

Understanding Houpelande and Burgundian Clothing Construction

by
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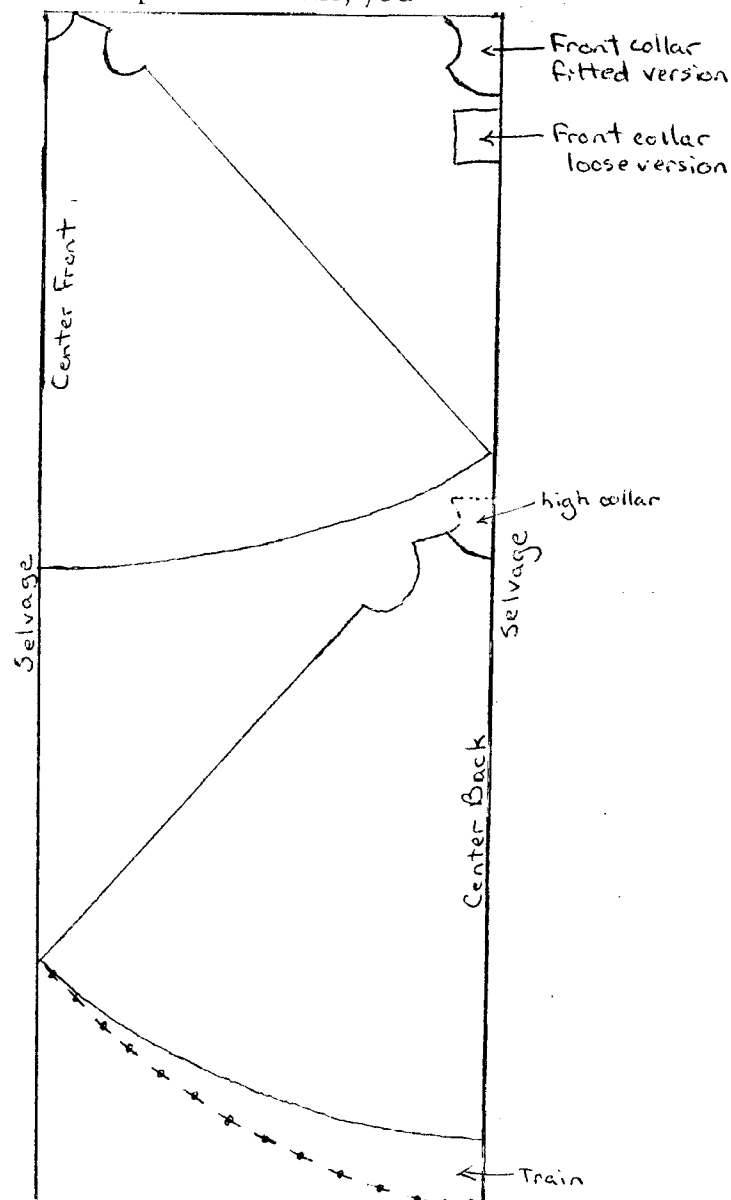
The houpelande and the Burgundian style of dress are two highly fashionable styles of the 1400s. They are fairly simple in construction and can be modified in many ways from the basic pattern.

1) The Houpelande

This garment is characterized by its full body and often seen high collar. Oddly enough, that is where similarities in the houpelande end. There is an endless variety of sleeves, lengths, and neckline/collar options to choose from. To create a garment worthy of the houpelande name, you should start out with **54 to 60 inch wide** fabric. To create the body of the garment, you'll need at least **4 times** the desired length; more if you want greater fullness in the skirt portion of the body.

Note: The patterns given work if you do not have a pattern that runs from one selvage to the other (putting a selvage edge at the top of the design). If you do have fabric of this type, simply turn the patterns sideways. If you want your garment to be longer, cut a border out of another fabric (perhaps a contrasting patterned fabric or color)!

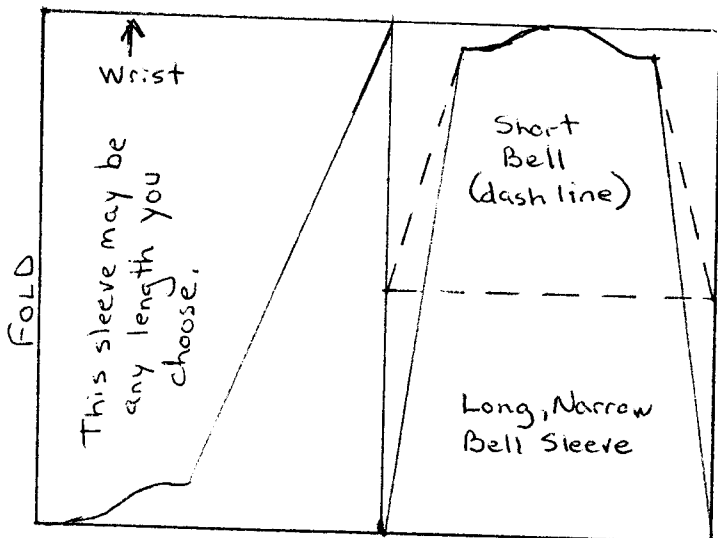
To vary the body design, you may add a train to the back by cutting the hem longer (the lower dotted line) or even dag the lower edge with the design of your choice. For a high-standing collar, you may also cut the back of the collar as one with the body (shown by the dashed line). For other attached collar styles, the neck should be cut in a curve, following the solid line.



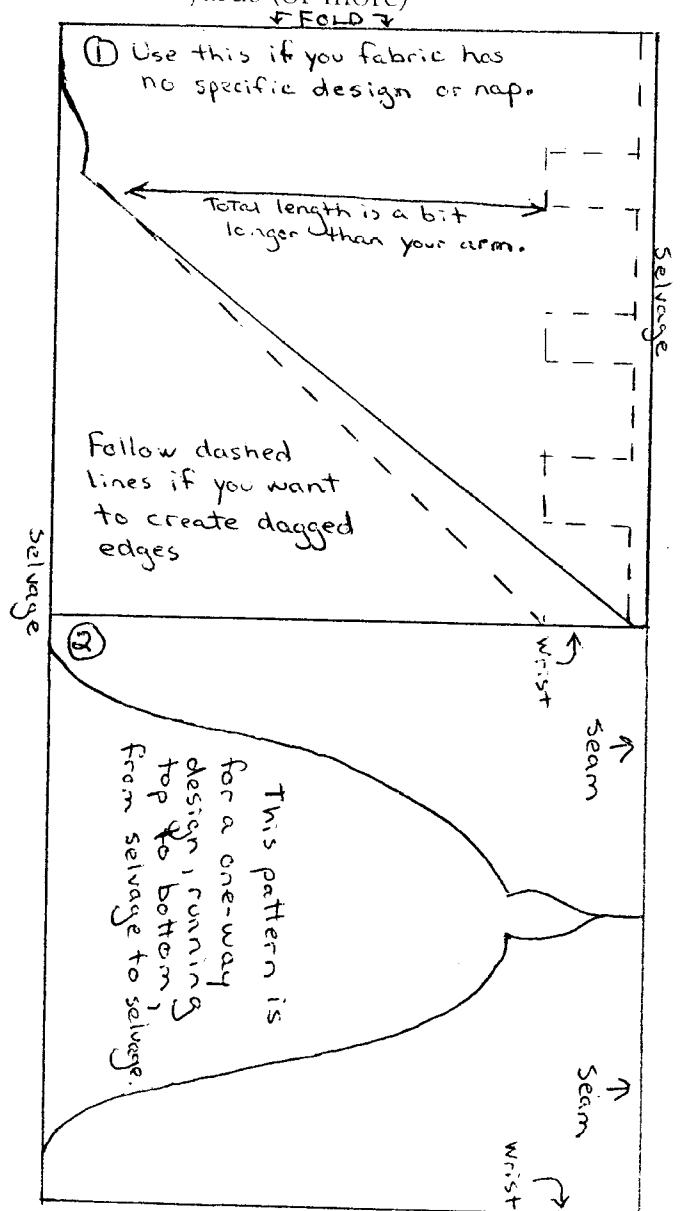
Sleeve Styles for Houpelandes

What is the correct way to cut a houpelande sleeve? There is much debate about this topic. My opinion is that with all the variations that exist, there is no one correct way. Some methods take more fabric than others so plan ahead before purchasing your cloth. If you are using cloth from your wares, you must modify your design to fit your yardage. Below are patterns for a simple bell sleeve, a belled trumpet sleeve, a simple bag sleeve, a long draped trumpet sleeve, and a cape sleeve. The draped trumpet and the cape sleeve may take the most fabric. If you have less yardage, the belled trumpet is for you (an Italian version). You may dag and straight edge with your favorite design as indicated.

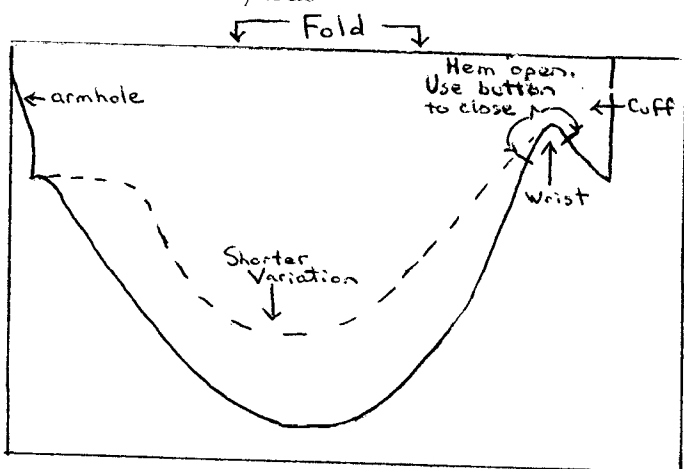
The Simple Bell
1 yard fabric



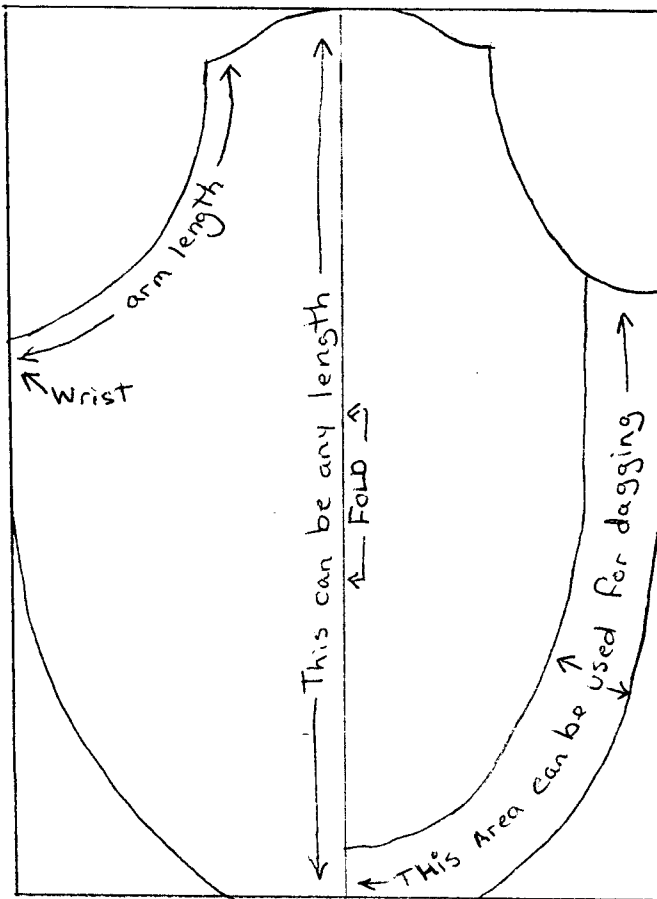
The Belled Trumpet Sleeve
2 yards (or more)



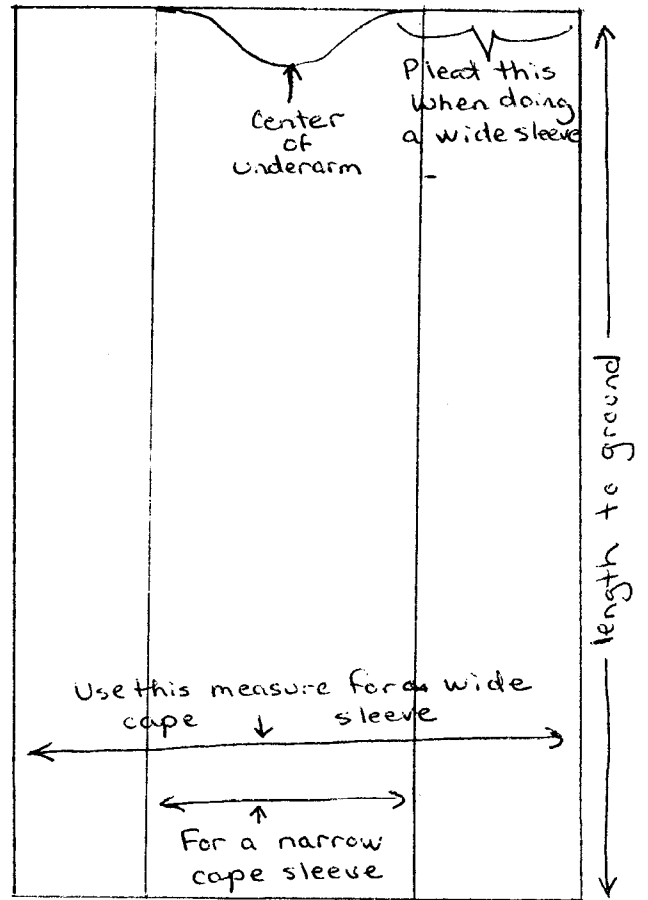
The Simple Bag
1 1/2 yards



The Draped Trumpet Sleeve
3 to 4 yards



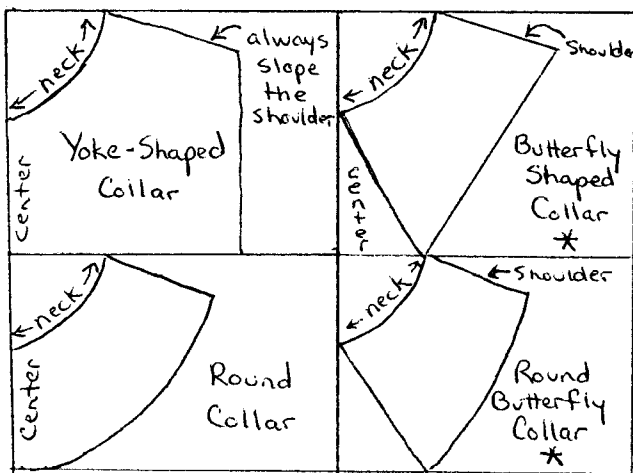
The Cape Sleeve
2 to 3 yards



Collar Patterns

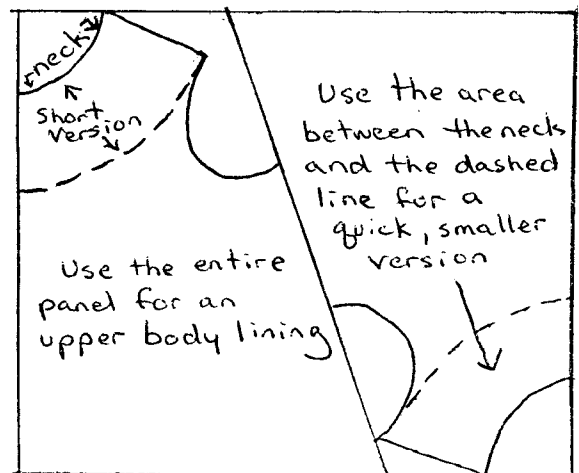
The most common collar style is the tall, upright version which I have patterned in the body diagram. Other styles range from a flat, square collar that drapes over the shoulder, to a simple facing of fur or cloth. Below are patterns for the later two collars.

The Flat Collar



* Use round collar

The Facing

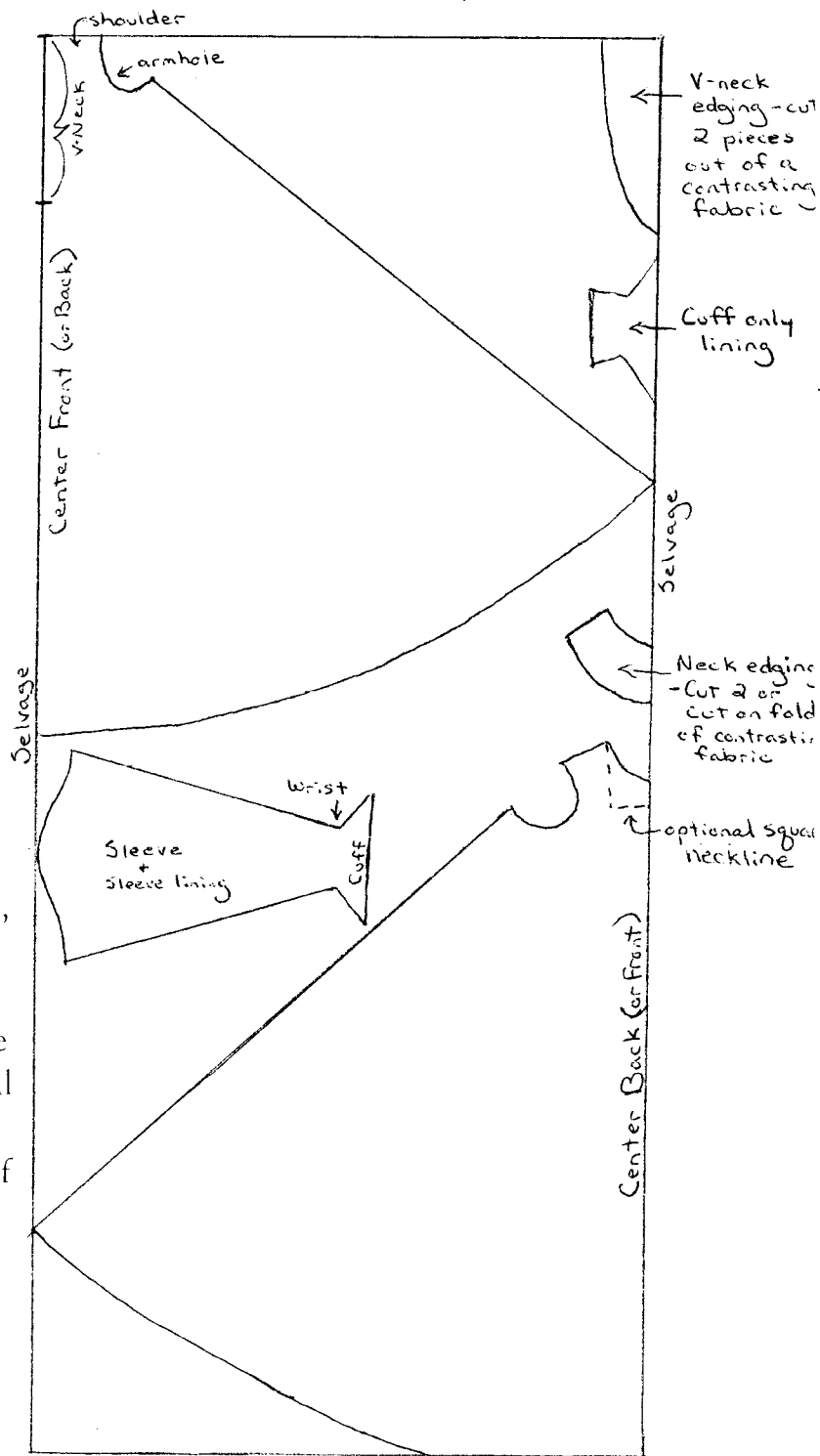


The Burgundian Gown

This garment is an offspring of the houpeleande. It has the same full body, but the differences include a characteristic “narrow” upper body shape and a V-neck in either front or back, or a deep, square neck. The sleeves are characteristically fitted and straight, often having a turned back cuff. Some sleeves shown are long, narrow bells. The collar is more like an external facing and often in black or a similar, dark color. Also done in black, was a bottom border on the body of the dress. You will need approximately the same amount of fabric for the body of a Burgundian dress as you would for the houpeleande. The main difference in cut is that the panels which make up the V-neck. These are cut with the entire center length of the panel on the selvage. This means the neck will not stretch on the bias (as a cut V-neck would) and fall off the shoulders. This also means that there is less fabric in the upper body region, creating the narrow appearance. The back (or front if the back is to be V-ed) is cut as a houpeleande back with a curved neck.

Sleeves

The easiest way to make the characteristic black, turned-back cuffs is to line the entire sleeve. To do this, cut an extra sleeve out of your lining fabric, sew the sleeve and it's lining together at the cuff edge, and turn the finished sleeve. If there is only a small amount of an expensive and highly decorative fabric, trace the cuff area of the sleeve pattern and make it slightly longer than the portion that will be turned back. Sew up the lining and



attach it to the cuff edge. After you turn and press it, hem the raw lining to the inside of the sleeve.

The Collar

The neck is a bit more difficult. I have outlined the pattern for a simple flat collar. If you use the pattern I have shown, you will cut the piece a bit longer than the depth of the V-neck and an inch wider than you want the finished edge to be. Sew these pieces together and place over the neck. (If it to be a free-standing collar that is tacked down in several places, be certain to cut a lining out of a thinner fabric. If the lining is too heavy, it will cause the collar to lay incorrectly.) Pin the edging or collar to the gown, making sure to match the neck curves. The neck edge can be turned under and attached by hand. The outer side (if it's a facing) is pressed under and hand-hemmed or topstitched.

The Bottom Border

This can be done two ways. 1) Cut the dress shorter than desired, cut a border by matching the bottom of the dress, and sew it to the bottom of the gown. 2) Cut an edging to match the bottom of your gown (similar to cutting a facing). Sew the seams together and press the top edge under for a hem allowance. Finally, pin the border to the bottom of the dress (so the top edge fits smoothly) and sew the top edge down. You may then trim the bottom hem edges to match and hem them as if they were one layer of fabric.

How to do Classic Burgundian Pleats

These full, rounded folds are actually the forerunner to cartridge pleats. They both are formed by anchoring them to a rigid strip of cloth which holds them in place. The key to creating the fullest look is to cut the body of the garment as full as possible. The pattern can be modified with gores or panels to increase the width. Rectangular strips of cloth should be cut (and lined if the fabric easily frays) to the width of the wearer's body (i.e. chest or waist gathers, or each side of the front of an open coat). If you can, set the folds while someone is wearing the garment. This makes the process much less painful.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

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