

Woman's Dress (Redingote)

Europe, c. 1790

Silk and cotton satin
and plain weave

Purchased with funds provided
by Robert and Mary M. Looker
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This hand-sewn woman's redingote of striped silk and cotton satin and plain weave is an exceptional example of women's fashionable dress informed by menswear in the 18th century. The dress features exaggerated *revers* (lapels), a large falling collar, and a cutaway skirt in imitation of the tail coats worn by male counterparts. At the center back of the skirt are *side edges*, decorative scalloped flaps that often adorned the center-back vent in men's coats.

The outer bodice was constructed larger than the inner bodice; although the outer bodice has fabric-covered buttons sewn at the center front, the absence of buttonholes suggests that the buttons were merely decorative. The center front was most likely closed with pins like most silk dresses of the time; the inner bodice of linen plain weave was secured around the torso with laces at the center front. When the dress was worn with a fine cotton *fichu* (kerchief) around the neck and over the wearer's *décolletage*, the ends of the fichu could be tucked between the outer and inner bodices. This volume at the chest and torso enhanced a prominent pouter pigeon silhouette, similarly en vogue with fashionable French men.

Although largely influenced by menswear, this redingote features a back bodice constructed *en fourreau*, a dressmaking technique distinctive to women's *robes à l'anglaise* (closed-bodied gowns) of the late 1700s. *En fourreau* is characterized by a narrow length of fabric along the center back that runs undisrupted from the top of the neckline to the bottom skirt hem with no waist seam. At either side of this center-back length is a finely pleated skirt into the waist, which creates the deep V-shaped volume at the back.

NOTES:

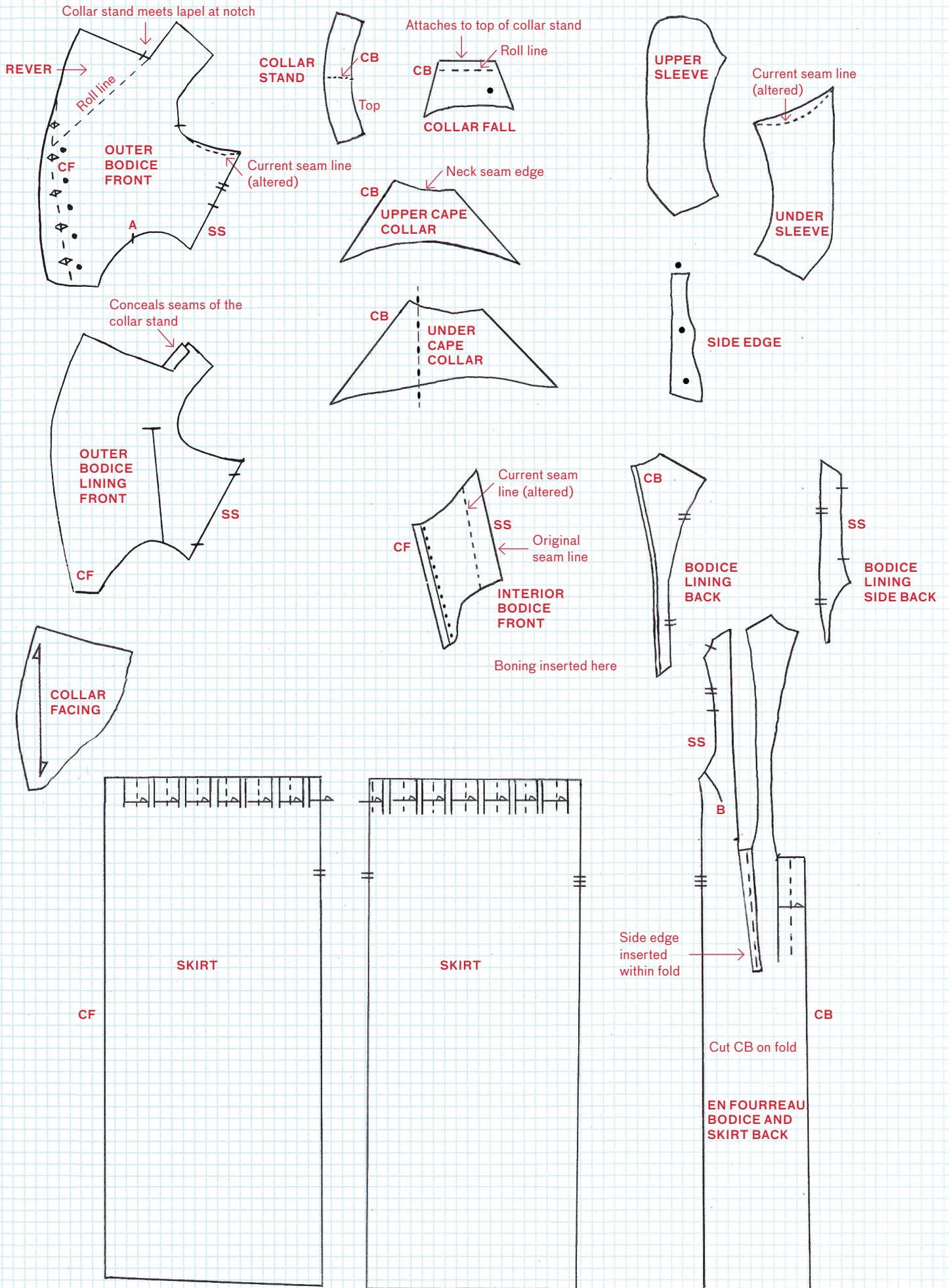
1. Fabric grain follows vertical lines of the graph paper.
2. Pattern pieces are drawn without seam allowance.
3. Five 1¼ inch-diameter self-covered buttons adorn the proper-left center-front opening of the outer bodice. The center-front edge is finished with a fold.
4. The inner bodice of linen plain weave is boned with a ¼-inch-wide strip of baleen at the center-front opening; 12 sets of eyelet holes close the center front with laces.
5. The large revers are faced with silk and cotton plain weave; the grain lines of both layers do not match. The collar stand and fall are of the same fabric. A medium-weight interfacing stiffens the collar stand. A small piece of silk and cotton plain weave sewn at the front-side neckline conceals the seams of the collar stand to the neckline. One 1¼ inch-diameter self-covered button stitched through the collar stand and fall decorates the front-side corner of the collar fall.
6. Two layers of cape collars are attached to the center back and side neckline under the collar fall; edges are finished with ⅛-inch-wide fold, whipstitched.



7. The sleeves are set into the armhole with small gathers at the top; the under sleeve and side-front bodice armhole show signs of alteration.
8. One 1½-inch long and ¼-inch wide strip of baleen boning on both sides of the center back stiffens the *en fourreau* bodice from the neckline to lower back. The boning was inserted in folded casings at the center-back bodice lining of linen plain weave. The center-back skirt below the boning is box pleated.
9. The skirt is made with full widths of 19-inch-wide fabric sewn selvege-to-selvege; the skirt is attached to the waist with small knife pleats from point **A** at the hem of the outer bodice front to point **B** at the end of a side-back slash in the *en fourreau* bodice and skirt back. The center-front skirt opening is finished with ¼-inch-wide folded edges, whipstitched. The skirt hem is finished with ½-inch-wide twill tape.
10. Side-edge details are stitched within a fold at the lower side-back *en fourreau* skirt. Three 1¼-inch-diameter self-covered buttons adorn the side edges; one is placed just above the side edge, and two are placed at each scallop point of the side edge flap.
11. The redingote bodice is lined in linen plain weave; the cape collar, sleeves, and skirt are unlined.



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Key:

□ = 1:1 inch

CF = Center Front

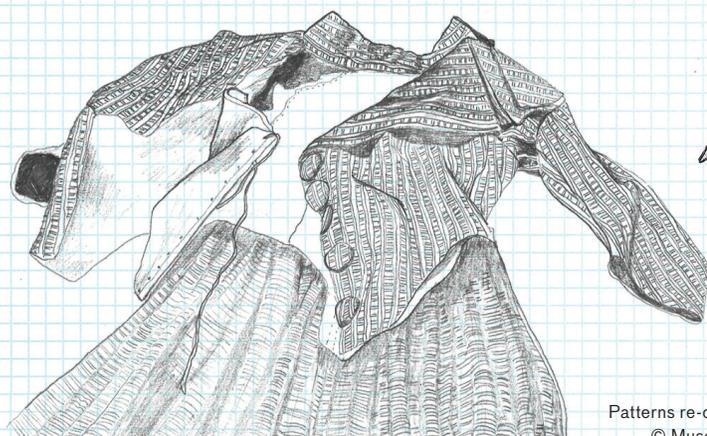
CB = Center Back

SS = Side Seam

--- = Pieced Fabric

• = Decorative Button Placement

⊕ - ⊕ - ⊕ = Fold line



Top cape with sample fabric pattern to scale