Wren ★ Feathers

Summer Sew Along: Medieval Europe
Week 3: Tunic

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I assume you have basic sewing knowledge and the explanation should suffice, but if you need help please email me!

Quarter inch seams are allowed except where otherwise specified

Model is a Sasha Gregor 312
This week, we’re adding to our medieval outfit with the tunic! 
This versatile garment is also suitable for making a girl’s dress! (see p.3)

In our ongoing study of how creative medieval people were with gussets, we have this tunic. As a weaver, I LOVE it, because it lets you use narrow cloth to its best advantage with clever piecing and sewing. In contrast to the famous “bog jackets,” which do use narrow fabric well, but are boxy and not always flattering (see what I mean here: https://www.pinterest.co.kr/pin/426223552204242253/), the triangle gussets allow for a circular-bottomed skirt with lovely fullness and drape. The sleeves are likewise tapered for better fit AND this could have allowed extra fabric for small triangular gussets.

This is my idea of how it could be laid out on the fabric (not to scale). We are so used to working with commercially-produced 45”-60” wide fabric with tons of scraps left over, but this shows it’s quite possible to produce a garment from narrow fabric with little waste. At human scale, making this from 24” wide fabric and assuming wide seams of about an inch still gives a 40” chest measurement on the finished garment. And if you’re a weaver who wants to make their own fabric for this doll tunic, go for it! It will probably only take you as long as making a scarf! 😊
Important notes:

- If you are lengthening for a girl, you probably don’t want the bottom edge of the gussets any wider than they are. Use the bottom of the triangle for a guide, decide how tall it needs to be and draw a new, taller one using that measurement as your top point like this:

- If you’re sewing for a doll taller than Sasha or with a lower waist, you’ll want to lower where you put the triangular gussets – just hold the pattern pieces up against the doll to decide where they go. For a boy, you can easily just cut off the triangles at the bottom as shown below; the hem of your tunic will be less full than mine, which is not much of a problem actually since this one is REALLY full.

- My wool was quite thick, so I used a .25” seam allowance and tidied the seams with pinking shears. If you’re using linen, you might prefer to add extra seam allowance and do French seams throughout.
If you’re using trim, you can hem the sleeves to the outside and cover with trim. Sew in place by hand, hiding your stitches between a row of warp threads if possible.

Check out week 1 for more info on my dragon bands! As it turned out, the band was quite thick and you can see it made the tunic not want to fall into nice folds at the bottom.

If you don’t want to weave trim, please check these links for a simple sewn trim or a variety of easy braids that would be appropriate:
- https://mittelalter-moehre.de/maschinennaeh-te-verstecken
- https://nokkvidr.wordpress.com/make-it/braiding/

Note that the center front seam I put in is not necessarily authentic. You can choose to omit it and cut on the fold instead, just note that it will be much more challenging to insert the front gusset.
Yes, you could cut a facing like I did. OR you could roll in a narrow hem on the center front seam where you’d like the slit to fall and then turn the neckline hem out and cover with trim, which is what I originally planned, thinking my band would not turn out as bulky as it did. If you’re not using a band, you can turn the neckline inside and do a narrow rolled hem by hand, but my wool was on the thick side and not fulled all that well, hence why I did what I did.
Start your triangle inserts AT THE BOTTOM and stop sewing when you hit the upper seam.
Your flatwoven trim will likely not lie flat along a curved hemline. Sew the bottom edge first, steam in place with an iron and then sew the top layer by hand, gathering and easing into place as you do so. The original would not have opened in the back, just pulled over the head. For a back finish I recommend either binding with bias or creating narrow bands as you did in the undershirt from week 1.
You can see here how the heavyweight band makes the skirt stand out if you don’t purposely arrange it into folds.
Quarter inch seams allowed on all pieces
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Wren☆ Feathers
Medieval Tunic
for 16” dolls like Sasha
(c) 2020 Jennie Bagrowski
Back cut 2
**You may want to add extra for facing at back edge**

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Medieval Tunic
for 16” dolls like Sasha
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Sleeve cut 2 on fold

1/2" hem allowed here

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