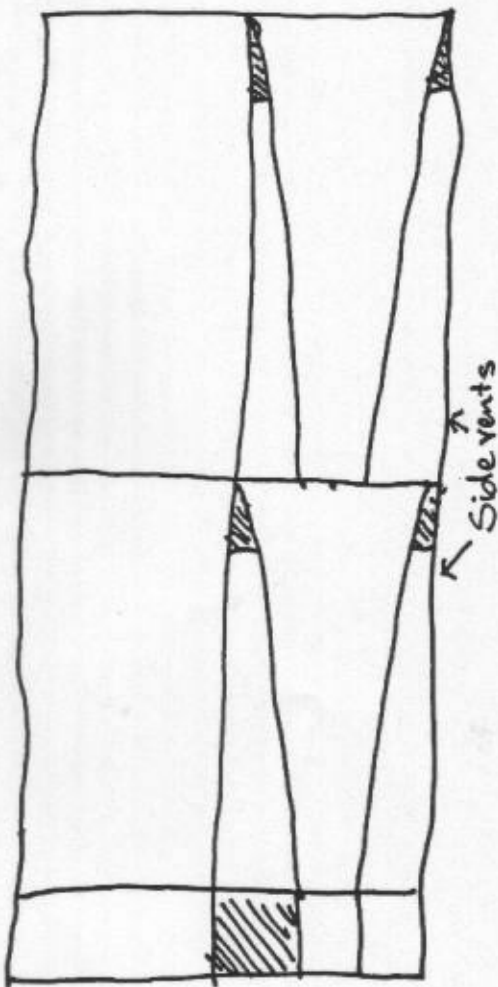
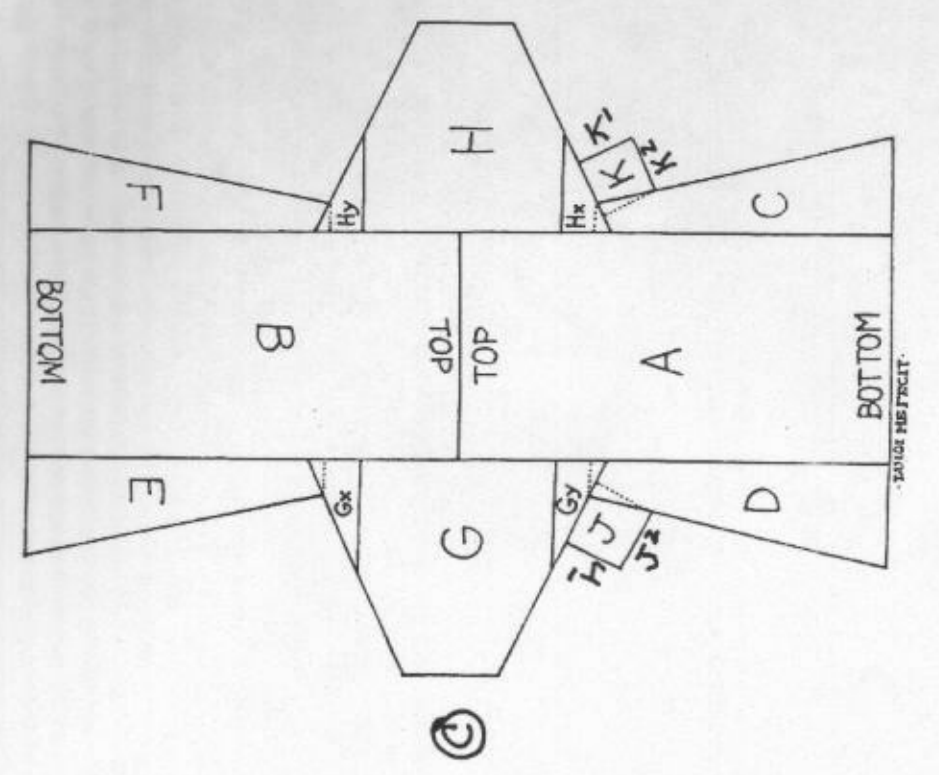
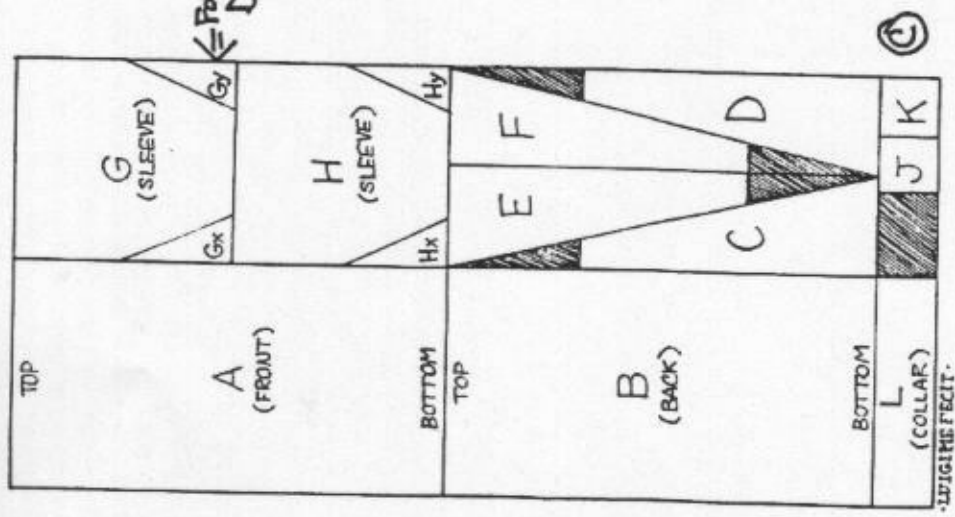


Diagram...



← For cuff see next Diagram page



(1) Sew top of A to top of B. Cut A up exact center from Bottom to Top 3 1" into Top of B (check on next page.)

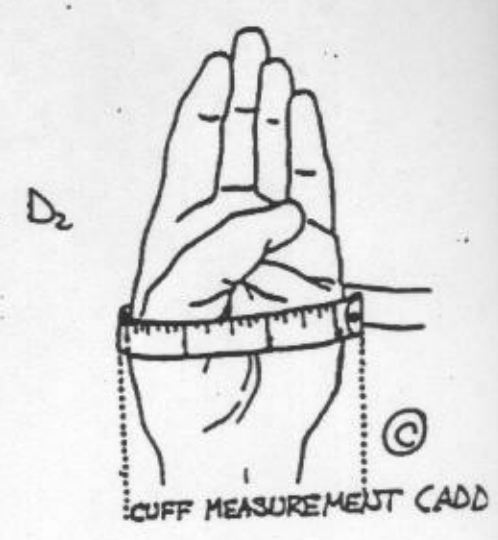
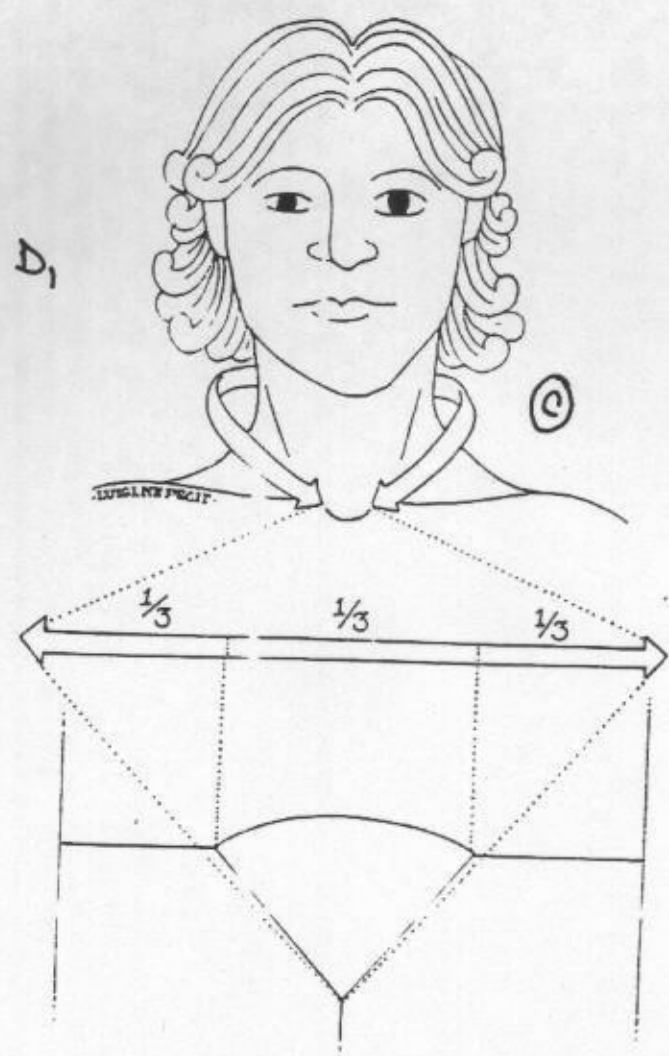
(2) Sew Gx + Gy to G / Sew Hy & Hx to H. S.

(3) Lay out A/B on ground (Flat) & place G/Gx/Gy at midpoint of A/B

(4) Place E & D as shown & trim excess as shown 1/2" extra material & sew S to D as shown on top of D & E. Sew after pinning & repeat with other side

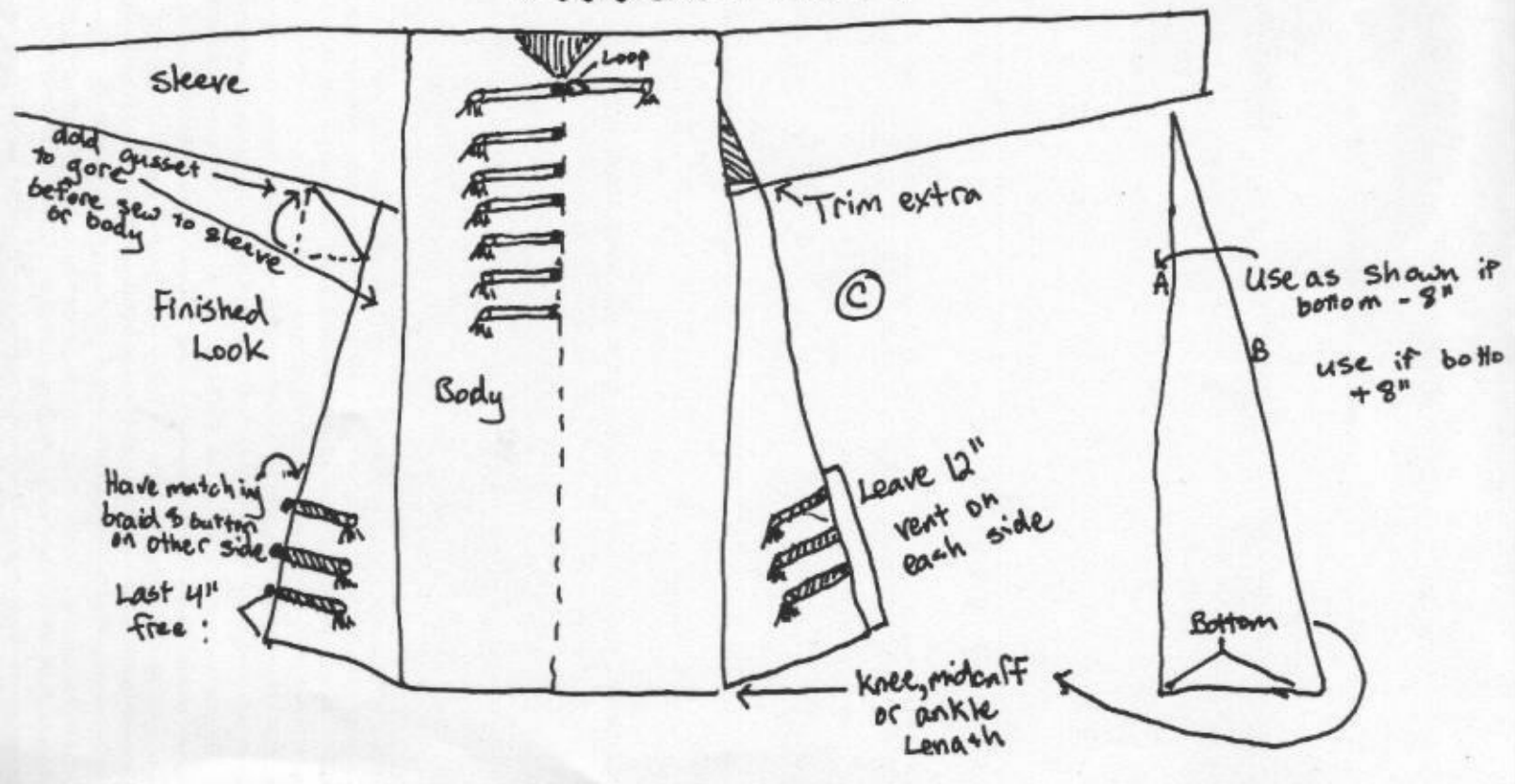
(5) Pin J1 to corner of Gx & E leaving 1/2" extra for seam to sew / pin out to cuff & sew. Repeat on other side

(6) Pin D to E and sew. Repeat on other side

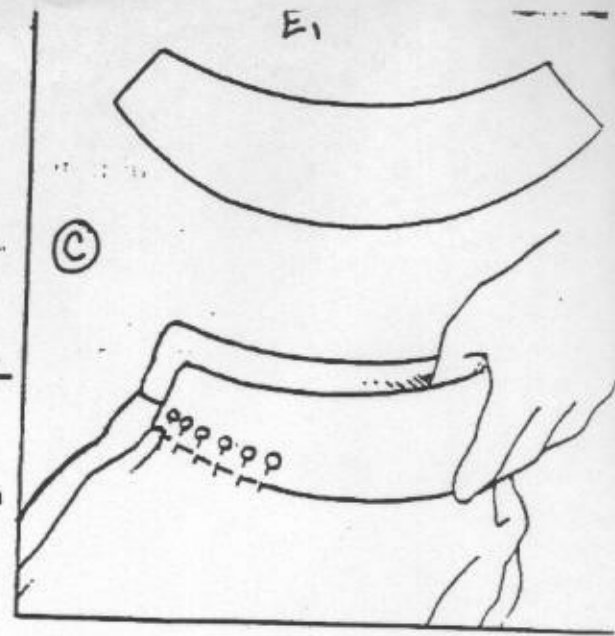
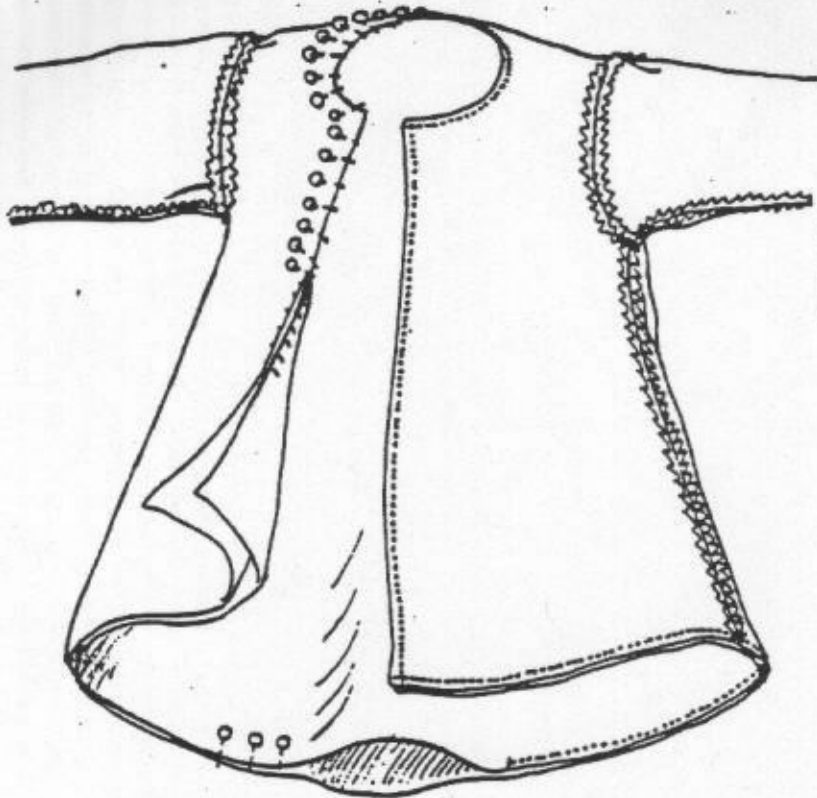


D3

Button on right side for Russian
on left side for Tatars Khanates



Ulagiuris - 15-23-3



E2

