

Guide To Vestment Design And Construction

By Sister Mary John, I.H.M.

History

The chasuble was is a descendent of the Casula Paenula and planeta. Garments worn by the peoples of the Roman empire, and later called casula, which means "little house". It consisted of a square or circular piece of cloth in the center of which a hole was made; through this the head was passed. With the arms hanging down, this rude garment covered the whole figure. It was like a little house (*casula*). Reminiscent of the seamless garment of Christ. It fell around the wearer in free and ample folds. It can be seen in depictions of early Christians on the walls of the catacombs and in other works of art representing high church officials in the earliest ages of the young Christian church. It continued to be seen in all types of art from statues to stained glass windows up until the present time.



FIG. 98. CHASUBLE OF ST. GODEHARD, HILDESHEIM, XIII CENTURY. This circular form is characteristic of chasubles of the XIII, XIII and XIV centuries.

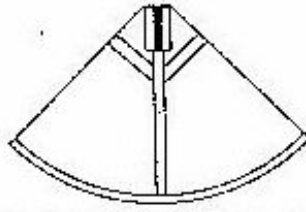


FIG. 99. CHASUBLE OF ST. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY, NOW AT PROVINS. It belongs to the XIII century which did no more than copy the cut of chasubles used in the two preceding centuries.

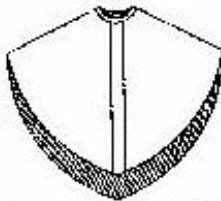


FIG. 100. A FOURTEENTH CENTURY FORM. Showing an evolution in the cut.

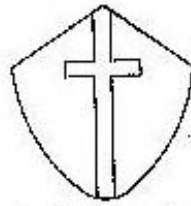


FIG. 101. A SIXTEENTH CENTURY CHASUBLE IN THE MUSEUM AT BONN. It has practically the dimensions required by St. Charles Borromeo.

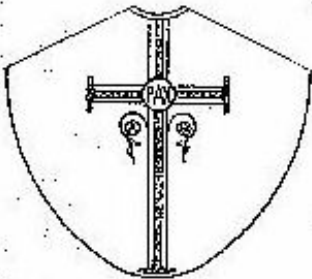


FIG. 102. MADE IN 1928 FOR A SEMINARY.

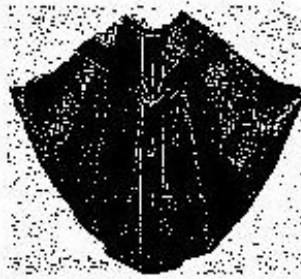


FIG. 103. MADE IN 1928 FOR A CARDINAL.

Chasubles from different periods -- 11th Century, 13th Century, 14th Century, 16th Century, 1928, 1928

Pictures from Vestments and Vesture,

From its early form which was round, it began to change and become more pointed, and instead of being one large piece it was put together using two pieces of material. When this was done there was, of course, a seam on the front and back which had to be hidden. This was then covered by wide pieces of cloth, orphreys. ① By the 12th century onwards these orphreys or bindings were placed so as to represent a cross. The Y shaped cross was one of the first, as was the Tau cross. The Latin cross made its appearance in the 14th century. These crosses became popular everywhere except in Italy and Spain where they still continued to use the vertical strip of cloth.

That is not to say that Italy and Spain did not espouse change. Historical changes have ever influenced both art and usage. "In every country a revolution in talent, in taste and in the arts is always accompanied by a revolution in the manners and feelings of the people...all that excessive culture which is known as the Renaissance, and which as we seen was really in certain ways a decadence, brought with it a general lack of interest in the Divine Mysteries and in the vestments necessary for their celebration." ② Men

were henceforth too much occupied in seeking their own well-being. The revival of interest in things classical, was also to some extent a revival in things pagan. The artists, many of them great, interested themselves in everything, and their imitators, not so great did likewise. Many things changed, and so did

the chasuble. The changes involved at first narrowing the vesture, cutting it and clipping it. This was done over time to such an extent that their dimensions were greatly reduced. We see at this development at this period of what would later be known as the "Roman" chasuble. The vestment which began as an actual garment and intended to serve that purpose had become an ornament consisting of two flat surfaces. These surfaces became as canvas needle artists as true canvas was to oil painters. They embellished them, and as art moved

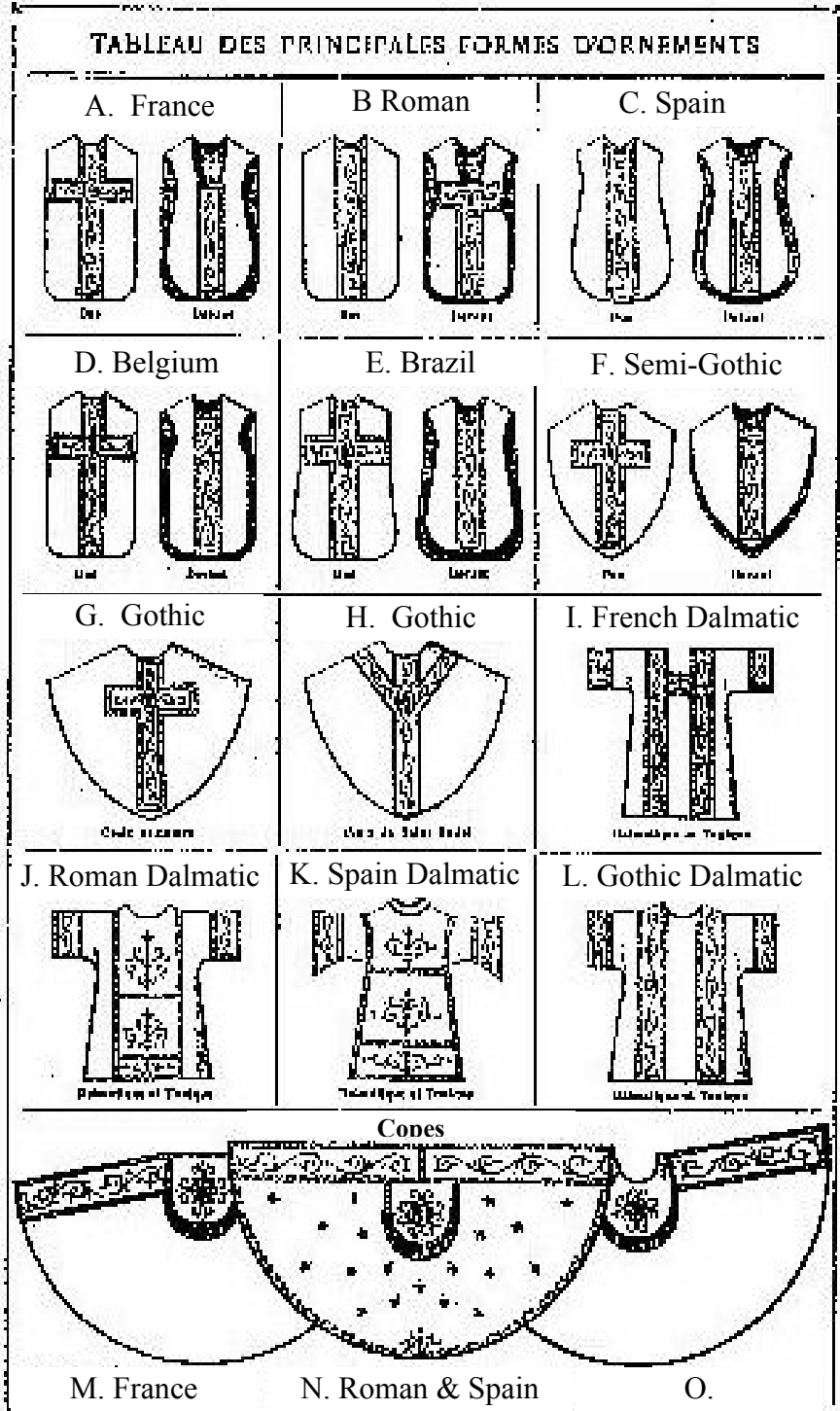
from the Renaissance to the Rococo, so did the vestment become more and more elaborately embellished with cloth of gold, and heavy metallic bullion embroideries.

Such vestments are indeed lovely, and worthy of their place in great museums. Although changed in form they were still very worthy of the place they held in worship, and were made lovingly to give God the greatest glory. Still there were those who were against such changes and defended the dignity of the time honored sacred vestments they had known, deploring the change in the chasuble. Such a one was St. Charles Borromeo who insisted that the chasuble not be less than 51 inches wide. Under his influence Italy retained the larger forms until the 16th century, but France, Spain, and Belgium adopted variations of the narrower vestments. Some of these are referred to as "fiddle backed" because of their fiddle shape and rigid backs.

Only in England, and so also America, did remnants of the original loose chasuble survive. It was practically identical to the form proscribed by St. Charles Borromeo in 1572. These "Roman" vestments are now referred to as "Gothic" to differentiate between them and the flat Roman style. Technically all approved vestments are Roman. So it is better to call the flat backed chasuble Latin instead of Roman and the full chasuble Gothic. In the post-reformation Catholic Church the order came to use, keep and restore the vestments that they possessed, and so all styles continued to exist, side by side, quite peacefully. Each had its adherents, and each its detractors but both, and all were legitimate successors and descendents of the original casula. Again, it is the artwork of the various periods that has shown this to be true.

Around 1863 with an interest in the origin of customs in mind, the style of vestments began to revert back to the gothic again. An new uproar arose, much like that made by St. Charles, as again men tried to defend the dignity of the sacred vestments that they had known. By 1925, however, you could find in general usage of Italian, French, Spanish and Gothic vestments.

Pius IX used wider then the 51 inch chasuble of St. Charles, and Pius X also used quite wide chasubles. He



frequently presented such chasubles to churches, recommended them.

National Styles

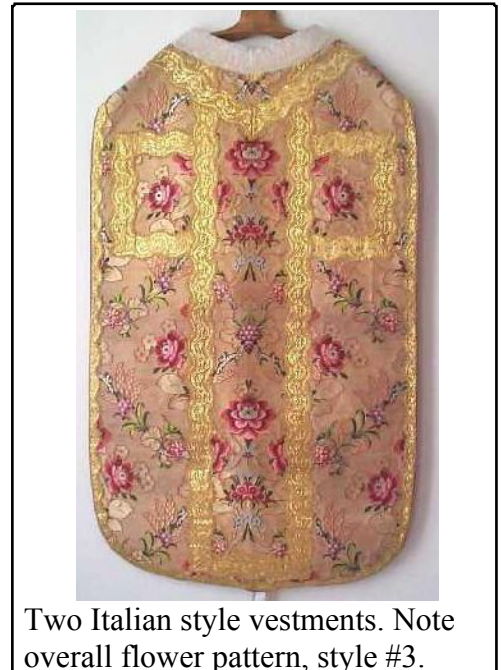
Each nation developed its own style. The Italians had three distinct types of chasubles.

1. A chasuble whose only decoration is stiff metallic galloons. ②③
2. A chasuble with a “column” adorning it which is usually very wide and ornate.
3. A chasuble that rather looks like drapery material, whose whole surface is covered with leaves, fruits, flowers, and other things reminiscent of ancient Roman art. To this was added often the “column” other bands.



Italian column style

The Spanish and the Belgians, both were part of the great Spanish-Holy Roman Empire. In the Table taken from the L'age D'or de la Chasublerie by Jean-Marc Florand you can see that there is small difference between the Belgium (Forme Beige) and the Spanish (Forme Espagnola). Both have shoulder seams, but the Belgium is cut a little deeper around the arms. The Latin form, has the joining at the chest. Notice also on these sketches the different kinds of crosses used. Some have a Latin cross (A, D, E, F, G). Some have a Tau cross (B). Some have the St. Andrew Cross (H). Some have only the column (C). The other drawings depict various forms of the Gothic, semi-gothic chasubles, Dalmatics (French, Italian, Spanish, Gothic, and several species of Copes.



Two Italian style vestments. Note overall flower pattern, style #3.

As you can see there developed four sorts of chasubles used in the Church:

1. atrophied chasuble still used in France, Spain, Belgium, Ireland, and elsewhere
2. The so-called Latin chasuble, reaching just to the junction of the shoulder and arm;
3. The medium-sized chasuble which reaches as far as the elbow, and conforms to the dimension of St. Charles
4. full chasuble reaching as far as the wrist.

All correct vestments are “Roman” even the Gothic, but the name “Roman” has come to be applied to the narrow chasuble (which I refer to as Latin, which would be more correct) since they are not “Gothic.” Roman does not mean Italian.

The measurement differences in these national chasubles:

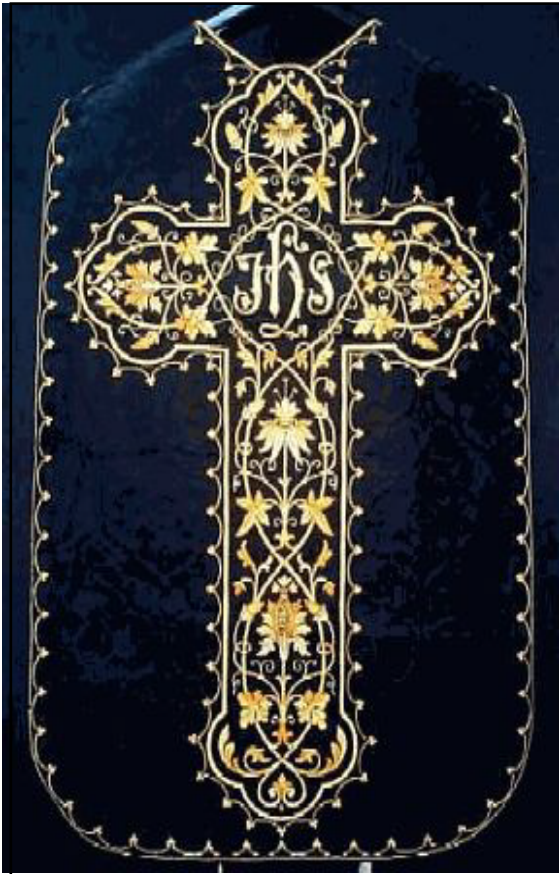
Italian 29 inches by 44

French, Belgium, etc : a 2 to 3 inches narrower, and shorter with some variations

Gothic 46 long by about 56 wide.

The stole for the Gothic chasuble should be longer than the length of the chasuble so that it hangs below it.

Rules of Design



Elaborate embroidery work on a black moire faille fabric.

When designing a vestment, there are several things to take into consideration in order for it to look and function properly. Firstly, consider the tastes of the priest who will wear it. Is he tall, or short? Does he prefer the Latin or the Gothic style? Just as women have particular tastes in their own dress, so do priests have particular expectations of the vestment that they wear.

Next, consider the function of this particular vestment. Is it intended to be used for a low or a high Mass? Low Mass vestments are more or less the “everyday” vestment. They are usually similar, and less expensive than their High Mass counterparts. That is not to say that they are not beautiful, but since they are worn much more, they will wear out much faster, and so do not usually have the hours and hours of painstaking hand stitching, or embellishments that their seldom used special occasion brothers have.

Thirdly consider the place where the vestment will be used. If the church is very dark, then perhaps lighter and brighter fabrics should be used. If the church is very large, then the appliqué work and galloons need to be larger to be seen from a distance, while in a small chapel this type might be too overwhelming.

After you have examined these facets and have a general idea of what Church or priest commissioning the piece desires, especially as to color and the amount of money to be expended on the work, look to the design

itself. This last item, the expense is usually a determining factor which limits the vestment artist not to what she could do, but what it is affordable to do. For this reason, I have searched the world via the Internet for the most beautiful fabrics and trims that I could find that are reasonably priced. Most vestment makers at some time or other will have in their possession a catalog from La Lame or Almy. I also buy from them on occasion, but I can’t afford to buy much or often. At \$30 a yard for orphrey banding I would use up most of my budget, yet I have found equally lovely orphrey banding, indeed in the same pattern, from a company in India at less than half the price. My web site carries such items. Most of the fabric I offer are around \$15 a yard including shipping. Then check the links to other fabric manufactures such as Istok in Russia, who imports to the United States through Canada. There you can get pure silks and silk brocades for about \$20 to \$40 a yard.

When deciding on your fabric and the orphrey or galloons that will decorate it, keep this in mind. If the fabric is very “busy”, that is, it has a very busy pattern (that can be seen as such from a distance, tone-on-



This gothic vestment has a green orphrey but no galloon border. It doesn’t need one. It does have a galloon edging around the outer edge.



This vestment is of velvet with mostly gold metallic embroidery. Galloon for cross and border. A very simple but beautiful design.

tone usually can't) then you don't want the orphrey of cross on it to be "busy" as well.

For example, if you are planning to use a fabric which is a rich purple brocade covered with metallic gold patterns, then don't use an orphrey or a cross design that is a swirl of embellishments. Use a simple one tone piece such as velvet and put a simple appliqué upon it. If you want the embel-

lished cross, then use a tone-on-tone fabric or a one tone velvet or

moire so that it will stand out and be seen.

"A prominent place is given to vestments decorated with appliqué work, because this is a very economic method, and the result is often marked by a distinctness and strength superior to the effects obtained by embroidery. However, many such pieces of appliqué work may be set off by true embroidery."⁴



Multiple colors are part of the design in this vestment. The only galloon is around the outside edge. This fabric is a white moire. This ornate piece of embroidery needs a solid color background, no brocade.

Vestments and Vesture by Dom Roulin, O.S.B. gives examples and some rules for orphrey design. Here is a breakdown of his rules:

Rules for Orphrey Design

1. You can use bands of ribbons of silk or velvet applied as orphreys. These stand out against the main material without the least border and make very good vestments. Even though they don't need it you can use galloons (trim or cording) to outline the appliqué bands, it gives them a richness and completeness. Well-outlined orphreys are usually preferable to orphreys which are not plainly outlined. The lines of orphreys provide a clear and precise demarcation, and help the faithful to distinguish even from a distance, the form of the sign of our Redemption.
2. Use galloons when two conditions are fulfilled: the designs are not very varied, and the colors are not multiplied. "Galloons of pale silk, or gold are the proper border for colored bands (green, red, purple), when these have the same or practically the same, intensity of color as the principal material of the vestment. These galloons then connect and at the same time separate somewhat the two tints; they enhance, that is to say, they make effective, the intensity of the two stuffs thus juxtaposed. If not, the colors annihilate each other. (e.g. violet velvet on a black chasuble needs a light yellow galloon or gold braid to join the bands and the stuff as a whole. Similarly pale galloons on white, need



Cloth of gold Tunic.



Note the construction on this Tunic which is not the norm. The front is cut in under the arms (fiddle front) and the back is squared. The sleeves are open at the bottom and straight from the shoulder.



a dark border.

3. Using two, or at most three colors and some conventional or natural design repeated symmetrically, one may obtain clearer and stronger effects.

Everything depends upon the design, character, proportions, and propriety of the figures and decorative compositions

Other Types of Liturgical Garments:

Dalmatics and Tunics:

Dalmatics and Tunics: the Dalmatic originally from Dalmatia and was introduced into Roman society during reign of Diocletian. The Tunic is shorter and plainer than the Dalmatic. Although now almost always the same shape and size, the Dalmatic of the deacon takes precedence over the Tunic of the sub deacon, and both have different functions to fulfil at the altar. Therefore they should be slightly different. In the Ceremonial of Bishops it lays down that the Dalmatic can be shorter and more richly ornamented than the Tunic, and the Tunic might have longer sleeves. Both garments retain traces of the clavi or stripes which decorated the tunics of the early Christians. The deacons Dalmatic has a two bands band running horizontally somewhere connecting the two clavi (orphreys or wide bands), while the Tunic has only one. This connection can be at the top, or bottom.

There are several types of construction for these garments. Some were originally laced up at the shoulders and had cords with tassels there. Some are made open at the sides, and some closed with pleats or gussets to give them ample room for genuflection and movement.

Most patterns for dalmatics and tunics have the sleeves cut at right angles to the vertical of the garment. However, the shoulder line should be slightly sloped. This is not only for aesthetic reasons. If the sleeves are not cut at this angle then the garment will hang in ugly folds and pull the

orphreys out of vertical. The heavier the garment is, the worse this will be, because if the sleeves are stiff and at right angles, they will fall awkwardly.



Dalmatic. Italian Style

Dalmatic simple but elegant design.





Cope front and back



Humeral Veil. Notice how lining sets off the piece dramatically.

The sleeves of the Dalmatic and tunic are often of late made more like flaps that simply hang over the arms. On some they are sewed together at the wrist, and others have some kind of tapes to tie. The best kind of Dalmatic or tunic, a true one, would be to have real sleeves, sewn all the way along. The sleeves may be wide and should be. Barring this, at least join them at the wrist and have a secondary tie back under the arm.

The Cope:

Cope went through changes as well as the chasuble. The pluviale of the Romans, (which means “to keep of the rain”), served as an outer garment. A hood was sometimes added to the cope in the Middle Ages, but is shrank to small triangular appendage. Later it grew very much wider and longer and also began to be fixed on below an orphrey which put it much too low.

For the best design don't let the hood fall below the waist. Keep cope as lightweight as possible.

Humeral Veil:

Humeral Veil: don't let it get stiff with design. Keep it simple. A Benediction veil needs a fastening.



Complete Solemn High Mass set. Chasuble, Humeral Veil, Deacon Stole, Dalmatic & Tunic (both the same here), Maniples for Deacon and Sub-deacon, Stole, Maniple, Chalice Veil, Burse, Antependium (altar front) and a

Materials for the Vestment

Vestments have been made of many types of fabric, but the most acceptable types are velvets, moire, and brocades. Tapestries are also frequently used, especially for orphreys. There is no rule that says you must use fabric with ecclesiastical patterns. Plain fabric serves its own purpose.

Velvet – a beautiful fabric to use provided that it is not heavy and drapes well, it is so made as not to crumple and develop those creases that make it look old and worn. For the purpose of decoration a stiffer velvet can be used. Velvet comes in several heights of nap. The short nap is often found in older vestments of the Latin variety because it is hard to do embroidery or appliqué work on high napped velvet. High napped velvet has a lovelier shine and catches the light beautifully. Silk velvet is soft and supple, and drapes well. (Example of a velvet Latin Chasuble on page 6 and 9)

Damask and Brocade: Brocade is a damask but with metallic threads woven into it. Although for convenience sake both here, and on my web site, I refer to all patterned fabrics as brocade, with or without



Latin chasuble of gold metallic appliqué and gold galloon done on green crushed velvet. Galloon here is to define



This brocade fabric of gold metallic thread on an ivory background is busy enough to make good use of only a cross of galloon and a simple appliqué



Damask tone on tone red vestment that doesn't conflict with elaborate embroidery work.

metallic threads. Brocades with patterns of flowers, animals, or of geometric shapes have been used, and provided that they have dignity and harmony they can indeed be suitable, but why when there are so many beautiful fabrics with ecclesiastical patterns.

If a brocade is woven of more than one color, you must remember that the ecclesiastical season color must dominate the whole vestment. In other words, silver and white may be used together on a white vestment provided that white is the dominant color. Similarly a green vestment may have red in it or even its orphreys may be red, provided that the green dominates the vestment as a whole. Brocade is one of the preferred fabrics for Gothic type vestments because it falls softly and drapes nicely. It also is not heavy unless it is heavily woven with metallic thread. Cloth of Gold, or that brocade made of yellow damask and heavily woven with gold metallic thread is best kept for Latin chasubles, or used to make lovely orphreys because it tends to be very stiff.

Moire faille – is an excellent fabric for vestment use when you want to use an elaborate amount of decoration. It comes in many colors and weights so that it can be used equally well for a stiff Latin chasuble or fall gracefully in a Gothic.

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It is the preferred fabric for Latin chasubles with much appliqué work in the cross on the back or front. (Example of Moire faille vestments on pages 5 and 6)

Satin – soils easily and wears out quickly, but can be used in appliqués, orphreys, or galloons.

Colors

The Church has set what we refer to as ecclesiastical colors: red, green, black, purple, white, gold, and rose. The Eastern church and Episcopalian also include blue. The church does not, however, specify the shade of these colors. The shade of the color must be considered in connection with the place of worship. A dark church needs light tones of colors, and a light interior of a church can use many of the darker tones.

White: Symbolizing purity is used for the following Masses:

1. White is used in the Offices and Masses during the Easter and Christmas seasons;
2. also on celebrations of the Lord other than of his Passion,
3. of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
4. of the Holy Angels,
5. of Saints who were not Martyrs;
6. on the Solemnities of All Saints (1 November)
7. On the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (24 June);
8. on the Feasts of Saint John the Evangelist (27 December),
9. of the Chair of Saint Peter (22 February),
10. of the Conversion of Saint Paul (25 January).



This rose cope has the “shield” hood of the Roman and Spanish style. I would classify this cope from the 17th century as rococo, and overdone. The shield color does contrast nicely with the vestment color, but it is too “busy” to go with the equally “busy” fabric. It would look nicer on a tone on tone rose fabric, or moire. If I wanted to use the fabric I would opt for the same colors, but a simpler design.

Snow white is a brilliant color, ivory white or silver white are less so. The ivory white is warmer and the silver is colder. The softer shades will work well in a well lit church, but opt for the snowy white if your church is very dark.

Black: Used for Masses of the dead

Most black fabrics are of a common shade, but life can be given to them by the use of strips of gold, or embroidery in red, yellow or other colors. The bands on them can also be gold & purple, red and purple, or purple and red, with outlines of gold. Some of the black brocades mixed with red or purple can also be used for orphreys with gold embroidery or galloon. (Notice how well the yellow and gold look on the vestment on page 5.)

Greens: Used for Masses of ordinary time, that is masses which are not particular to the seasons.

There can be any shade from moss green to forest green, and include Kelly green, emerald green, and olive green.

Reds: Used for the following Masses

1. Passion Sunday
2. Good Friday



This vestment was made by Ecclesia Designs (www.ecclesiadesigns.com). You can see the dramatic effect of using the gold lining to enhance and set off the red brocades. ⁶

3. Pentecost
4. Commemorations of the Lord's passion
5. Commemorations of the martyrdoms of the apostles the evangelists and other martyrs

Reds can be scarlet to wine, and any other shades in between.

Purple: Purple signifies penance and is used for the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Purples can be dark or pale and fall in the spectrum from red purples to blue purples. Be careful about dark violet in a dark or poorly lit church. It will appear black.

Rose: Rose may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent). If rose vestments are not available then purple is used.

You must be careful about rose however. Priests are men, and they do not like to wear pink. Be sure that the rose color is truly rose, and not just an off shade, or dark shade of pink. Rose has a small amount of purple to it, or a grayness which does not allow it to be shocking or abrasive.

Linings:

The first question is whether you should line the vestment at all. Most often the low mass, daily use vestments are not lined. But it often happens that even some of the more expensive vestments are not lined because the maker is trying to keep them light and flowing. A heavy embroidered cope will only be that much heavier with a heavy lining. A flowing Gothic chasuble will not always flow as nicely if it is heavily lined.

There are benefits to lining. The vestment will last much longer, it will not crease and crumple as much. It gives the garment a finished appearance. It hides the interior sewing of the galloons, orphrey, and appliqué work. If you choose to line then consider these rules. Gothic vestments need light thin linings to drape well. Latin vestments often need medium to heavier linings to support the piece and keep them stiff enough. Consider the vestment fabric as well. If the vestment fabric is extremely thin and light, you may need to use a heavier lining to support and strengthen it.

When choosing the color of the lining keep in mind the color of the vestment. The lining color must complement the vestment color. It could be a darker or lighter version of the same shade, but not an entirely different shade that jars with the main fabric color. Better in this case to use an entirely different color that at least complements the main color, than contradicts it. Contrasts are fine (such as a pale-green lining with a red vestment or salmon-red with dark-green, or a sulphur or straw yellow with purple. White vestments look best with vivid linings, such as blood red, copper red, slate blue, ultramarine blue. You can also use pale colors such as rose or sky blue. (See page 8 for another dramatic lining on a Humeral Veil.

The Beginner Vestment Maker

For your first vestment you should use a simple design and avoid difficult fabrics such as velvet. Likewise you should avoid any elaborate embroidery work your first time out. A good starting piece would be a



Patrick Boylan of Grace Vestments (www.gracevestments.com) designed the above chasuble and it is pictured on his web site. Both this and the antique below are maker designed orphreys. The upper used a complementary brocade with an embroidered velvet panel and galloon. The lower uses gold moire with galloon and an applique.



Gothic vestment using a tone on tone damask or brocade fabric of good quality. To this apply an ready made orphrey band and an appliqué that suits the vestment and design. This vestment could be either lined or unlined, as you choose.

Once you have learned the principles of construction, you might wish to design your own orphrey for you next vestment, such as trying a figured brocade, with a strip of contrasting velvet embroidered or appliquéd with a simple design, and then sewn down with the edges covered with galloon.

A simple Latin vestment could also be made by using a moire or tone on tone fabric and making the cross using a one inch galloon. Then apply an fitting appliqué to the center of the cross where the two arms cross. This vestment should be lined. (an example of this would be the rose vestment seen at www.vestments.homestead.com).

I sell some basic kits to get you started that include a fabric, orphrey, and pattern. You need only decide on an appliqué and lining (if desired).

Experienced Vestment Makers

Experienced Vestment Makers will want to try more elaborate designs. They may want to do some involved embroidery or appliqué work, inventing their own orphrey. The important thing here is that they worker be expert in the technique she is employing.

If you are going to make your own orphrey, decide on the width you will need and the fabric. Lay it out on paper and draw it to actual size. If it will be embroidered or appliquéd check the placement of the pieces. I make up my pieces on sheets of paper the actual size that they will appear. I often color them to get an idea of what colors will go best together and with what fabrics. (see page 23 for an example).

A question has come up with modern convenience and the new embroidery sewing machines. Is it permissible or should the embroidery work and appliqué be done by hand? By all means do whatever you are capable of doing with whatever machine fits the job. There is nothing wrong with doing the embroidery with a sewing machine capable of doing it, provided that you also are capable of programming it to do the work properly. Again it comes down to being expert in the technique you employ. How do you become expert? Practice. You don't need to begin by practicing on an elaborate orphrey. Start with a simple design, and work up to something harder. Remember it is not how elaborate the work is that makes it beautiful, but its texture, richness of color, and proportion. More often then not, it is the most simple designs that are the most beautiful.

Make your own Orphrey

This orphrey band is made from a navy blue satin brocade that has very small gold fleur d'lys upon it. A priest commissioned me to make a Marian vestment with an appliqué that had the Blessed Virgin that he used on his ordination card. This was a photo of Our Lady of Paris, which is a statue in Notre Dame Cathedral. I decided the overall design would be French. Father approved the fabric which was a pure white tone on tone brocade covered with a regular pattern of fleur d'lys set in diamond panes. The panes were about 2 inches by 1 ½ inches. I knew the small gold fleur d'lys on the

navy would go well with it. Father had also chosen a Gothic style of vestment. I took a yard of the navy brocade and cut it in long strips about 4 inches wide. I used the pattern on the fabric to as a guide to make sure they were absolutely an even width overall. I needed 4 yards but I prepared six yards in strips. I used stabilizer to reinforce the strips for embroidery and I embroidered the large fleur d'lys on them. You can use an iron on stabilizer for

this. Cut the stabilizer to the exact width that the finished band will be, and iron it down leaving the seam allowance without stabilizer. Then I placed the strips on my cut out pieces of white brocade to check their width and to mark on them where I wanted the appliqués. I wanted the appliqués equidistant, but I did not want to put any where the bands crossed and where I would put the larger appliqué of Our Lady. I put a pin in the center of the spot where each Fleur d'lys would go. The small pattern on the bands helped me to place them all very exactly, but if there had been no pattern I would just make a template, or else measure exactly from pin to pin.

When I began doing the embroidery on these bands, I first appliquéd a metallic gold and beige fabric in the shape of the fleur d'lys and then I embroidered on top of this with metallic gold thread covering the edges and satin stitching shading inside to give it a 3 dimensional effect. The pins helped me to place each embroidery exactly. I used an embroidery sewing machine and used the pin mark as the center point of the hoop. Hand embroidery would work the same way.

When all the appliqués where finished, I turned over the seam allowance on each side



of the band. The stabilizer helped make the edge crisp and gave it a finished edge. I sewed it down with a matching thread. The edges could then have been covered with galloon, but I felt that the large appliqué of the Virgin together with the appliquéd fleur d'lys would be more than enough. Simplicity of design, even though the work itself was elaborate, it did not appear to be so. Galloon or gold edging on the chasuble would only have detracted from the other lovely embroideries.

Putting down Galloon, Orphreys and Appliqués

As mentioned in the design section above, use galloon to separate two similar colors, or to make a demarcation line between the orphrey and the main fabric, or to give the vestment a unity and completeness, but don't just use it just because you can. Always consider the whole design and the effect. When you do use it, it must be applied so that it is firmly attached, and is absolutely straight.

Beware of puckers when sewing down either the orphrey or the galloon. If you are using the galloon to form the cross on the back of a Latin vestment, the same applies. Make sure it is secure, and straight, without puckers.

How do you do this? There are several methods. Pick the one that is most comfortable for you. If you enjoy hand sewing, baste everything down. Pinning them in place first is a must, but don't count on everything being straight and without puckers if you just pin. Velvet especially shifts because of the nap, but because you are sewing multiple layers, and the galloon is often thick and slippery, things will slide or shift to one side or the other, often the tension on your sewing machine will pull them so that when you finish everything is just a little off. No, everything has to be well secured before you begin to sew with the machine. If you plan to do everything by hand, then by all means pin and sew, but there is nothing harder on the fingers than hand sewing heavy metallic galloons.

I have found, (again using modern notions found in fabric shops items not available to previous generations of vestment makers) a little item called "stitch witchery" and another called "unique stitch". The first is nothing more than a roll of fusible web, the same kind used in fabric appliqué, but pre-cut into strips of widths from 1/8 to 1". I like 1/2 inch for 5/8 inch seam allowances, and use the 1/4 for 3/8 inch seam allowances. I use stitch witchery for anything I want to basted down. This includes orphreys, galloons, and appliqués. The unique stitch is a fabric glue, and I use it only for velvet, and will discuss that later in the velvet section.

For example, to apply the cross galloon to the front of a Latin vestment, I would first cut and pin the galloon in place. When everything is as I wish it, I begin to unpin small sections of it (don't iron it with the pins in it even if you are using glass headed pins, it will make puckers where the pin was.) Then I slip a small piece of the stitch witchery underneath, and press it in place. The heat of the iron melts the webbing, and bonds the galloon to the fabric.

Warning:

- 1. check that your iron is set on a heat setting that both the galloon and the fabric will tolerate. If it is a fabric that can't be ironed use the unique stitch glue to baste them together.
- 2. Don't let the stitch witchery come out from behind the fabric and stick to your iron. It will be messy, and put glue on your fabric.
- 3. While the pieces are still hot lift them up from the ironing surface. Sometimes the glue will go through the fabric and adhere the fabric to the ironing surface as well. Just get in the habit of - press, wait a second, and lift, move to a new spot, place web, iron, wait, lift, etc.

Wait a moment for the pieces to cool (they must cool somewhat to stick), and check for adhesion. If not stuck together, reheat. Iron doesn't have to be very hot, but it can't be cool either. Even a synthetic setting will work. Fabrics that can take steam will get a better adhesion if you use it on the lowest setting.

Once you have the beginning of your galloon or orphrey stuck in place, you can remove more pins and continue around your cross. Because the piece before it is stuck in place, you can even put a little tension on the galloon or orphrey to make sure they are smooth and in line.

This product works well with appliqués that are done on felt or some other fabric and then sewn down completely on the vestment. Just use some of the stitch witchery behind them, and press them in place first. They will stay very well without shifting at all, while you sew them down with a sewing machine afterward.

Putting it Together

Cutting

Lay out your pieces on the fabric. If you don't have it you could go to my web site www.sewvestments.com and download the [Guide to Layout and Cutting](#). It is free.

Make sure that if there is a pattern in the fabric that it lines up symmetrically. The best way to do this is fold the fabric in half exactly down on pattern and fold your pattern piece for front (do the same with back after) in half and place it on the fold. Remember that with patterned fabric you will need to buy extra fabric for this very reason, to keep the patterns straight and symmetrical. Once you have the front and back placed, place your stole pieces, maniple, veil, and burse pieces wherever there is room for them. With the veil, it is also important the pattern is symmetrical, if you have enough fabric try to get the patterns on all the pieces symmetrical as well. After you have cut your main fabric, without removing the pattern pieces, cut your lining as well.

Pressing

Always press all seams as you go. Either press them open, or when called for press them flat. Most of the time they will be pressed open.

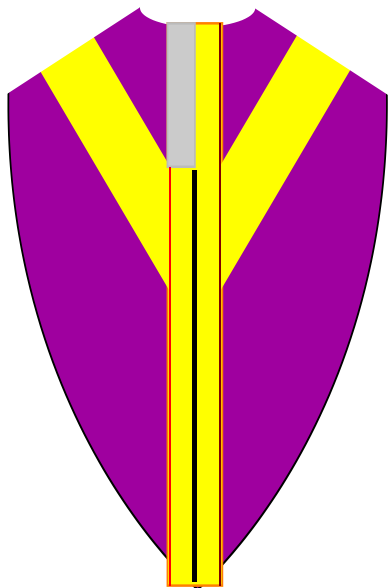
Gothic Chasuble

Each half is made up separately, applying any decoration to the right side. The front of the chasuble may have a seam line that is covered by an orphrey. This is only when the neck opening is not cut large enough to go over the head easily and an opening is put in (similar to the opening in the side of a skirt) using a placket. This opening is then disguised by the orphrey.

Sew this seam up to the beginning of the opening. Apply your orphrey to the front now and any galloon to the edges. One side of the front orphrey can be sew completely, the other side can only be sew to the beginning of the opening. You can stay stitch the neck opening within the seam allowance if you wish.

The red lines on the drawing are the seam lines sewing down the orphrey. The Black line is the seam line connecting the two front halves. It is actually under the orphrey, but I put in on top to show you how to make the placket. Notice the red line on the right side of the orphrey is sewn top to bottom. The center seam and the left side orphrey are sewn only to the beginning of the neck opening. The lining on the right side stops at the center seam line (plus 5/8 seam allowance), but you need it to go all the way to the other side of the orphrey (the gray area). Cut a piece of lining fabric the size of this gray area plus 5/8 seam allowance on all sides. Turn under the seam allowance on three sides, but not on the left long side. and press it. Sew the un-turned seam allowance to the seam allowance on the lining, right side together. (Similarly if you don't have the lining cut out you could just add the piece to the lining and then cut it out, but it works out this way just

as nicely especially since you never know exactly how wide your orphrey will be.



Sew the back of the chasuble to the front right sides together at the shoulder seams. Press all seams open.

Do the lining the say way. Sew the seam up the front to the opening, press it open. Sew the shoulder seams and press them open as well. Now with right sides together, put the lining and the main piece together, matching seams at shoulder and front. Pin around the bottom edges. Machine baste it. Check it's fall and then machine stitch it.

When you have turned it right side out, make sure that you have it turned all the way to the stitching line and press it to be sure it stays that way. If you applying a galloon trim around the edge, you can pin it in place, baste or stitch witch it, and top stitch it after you have made sure that everything is falling as it should.

The placket you made for the closing should meet the edges of the orphrey when they are folded in (you already pressed them in place). Sew the bottom to the lining, and top stitch the long

edge of the opening. Close the top when you close the neck opening.

To close the neck you can either bind it, or press the seam allowance to the inside and put both sides together and top stitch.

You may wish to make some invisible hand stitches tacking the lining to the shoulder at several places.

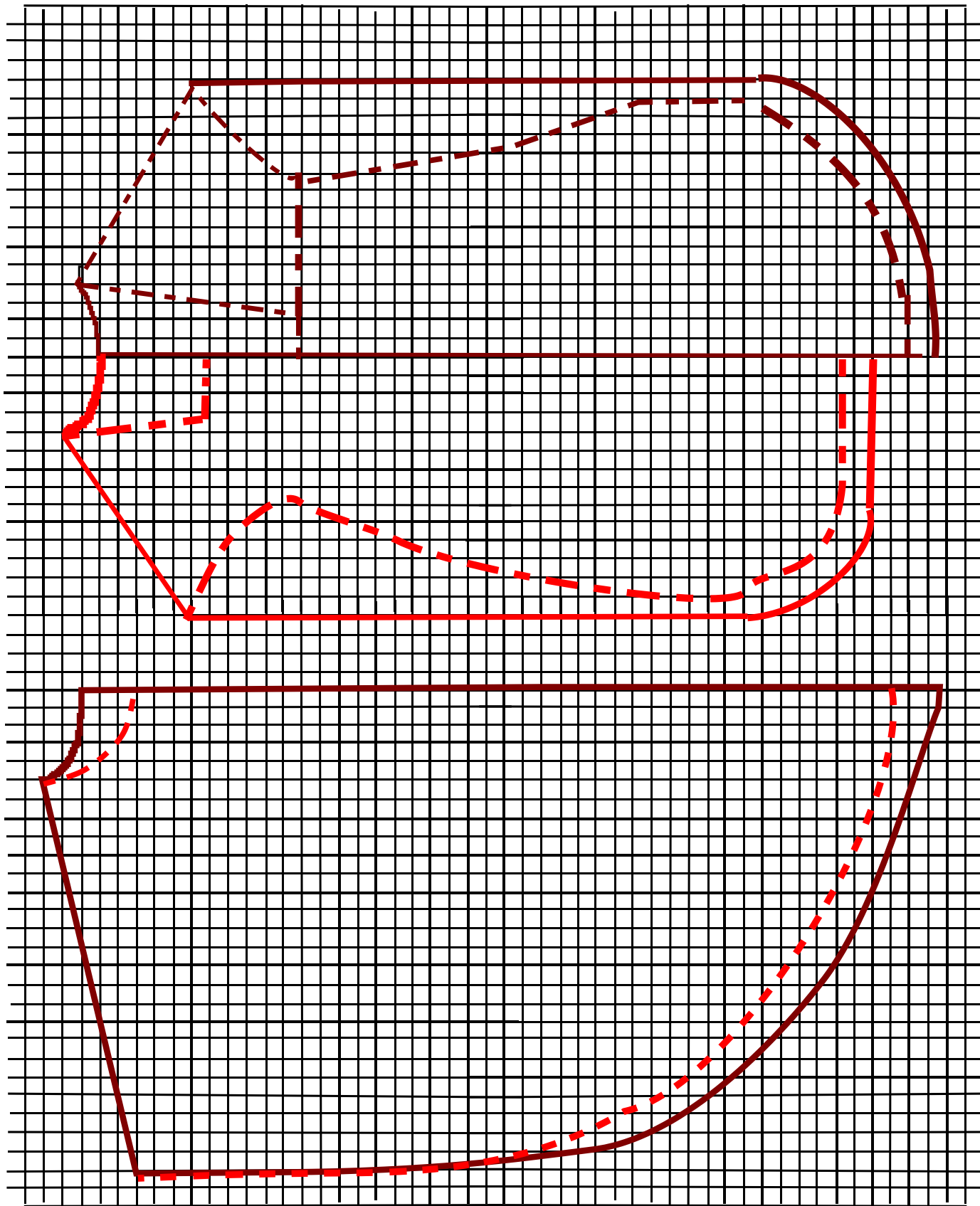
Latin Chasuble.

As with the Gothic you will prepare the main fabric, make the pattern symmetrical if there is one, and do your embellishments and cross or columns on the front and back.

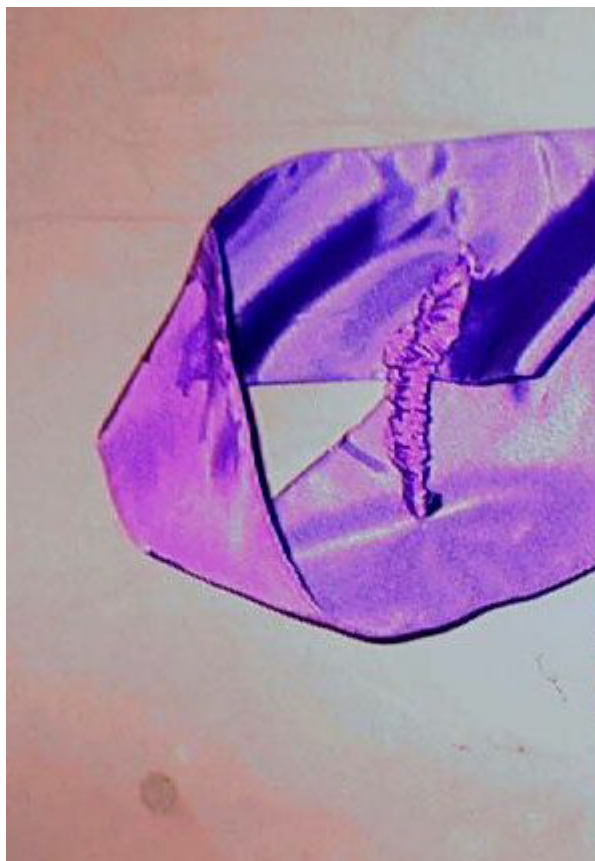
The Latin chasuble usually has some kind of interlining to give it a stiffness. You can use pre-shrunk linen, or one of the modern pellon type or iron on type of interlining. Don't use buckram. It should be cut to the exact size of the finished piece (no seam allowance). You can then attach it by basting at the edges, ironing it down, or use a temporary spray adhesive like the kind they use for quilting, and spray it and then stick it in place leaving the seam allowance free.

The Spanish, French and Belgium styles that have shoulder seams can be done in a similar manner to the Gothic, sewing up the shoulder seams and then doing both pieces right sides together, and sewing the outer edges. Turn inside out (this is a bit tricky but manageable with the interlining) and then similarly bind or turn and topstitch the neck opening.

The Roman chasuble that goes over the shoulder and connects to the shortened front at the chest is done in a slightly different manner. You do the back as one piece sewing down the lining and turning it as one piece and the front as one piece also with lining and turned. Then fold in the seam allowance on the upper front edge and press it in place. Tuck the two "wings" of the back that connect to it inside this pocket. Pin them in place and check that everything is as it should be. Make adjustments now. When everything is correct just sew across the galloon top stitching everything together. Alternatively you could top stitch everything and



Gothic and Latin Chasubles (Spanish & Roman) -- Solid line back, dotted line front



then sew the galloon down, but that puts more stitches on the inside than is necessary.

Where the stitching is on the inside you may also attach the long tapes the priest uses to tie it in place. Measure the priest for these tapes when he is in both his cassock and alb, or else measure the tapes of a vestment that fits him comfortably.

Stole and Maniple

Again decorate, sew the top seam connecting the front to the back. Sew the cross on the seam line. (In the Machine Embroidery section of the web site there are some downloadable designs you can use if you have a machine embroidery sewing machine. If not you can do them by hand or buy an appliqué. Put right sides together with the lining and sew the side seams, but not the bottoms. Turn right side out. Turn the bottoms in and press in place. Attach the fringe or tassels by placing the fringe edge inside this pocket and topstitch over all, closing everything neatly. Alternatively you could topstitch the fringe on the outside, but it doesn't look as well, to my way of thinking.

The Maniple needs a loop of elastic hand sewn in (if you did not sew it into the seam which you could have done) This keeps it in place and the front needs to be tacked to the back about 8 inches down on one side.

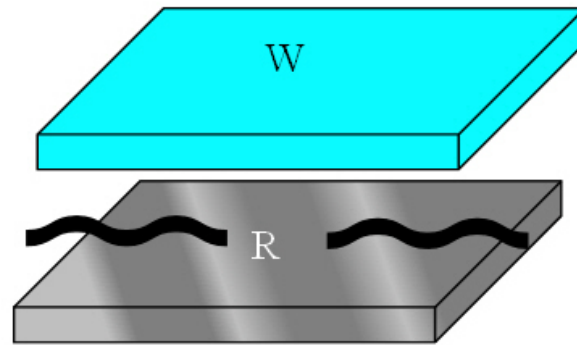
My own method to accomplish both of these items is to make a tube of lining fabric a little wider than the elastic that I am going to put inside it and about 4 ½ to 5 inches long. I turn in one end of the tube about 3/8 inches. I then cut a piece of elastic about 3 ½ inches to 4 inches long. I put the elastic in the tube and sew it across a little in from the end of the turned edge. I do the same thing with the other end. Since the casing is bigger than the elastic it is gathered up a little over the elastic. I then stitch one end to the center of each side of the manipule about 8 inches down. This connects the front to the back, but also gives it the elastic that catches the alb and cassock material and stays in place. It is also easy to on and off. (see photo above)

The chalice veil is again decorated, and then pinned right sides together and sewed around the edges leaving an opening in the back edge about 4 inches long. Turn it right sides out. Press and finish the opening by hand or by top stitching all around the edge.

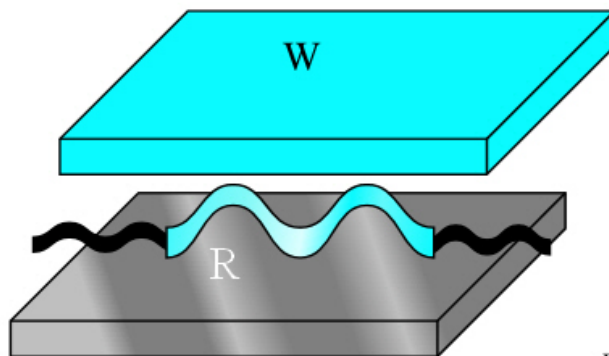
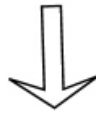
The Burse is a bit complicated. Before you begin you need to cut two pieces of matte board (the type used for pictures) about 1/8 " less than the size of the finished burse. Make two tapes by making two tubes of lining and turning them right side out. These tubes should be about ½ inch wide when finished and 3 inches long (this allows ½ inch seam allowance on both ends. Ribbon can also be used.

Step 1: Put one side of the burse right right side up on a work table. If there is a front to the design that should be facing away from you. Put the ribbons or tubes of cloth down on the right side of this fabric at the center sides. Their edges will get sewn into the side seams. Put the lining right side down on top and pin the edges together and sew around the top and sides, but not the side facing you.

Step 2: Turn right side out and press. Now make a new sandwich. Put the other burse fabric down right side up. Put the entire other piece of burse and ribbons on top of this, but only the un sewn ends of the ribbons get put at the side seams. The good fabric should be facing the good fabric and the lining up. The open end should

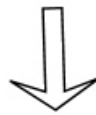


Step 1



Step 2

First



be toward you. Pin this sandwich together enclosing everything inside. You should now have the lining with the ribbons on the sides and the other half of the burse bunched up in the middle and covered by the top fabric of this side of the burse.

Sew around the edges but not the end near you. The only thing from the other sandwich that should get sewn is the ribbons in the side seams. Turn everything right side out. You should have two pockets connected by the ribbons. The ribbons are neatly sewn into the side seams. The top of the burse should be the open ends. The linings should be facing each other on the inside and the good fabric the outside. If all is correct. Slip the matte board into the two pockets. Fold lining to the inside but not over the matte board on both sides. Put the back and front together and hand stitch with an overcast stitch the lining front to the lining back along the edge. Now fold in the seam allowance on the good fabric to the inside but not too tight and hand stitch the front to the back. The tapes are folded to the inside of the burse and kept there with the burse closed.

Dalmatic and Tunicle

These garments are very much alike. Sometimes the Dalmatic is made with the front like the Spanish Latin chasuble while the Tunicle is the squared type. (See photos page 7) Sometimes both are exactly the same, and sometimes the only difference between them is a second band on the Dalmatic. Most often the sides and undersides of the sleeves of them both are left open. There are usually some ties to keep them in place, yet others

have real sleeves. I will discuss the open style. Originally the shoulders were not sewn but laced together with tasseled cords. That is seldom seen these days, but could still be done if you desire. I don't suggest that for the beginning vestment maker.

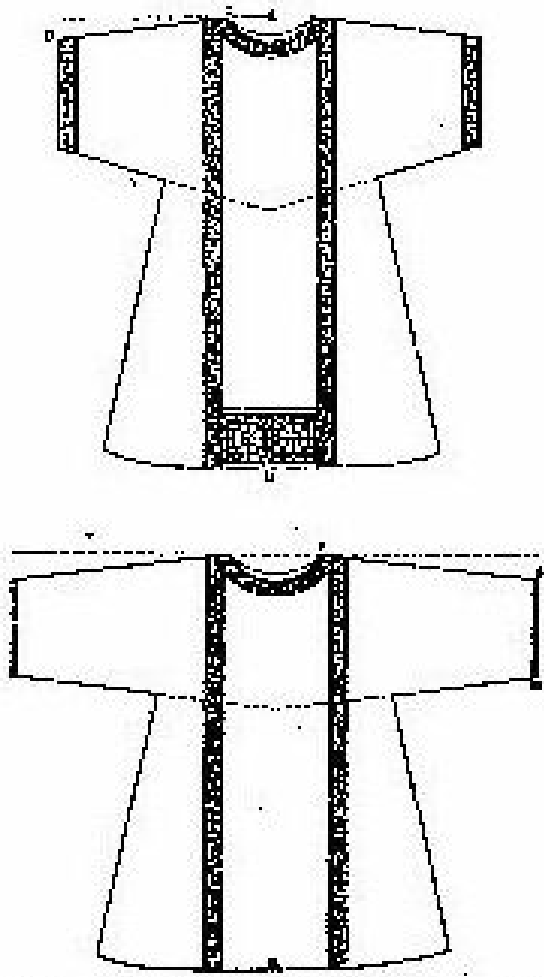
When not identical the Tunicle may have shorter and rather less elaborate decoration than the Dalmatic, but with longer lightly tighter sleeves. (See diagram).

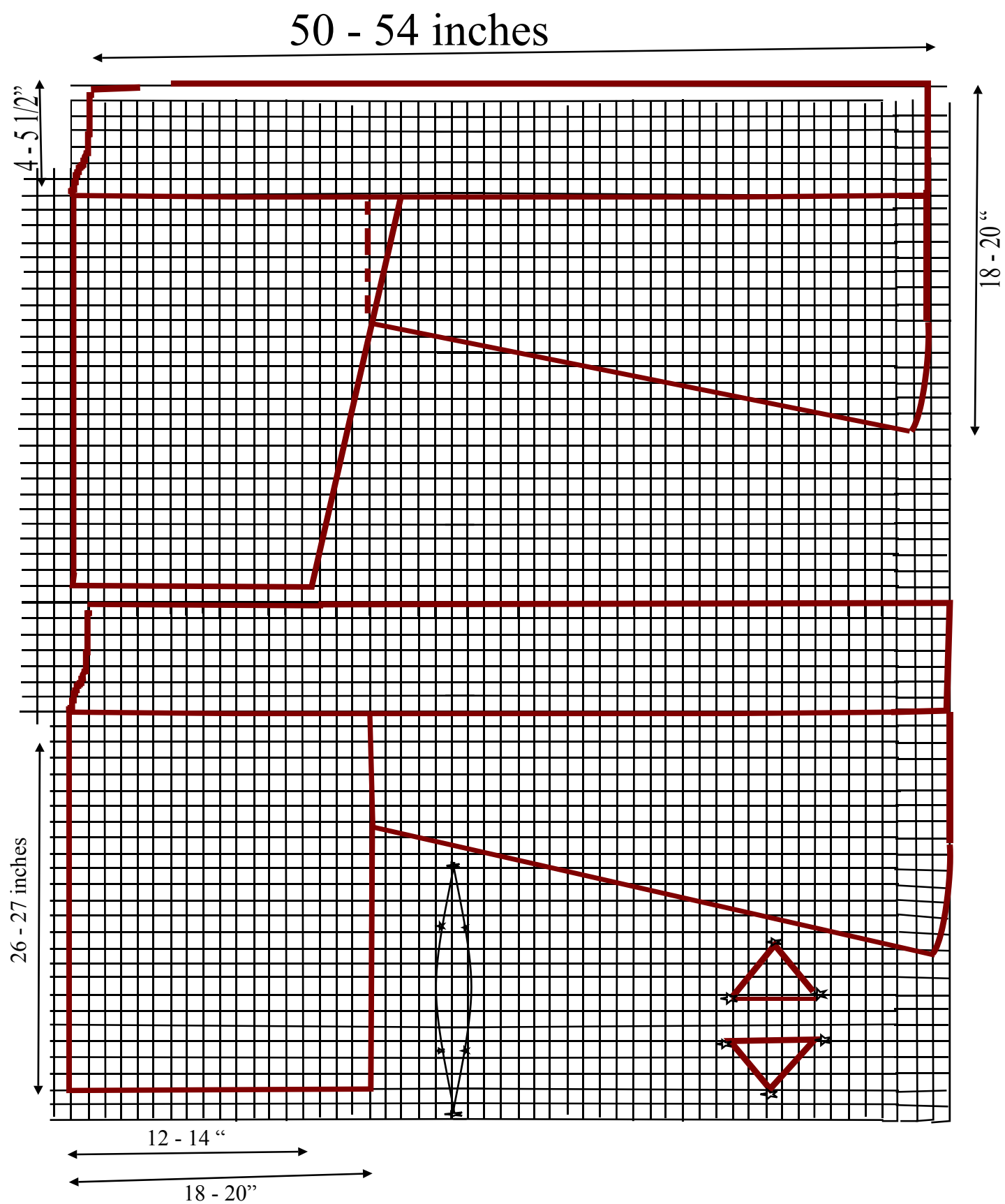
The garments can be cut as one piece, or two side pieces and a center piece. This is because the two clavi (orphreys) will cover the seam lines.

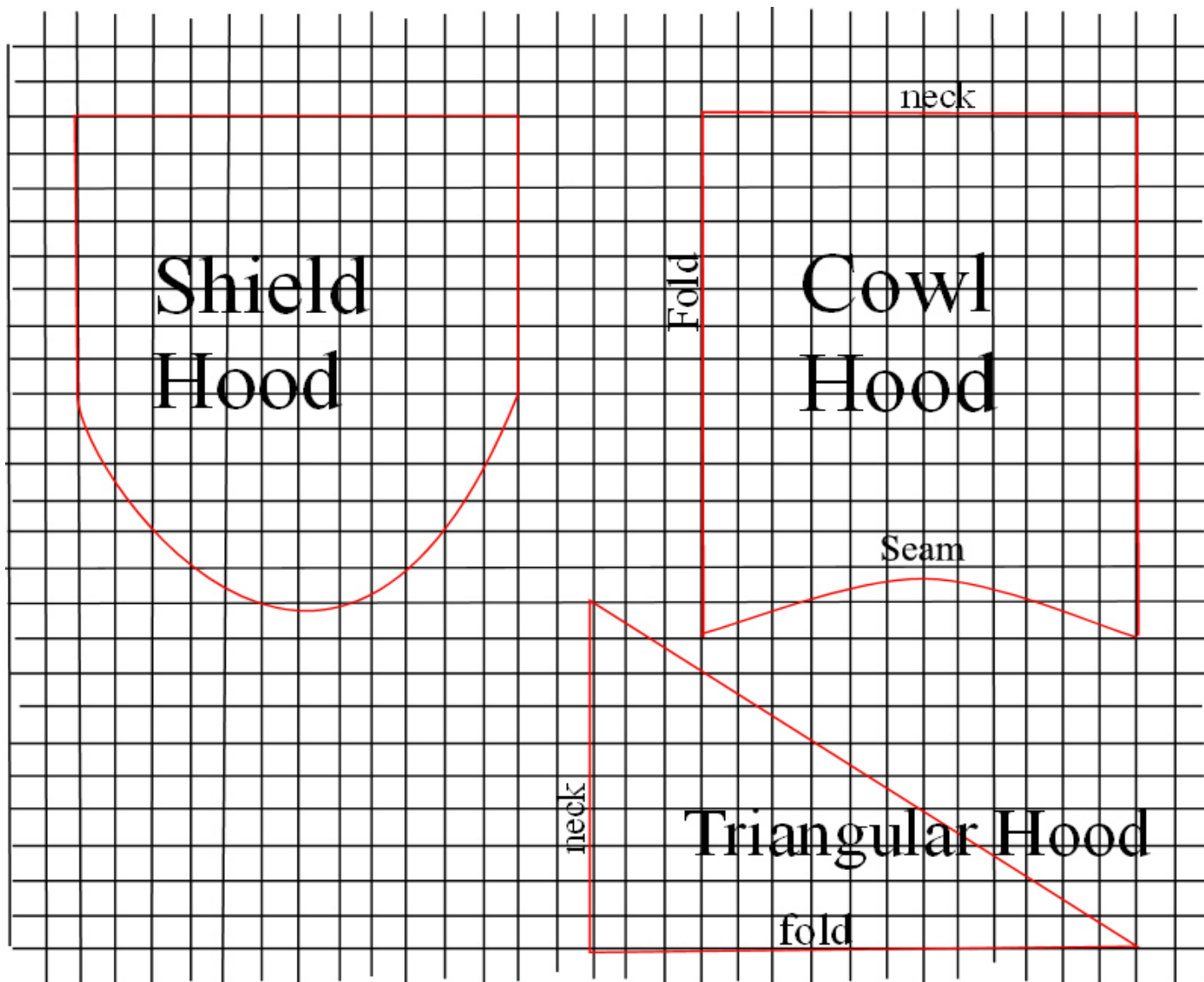
The garments are simple to construct. Right sides together sew left and right sides to center front, and repeat with center back. Repeat with lining if any. Cover seams with orphrey and connecting bands. Right sides sew shoulder seams.

The neck opening has a gusset that should be sewn on both sides right sides together. Press all seams open. Put lining right sides together on top of vestment fabric and sew around all edges except neck. Turn right sides out and press edges. To keep garment in place, do any of the following. Sew the two ends of the bottom inch of the sleeves together, and/or sew tapes under the arm on both sides. Sew tapes inside like you do with the roman vestment if you find it necessary.

Close the neck in the usual manner as for the other vestments. Neck edge can then be covered with galloon if you desire.





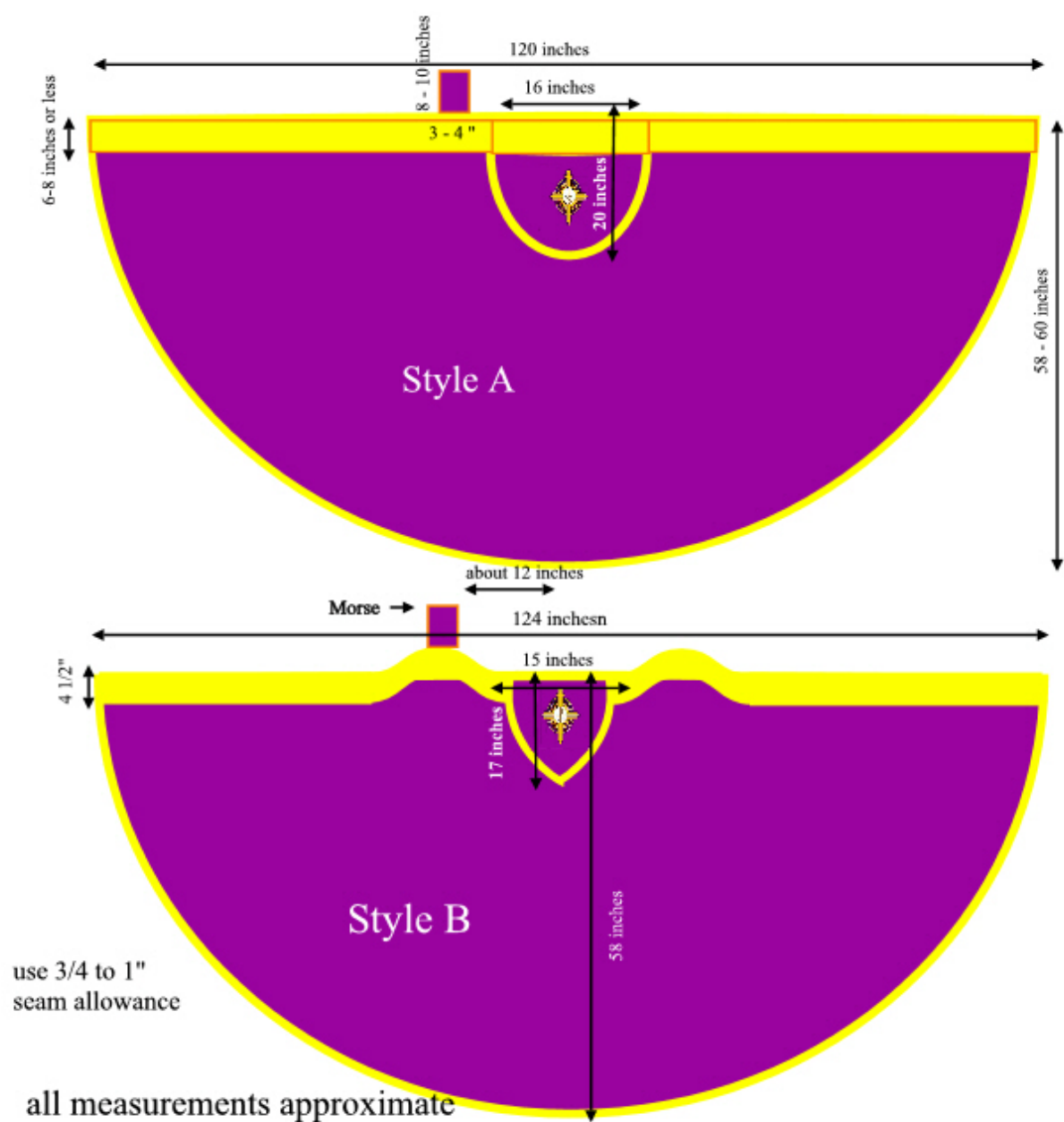


Cope:

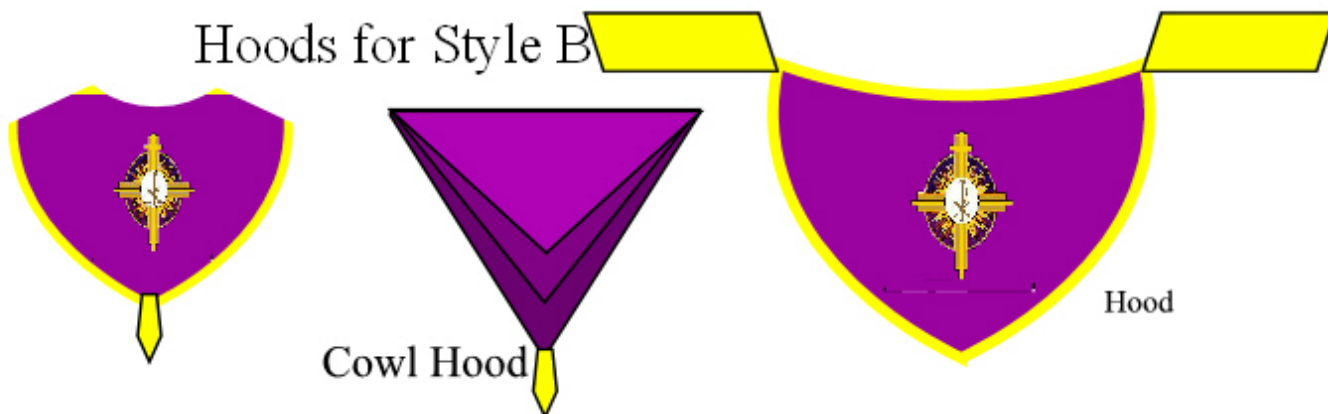
"In practice, when drafting the pattern for a cope, the center of the semicircle is taken 3 or 4 inches above the straight edge of the orphrey."^⑤

The orphrey used to be as much as 8 inches wide, but is not so anymore. An interlining is seldom used unless the fabric needs more substance. It is essential that the cope fall in nice folds. Use a good seam allowance (as much as 1"). Cut and prepare the morse first, if you are using one. The morse is a rectangular piece of fabric that is used as a closure. It is found primarily on the heavy older copes especially those with shield hoods. The newer copes which are lighter (type b) may have a morse or a clasp and chain. Cut the morse 6 to 8 inches long. It may be embroidered and jeweled. The length must be adjusted so that the cope does not poke at the back of the neck, and the bottom fronts hang parallel and do not overlap. Sew on firmly three large eyes to the end, and slip-stitch the lining to the back. When finished the morse will be stitched to the cope at the edge of the orphrey on the wearer's right hand side, about 12 inches down from the center. Three large hooks are attached to the corresponding position on the left-hand side.

Place the cut and decorated fabric with its orphreys intact right side up on a flat surface, and place the lining right side down on it. I like it if the fabric is about one inch longer than necessary on the rounded edge, and

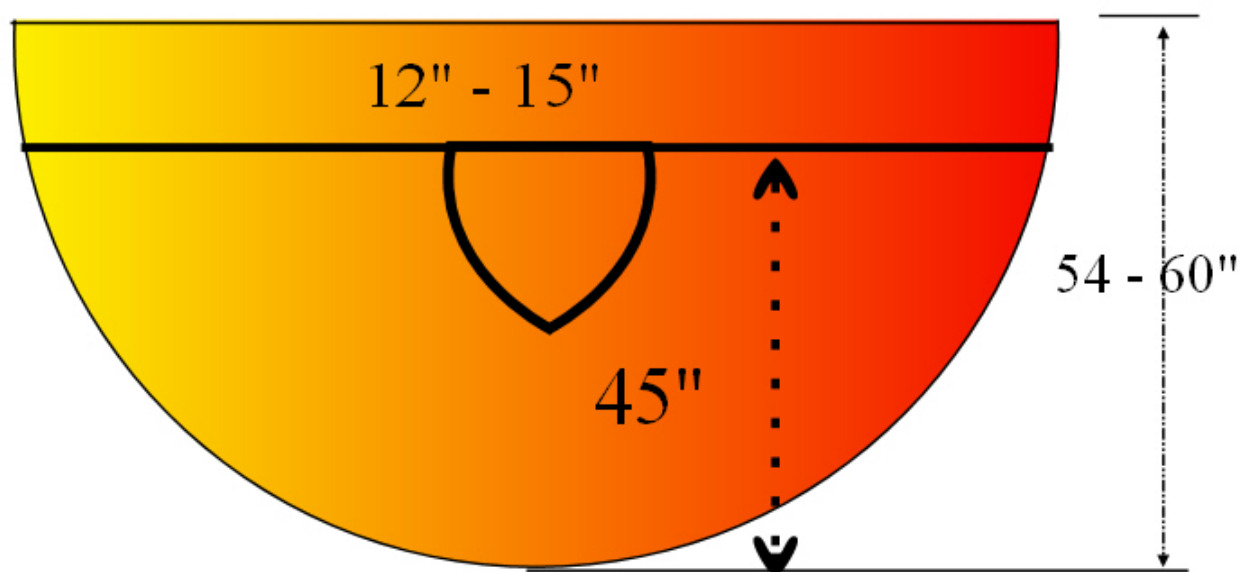


Hoods for Style B

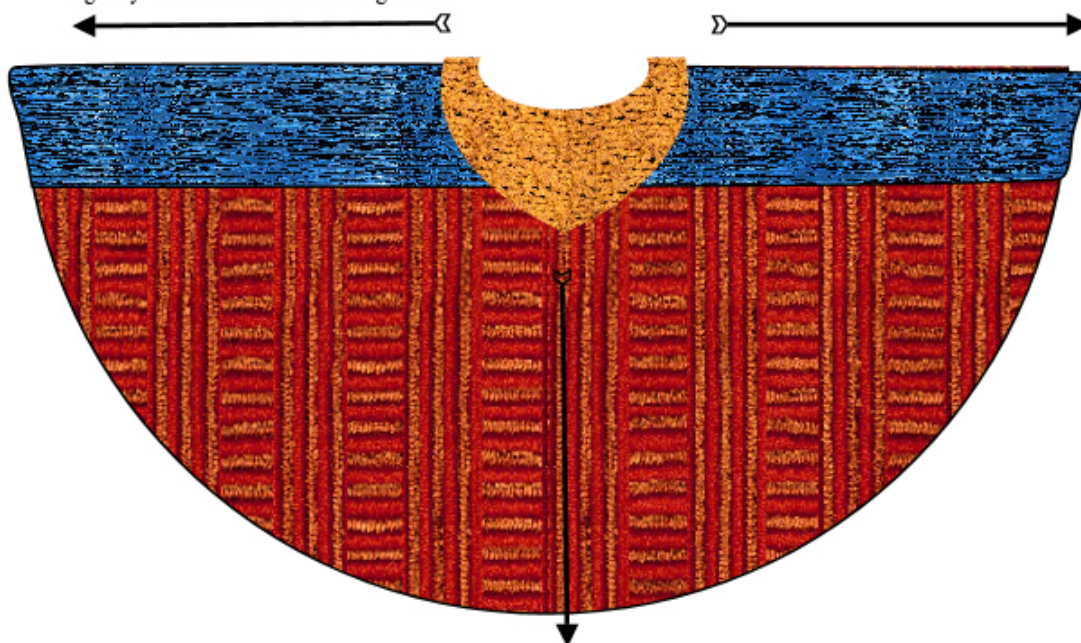


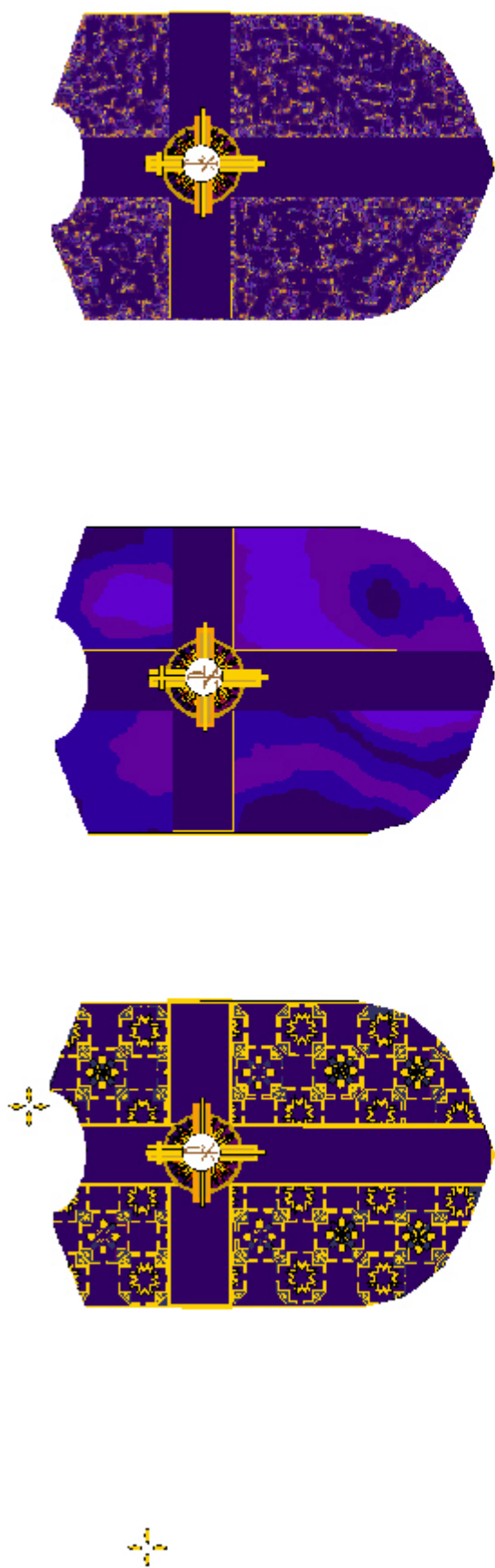
Fabric layout for copes if not using 54 - 60" fabric

Use a narrow piece of the fabric at the front edges and neck. If a roman cope, (shield type) attach the hood at the seam line and then cover all the seams with galloon.



If making a gothic cope (cut out neck with hood), do the same thing as for the gothic, only run your orphrey pieces in the directions of the arrows. If necessary you can separate the left and right and hide the seam under the hood) If there is a back orphrey it would run in the direction of the back arrow. Again you can cover seams with galloon.





You can use computer drawing programs to help design your vestments and get an idea of what it would look like on different fabrics. You can even download fabrics into some programs. Or copy the picture of the fabric and paste it into your picture. Which of these fabrics would you use for this applique? The first is a very “busy” brocade the second is a moire solid color. The third is a more subtle brocade.

the lining about 1 inch shorter. Then when the two are joined together this will pull the extra inch of fabric to the inside and there will be no lining sagging to the outside to show. You will sew the round edge first, then match the straight edge. Centers meeting at center. Sew leaving hood section of neck open. Turn. Attach hood and do neck in one of the approved manners described elsewhere in this article.

Hood: the hood can be shaped in various ways. In fact there are some copes that have a “false” hood. That is there is a fringe sewed to the fabric to give the appearance of a hood. The inside of this is decorated as you would a real hood, but there really is not one. I have a cope that is over 125 years old that has no hood, only a very elaborate decorative back, that gives a slight appearance like a hood. There are cowl hoods, pointed hoods with tassels, shield hoods (which are joined farther down from the neck below the orphrey).

The cope can be too stiff and unwieldy if the hood is over-large and the orphrey too wide. The neck can be curved in for as much as 4 inches giving it a much more pleasing appearance and more comfort for the wearer.

Velvet Fabric

As I mentioned, velvet fabric must be treated in a different manner because of its nap. I have yet to find anything that will sew velvet without it moving. I have used walking-feet, velvet feet, roller feet, etc on my sewing machine without success. Yet I love the play of color and the gentle draping of silk velvet, so I had to find a way. The answer was the “unique stitch” glue.

When you are applying galloon or orphrey to velvet, glue it first. You can’t press stitch witchery because it flattens the nap (unless you have a needle board for pressing). Be sparing with glue. A dot or two is sufficient. You only need to keep it from moving. Make sure that you are gluing the galloon or orphrey to the backing fabric and not the top of the nap which will still let it move. Apply pressure to make sure that the nap flattens and the glue goes to the backing and sticks it to the trim which you are applying.

The best method I found to attach the lining to velvet was discovered when I took an old vestment apart for repair. The lining was cut with a seam allowance of about 3/8 to 1/2 inch. The velvet fabric and stablizer backing had no seam allowance, but were cut to the exact size of the finished piece. The lining was laid wrong side up and the velvet was laid wrong side down, right side up on top of it. The seam allowance was then folded over the front velvet fabric and pressed (if you have one of those very small craft irons). Basted, or as I do, glued down around the edges on the right side. This was then covered with a 1/2 inch or 3/4 inch galloon which was also basted, or glued to cover this raw edge, and then top stitched on both edges of the galloon.

Conclusion

I hope that I have given you enough information so that you can begin to design and make your own traditional Latin or Gothic vestments. If there is something that you don’t understand, (it is not always easy to explain with words something that your hands are used to doing), please do not hesitate to write me. I would also enjoy seeing pictures of your finished garments.

Sources for Materials

Fabric and trims can be bought from any good quality fabric shop, ebay, or vestment supply house. I sell some fabric on my web site from worldwide fabric houses that I am able to get at better than average prices for ecclesiastical brocades. Other places are Almy, LaLame and Istok. Almy and LaLame have beautiful fabrics and trims designed especially for vestments, but they are very, very expensive. Istok sells beautiful Russian brocades, and silks. They work through Canada. Obviously they tend to eastern rite styles and patterns, but many of them are suitable for use in western vestments. They are very economical considering the quality of their fabric and that it is usually pure silk and often metallic threaded. They do not have much in the way of galloon. The galloon I offer comes from a company that only allows 5 yard minimum orders, but since you need 7 yards minimum for any galloon work, that is not a problem. I also have access to 9 yard rolls of beauti-

ful 1” metallic gold galloon from India for a very reasonable price. I do not stock any of these materials, but will sell them to you and have the company that manufactures or distributes them send them to you direct. Because I buy many of these items from other countries I include the shipping cost in the price of the item. The price quoted is the price you pay.

I make my own appliques and can copy anything that I have a photocopy of to work from. This way I can replace missing parts to vestment sets and have them match the original. An example is the humeral veil seen at www.vestments.homestead.com. Afterward I sell other copies of these vestment appliques on my website. If you have a particular applique or design you want copied or made for a vestment, I can do this custom work. I prefer to do the applique work and let other do the actual vestment sewing.

Thank you for your interest in this subject and art form.

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① or·phrey [áwrfree] (plural or·phreys) or or·fray [áwrfree] (plural or·frays) noun sewing elaborate embroidery: elaborate embroidery, often done in gold [13th century. Via Old French orfreis from, ultimately, medieval Latin aurifrigium , literally “Phrygian gold.”] In vestments it signifies the often elaborately embroidered column or cross in the center of the chasuble. It can however be any wide decorated band.

② Vestments and Vesture, Dom E. A. Roulin, O.S.B., Sands and Co., London, 1931, p. 68

②③ Galloon \Gal*loon\", n. [From F. or Sp. galon. See Gala.] 1. A narrow tapelike fabric used for binding hats, shoes, etc., -- sometimes made ornamental. 2. A similar bordering or binding of rich material, such as gold lace. A galloon is a trim which can be any width. It is flat, and used usually as a border. Narrow ribbon can be considered a galloon.

④ Vestments and Vesture, Dom E. A. Roulin, O.S.B., Sands and Co., London, 1931, p. 92

⑤ Ecclesiastical Embroidery, Beryl Dean, Branford Company, Boston, 1958, p. 230

6. Photo with permission of Ecclesia Designs: www.ecclesiadesigns.com

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