

Patterns of Fashion 6

The content, cut, construction and context of women's European dress c.1695–1795

JANET ARNOLD SÉBASTIEN PASSOT CLAIRE THORNTON JENNY TIRAMANI

with additional patterns by

MELANIE BRAUN, ADRIEN CHOMBART DE LAUWE, LUCA COSTIGLIOLO,
NIKI MILES & PAWEŁ TOMASZEWSKI

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THE SCHOOL OF HISTORICAL DRESS



1.1. The informal flat-cut gown laid flat. The gown was part of the grave clothing Luise Dorothea was wearing when she was buried. Brown conservation textiles are seen inside the gown, with the surviving fragments of gold tissue stitched on top.



1.2. A dart at the back of the sleeve end shapes the sleeve to help it hang gracefully when worn with the cuff folded back as seen in figures 1.13 and 1.14.



1.3. A gore is inserted on the right front sleeve end. A fold line is visible on the gold tissue facing.



1.4. A piecing in the gore at the left front.



1.5. The right side seam. The back gore is pieced.



1.6. The gold tissue facing at the CF hem, showing the foldline.



1.7. Tissue, MT27962 © Musée des Tissus.



1.8. A flower that has retained some red colours.



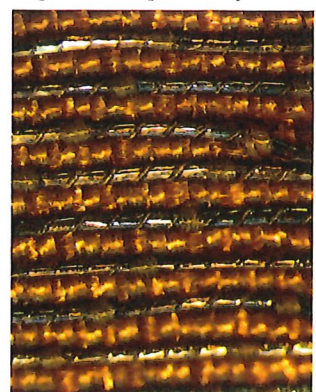
1.9. A flower that has retained several shades of blue.



1.10. Detail of the left front. This textile design was the height of fashion in 1705, when the gown was probably new.



1.11. The silver-gilt *frisé* on the left, and *filé* on the right.






1.12. The two silver-gilt *filé* yarns seen in figure 3.

Pattern of the RHS of the gown. The original silk colours of the gown are now mostly gone, and it has an overall pale brown colour. Much of the original stitching is also missing and the gown has been backed with a brown conservation textile and stitched together again.

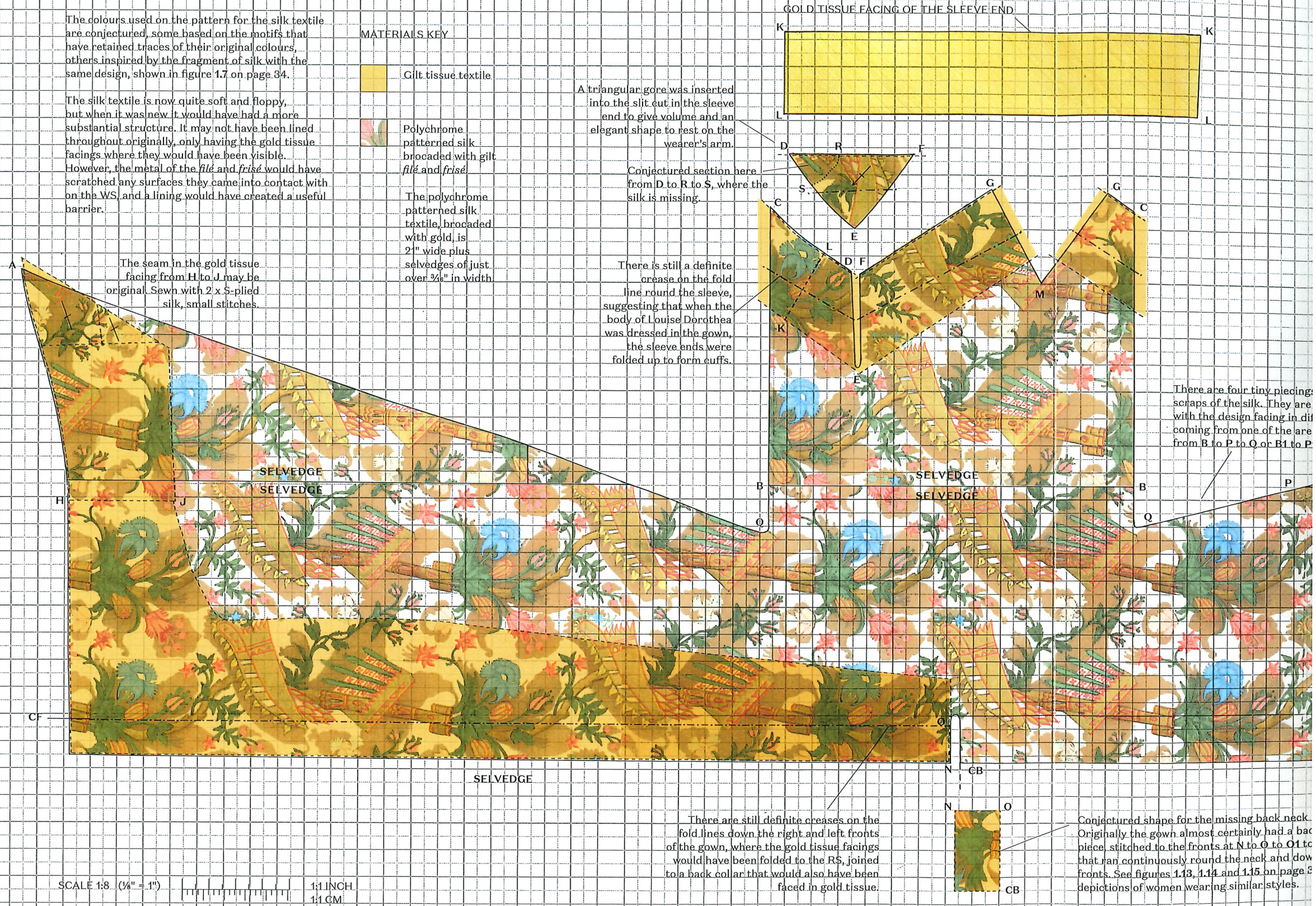
The colours used on the pattern for the silk textile are conjectured, some based on the motifs that have retained traces of their original colours, others inspired by the fragment of silk with the same design, shown in figure 1.7 on page 34.

The silk textile is now quite soft and floppy, but when it was new it would have had a more substantial structure. It may not have been lined throughout originally, only having the gold tissue facings where they would have been visible. However, the metal of the *filé* and *frisé* would have scratched any surfaces they came into contact with on the WS, and a lining would have created a useful barrier.

MATERIALS KEY

-  Gilt tissue textile
-  Polychrome patterned silk brocaded with gilt *filé* and *frisé*
-  The polychrome patterned silk textile, brocaded with gold, is 2" wide plus selvages of just over 3/4" in width

The gown worn by the 1690–1700 doll known as 'Lady Clapham' in figures 1.17 to 1.20 on page 37 is of a much more simple shape, without the cleverly shaped sleeve or train.



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In 1954, during clearing work for the reconstruction of St. Martin's Church in Kassel, which had been badly damaged by bombs during World War II in 1943, two items of a woman's grave clothing were recovered from a rubble-covered coffin under the chapter house, together with another coffin containing a pair of late-17th-century men's hose.

of 8 January 1706, she was buried in the church of St. Martin, Kassel, by torchlight.

Elite European women's garments of this period are extremely rare, especially those made with long selvedge lengths of valuable textiles that could easily be re-purposed and transformed into other items.

This spectacular informal flat-cut gown, and a silver-tissue open petticoat (pattern 2), were identified as the burial dress of Princess Luise Dorothea Sophia, the first wife of Prince Friedrich of Hessen-Kassel. Luise Dorothea died of chickenpox and typhus on 23 December 1705 at the age of only 25 in Berlin, where she had been staying at her parents' Court since mid-September. On the evening

Several small pieces with the same textile design, albeit with some variations, survive in the collection of the Musée des Tissus in Lyon, as shown in figure 1.7 on page 34. The example in Lyon has flower motifs brocaded in reds, pinks and blues but with a ground of silver tissue. The WS of the gown silk is not visible, but the silk motifs were almost certainly brocaded in the same way.

There is a short train on the gown, about 12" long. However, it may have originally been worn with the entire hem trailing on the floor. The informal gown worn by Henrietta d'Auverquerque, Countess of Grantham, in figure 1.13 on page 37 is extravagantly long, and held off the ground at CF by a sash tied round her waist. It is quite possible that this informal gown was also worn with a sash.

Only sections of the gilt facings remain. They were stitched on top of a layer of fine silk that was added to the interior of the garment when it was conserved. The original depth of the facing round the hem is unknown. It may have been as deep as the section shown at the CB where it measures approximately 24" or even deeper.

The gold tissue facing is missing completely on this section.

There are four tiny piecings here, made from small scraps of the silk. They are all on different grains with the design facing in different directions, possibly coming from one of the areas cut out under the arms from B to P to Q or B1 to P1 to Q1.

A triangular gore was inserted into the slit cut in the sleeve end to give volume and an elegant shape to rest on the wearer's arm.

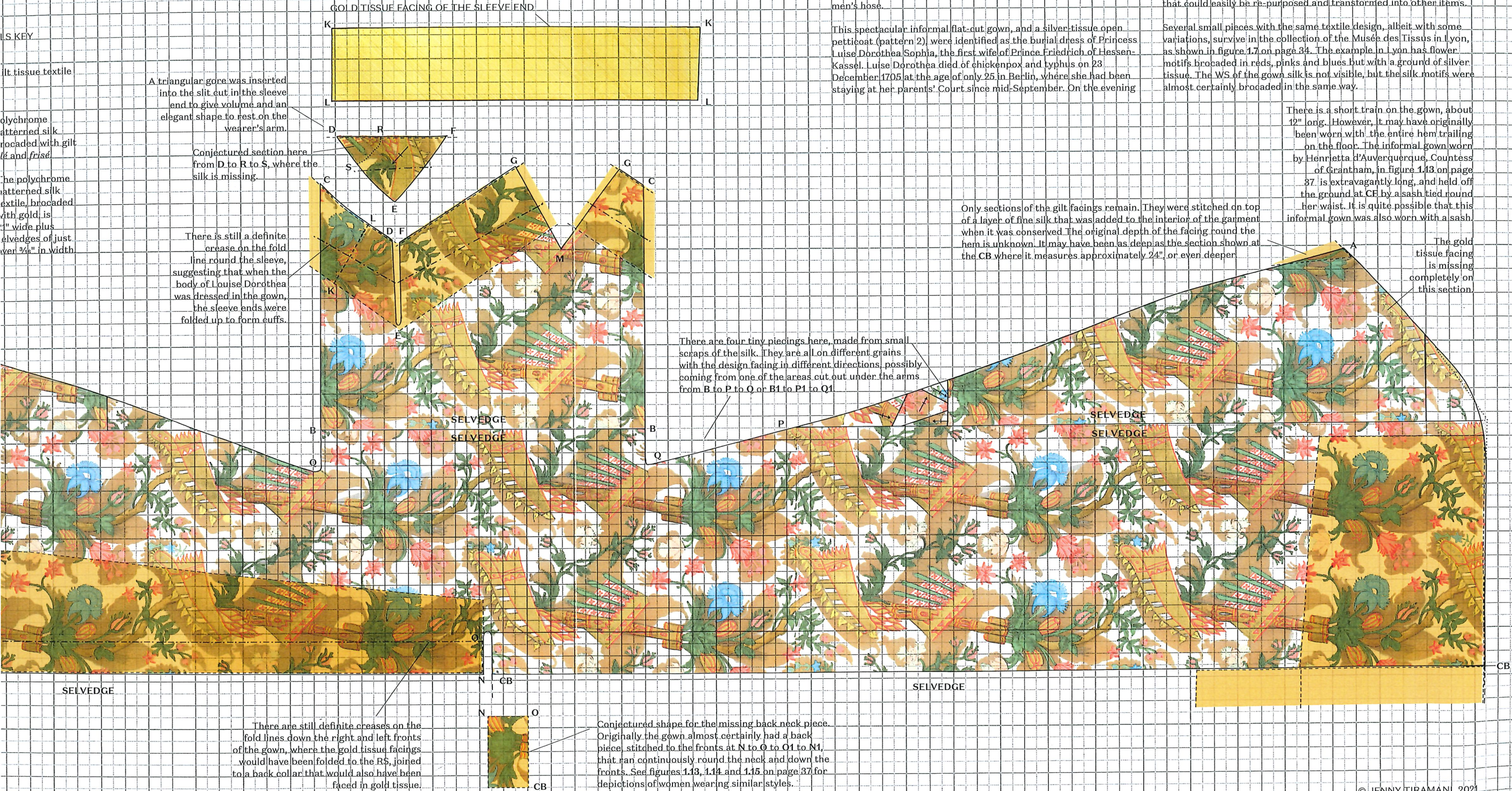
Conjectured section here from D to R to S, where the silk is missing.

There is still a definite crease on the fold line round the sleeve, suggesting that when the body of Luise Dorothea was dressed in the gown, the sleeve ends were folded up to form cuffs.

There are still definite creases on the fold lines down the right and left fronts of the gown, where the gold tissue facings would have been folded to the RS, joined to a back collar that would also have been faced in gold tissue.

Conjectured shape for the missing back neck piece. Originally the gown almost certainly had a back piece, stitched to the fronts at N to O to O1 to N1, that ran continuously round the neck and down the fronts. See figures 1.13, 1.14 and 1.15 on page 37 for depictions of women wearing similar styles.

LS KEY
 lt. tissue textile
 polychrome patterned silk brocaded with gilt
 The polychrome patterned silk textile, brocaded with gold, is 1" wide plus selvages of just over 3/4" in width





1.13. *Portrait of Henrietta d'Auverquerque, Countess of Grantham*, b. c.1675, Thomas Murray, c.1690. whereabouts unknown. Christie's Images/Scala.



1.14. *La Diseuse d'aventure*, Jean-Antoine Watteau, c.1710. The pregnant (?) woman on the right wears an informal gown with a single pleat on the shoulder.



1.15. *Femme de qualité*, Dieu de Saint-Jean, 1693.



1.16. *Luise Dorothea of Prussia*, J.H. Quiter, 1724.



1.17. *'Lady Clapham' doll*, V&A Museum.



1.18. Back view of the gown in 1.17.



1.19. Front view of the gown in 1.17.



1.20. The neckline of the gown in 1.17.



2.1. *Physician Taking the Pulse*, Matthijs Naiveu, c.1700.



2.5. The patterned silver tissue textile has an intricate design of stars, crescent moons, flowers and berries, worked in *filé* and *frisé* (plain and frost).



2.2. The front of the half-petticoat laid flat. The two pocket openings are clearly visible.

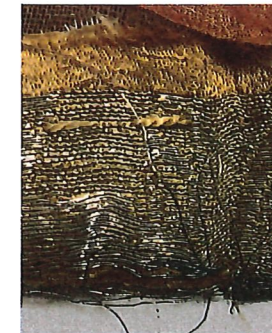


2.4. The back of the half-petticoat laid flat. The darker brown textile seen top left and right of the image is 20th-century conservation, as is the white material inserted between the silver tissue and the silk lining.

2.3. The WS left pocket opening with fragments of the silk pocket above.



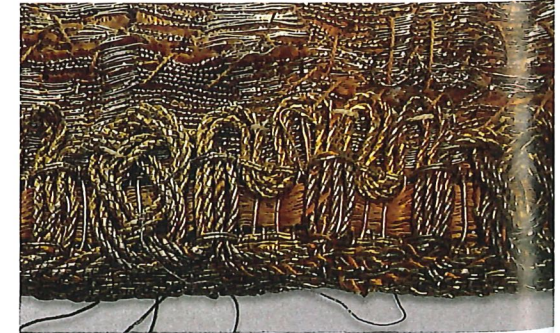
2.6. This section of the hem retains its silk ribbon facing, stitched on top of the silk lining and metal lace binding.



2.7. The end of a loom length of fabric on the WS of the hem.



2.8. The edge of the hem is bound in a woven metal and silk lace. The warp of the lace was woven in paired threads.



2.9. Detail of the decorative lace along the hem, in silver-gilt twist and silk. It overlaps the lace seen in figure 2.8; 'eternal knot' motifs feature at intervals.

This open petticoat was part of the burial clothing of Luise Dorothea Sophia, Hereditary Princess of Hesse-Kassel, together with the informal gown featured in pattern 1, on pages 34 to 37. Garments of this nature are the descendants of the foreparts frequently worn in the 16th and 17th centuries, and they were often of more precious textiles than the gowns worn over them.

In French the word *tablier* was given to such items, indicating the style well as meaning 'apron' in English. The advantages of petticoats that were not joined at the back were twofold: smaller amounts of valuable materials were required and it was perhaps more comfortable to sit or lie down in. Also, the weight of the silver tissue is considerable. While it was essential for

the heavy petticoat featured on pages 56 to 59 to be completely closed, due to the very open nature of the mantua under which it was worn, not all outer garments disclosed such a 360° view of a petticoat. Such a high-status textile as the patterned silver tissue would have been suitable to wear at an important event such as a wedding and it is possible that she could have worn it

on the occasion of her marriage to Prince Friedrich of Hesse-Kassel in 1700. The textile design suggests a date of c.1700, and the 'eternal knot' symbols worked along the lace decorating the hem support this date too. A closed gown in silver tissue, c.1620-40, was recovered from the Palmhout shipwreck near Texel, the Netherlands, and has a woven design of similar knots.

Originally there were 12 pleats on the RHS of the petticoat and 12 pleats on the LHS.

There is an opening from D to E with the remains of a pocket still attached. The silk of the pocket is similar to that of the petticoat lining. There is an opening with pocket fragments in the same position on the LHS of the half-petticoat.

The integral pockets stitched into this garment indicate that the petticoat was made by a tailor, rather than a mantua-maker. The petticoat featured in pattern 9 has two intact linen pockets and a construction sequence for them is given on page 59. Those belonging to this petticoat may have been of a similar construction.

2 x loosely S-plied silk was used for the surviving original stitching.

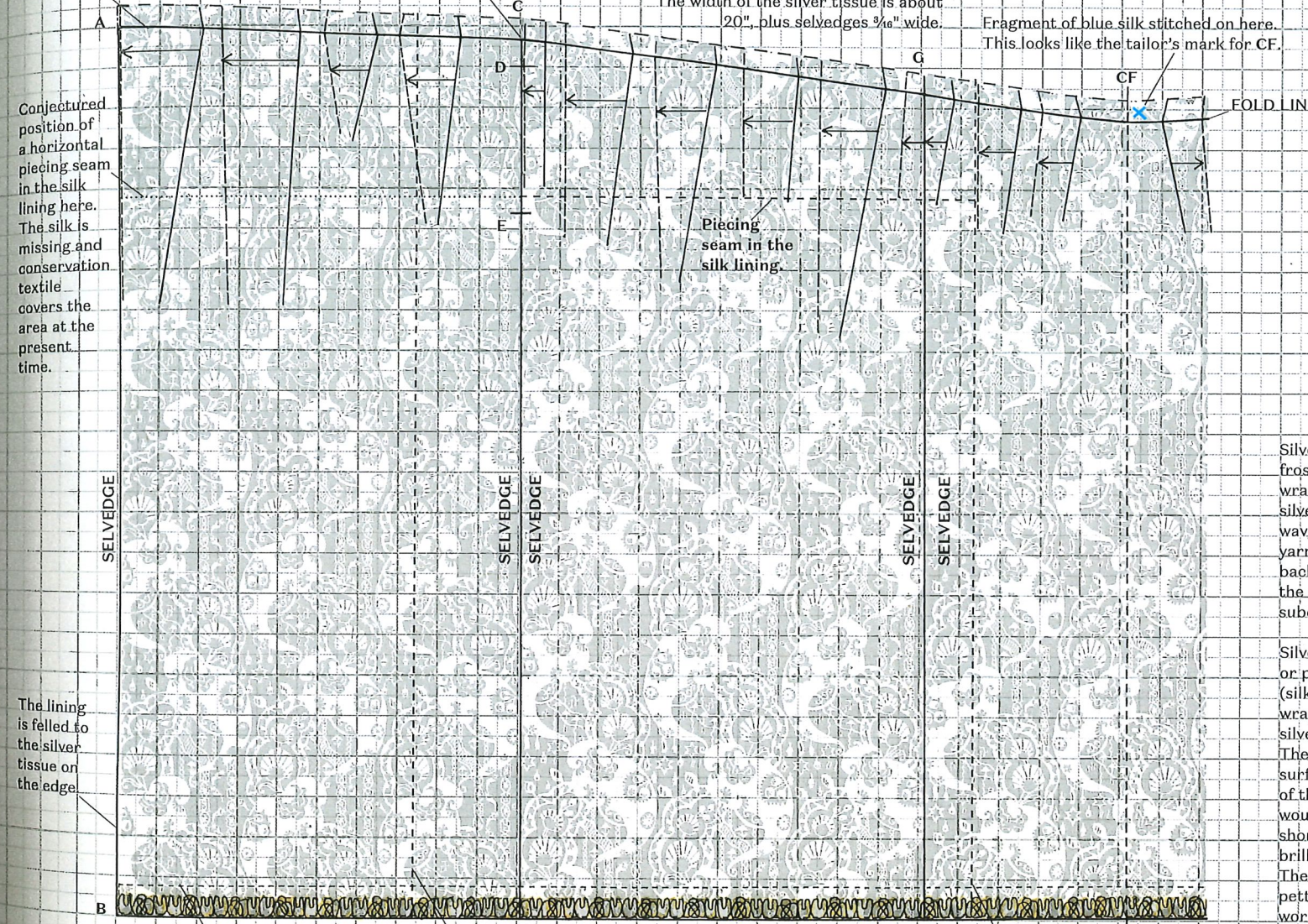
There are also both S- and Z-plied modern conservation threads on the garment now; brown material for patch repairs and white conservation material have been added between the silver tissue and silk lining.

Fragment of blue silk stitched on here. This looks like the tailor's mark for CF.

CONJECTURED CONSTRUCTION OF THE OPEN PETTICOAT

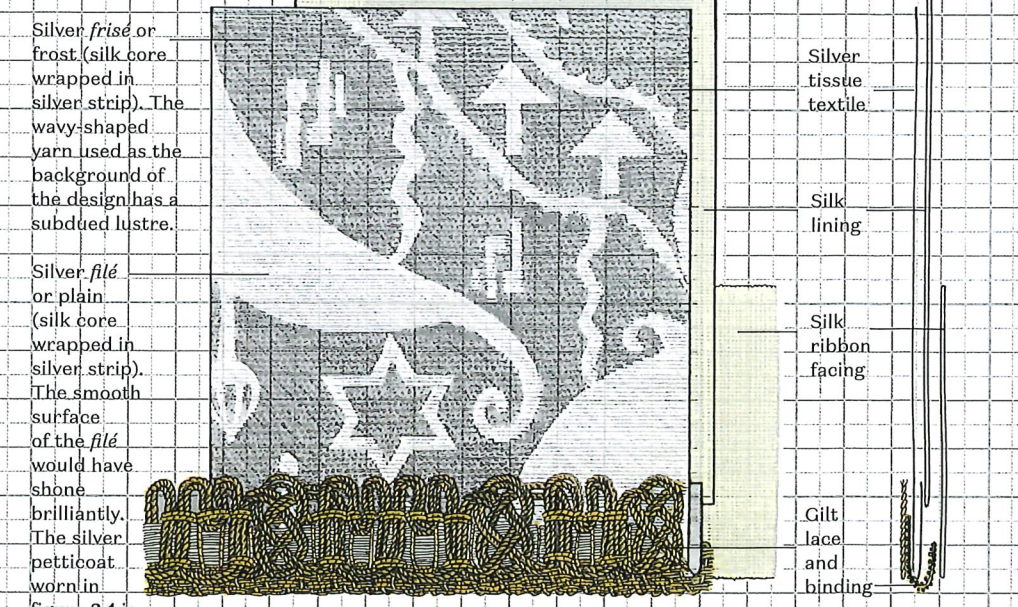
1. The selvedge widths of the silver tissue were half-backstitched in the thick 2 x S-plied silk, except on the seams C to F and C1 to E1 where the section from D to E and D1 to E1 was left unstitched.
2. The horizontal piecing and vertical seams of the silk lining were stitched together.
3. The WS of the lining was placed on the WS of the silver tissue. The seam allowance at each end (A to B and A1 to B1) was folded in and the tissue and lining were felled together down the edges.
4. The seam allowance of the openings from D to E and D1 to E1 was folded to the WS and the tissue and lining were felled together down the edges.
5. The seam allowance, 1" wide, was folded down to the WS at the waist.
6. The 1" wide seam allowance of both the silver tissue and silk lining was folded down to the WS along the waistline.
7. The pleats were folded on the waistline.
8. The stitch holes remaining near the waist suggest that the waistline was bound with a tape or ribbon (see a similar example on the petticoat of pattern 9). The original one was possibly linen as no cellulose fibres survived in the grave on this, or on the informal gown. However, it is possible that the waistband and waist ties are missing because the silk they were stitched on with was inferior and has rotted away.
9. Finally the lace was stitched at the hem, and the silk ribbon running stitched over the edges of the lining and lace on the WS, as seen below.

Fold line of the silver tissue and the silk lining.



LAYERS OF THE OPEN PETTICOAT AT THE HEM

CROSS SECTION



The lining is felled to the silver tissue on the edge.

The dotted line indicates the top edge of the silk ribbon, 1 1/2" wide, facing the petticoat.

Approximate position of a seam in the silk lining here. The selvedge width of the silk for the lining is 28", plus selvedges 3/16" wide.

Seam in the silk lining here.

The lining is fine plain-woven silk. The colour is now brown due to the prolonged burial and the original colour is not known, although it was possibly a shade of white or cream.

Another petticoat would almost certainly have been worn underneath an open petticoat such as this one. Further information about petticoats can be found on pages 16, 17, 26 and 27.

