

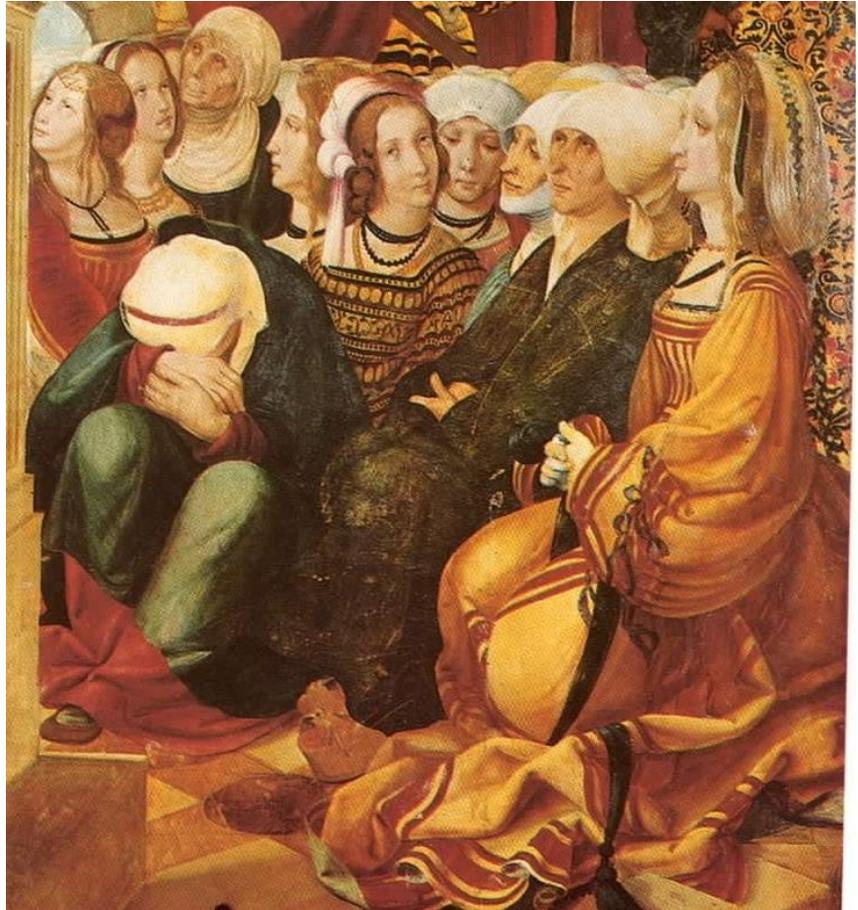
Name of Entrant: Elena de la Palma

What is it and when is it from?

There are two items included here:

- **A yellow linen dress**, the main focus here.
- **A white linen *camisa***, which is to be worn beneath the yellow gown.

The yellow garment is the main event. It is a **Spanish middle-class garment from the 1520s-1530s**. The reference is taken from the *Retablo de San Felix* by Joan de Burgunya (Gerona, Church of San Felix, Sala de Museo) – see right. The particular inspiration is the yellow-gold gown featured on the kneeling woman in the foreground.



This is an altarpiece in a church, and it features women watching a man preach. Therefore, there is no reason to expect that the women would be dressed particularly fantastically or out of the norm. The garments are decorated with *tiras*, or strips of colored fabric, which are typical of this era of Spanish fashion.

The construction method for the bodice is important as it represents a plausible in-period methodology: the garment is entirely self-supporting without requiring any undergarments. The shaping is obtained through careful fitting of the three-layer heavyweight linen interlining (more details on this under the "what did you learn?" section). This is an important detail because, in 1520s Spain, there is no evidence to suggest any kind of boning or even to concretely point to the use of buckram or other stiffening. There is plentiful evidence to suggest that linen may have been used – and there's certainly something shaping the lady's bust in the reference image. This is one option for that that something might be. The original may have lacing, and if so would likely have it in the back.

The white *camisa* with the black border around the neckline can be barely seen beneath the yellow of the gown. The patterning on it is not necessarily period, but was done as one might pattern a Gothic fitted gown. While the exact patterning is not necessarily correct, the close-to-the-body style likely is. With the gown itself not using any rigid stiffening, extra bulk beneath the dress from a loose, flowing *camisa* would not have been desirable.

Note: I used linen to create the entirety of this gown, but in period linen almost certainly would not have created sufficiently vibrant colors. It is far more likely that the original was silk or wool. I selected linen for comfort, ease of care, and cost effectiveness.

What inspired you?

I was inspired by necessity and determination. I typically wear the high-class fashion of 1530s Spain – heavy brocades, many layers of fabric, trailing skirts, all in all, entirely impractical. **I need comfortable, practical garments to wear at Pennsic, and I'm too stubborn to wear something other than Spanish garments circa 1530. Therefore, I looked at lower-class outfits, and have been experimenting from there.** This gown is really the gift that keeps on giving – everything I learn applies to other gowns of a similar style that I am going to create for a total wardrobe of 10+ gowns.

What did you learn to make this?

- **This was my first time working with 100% linen.** Everything on this table is linen, from the shift to the gowns and the interlining. I had to learn how to account for its unique properties of stretch.
- **This also represents a significant effort in construction and fitting, as the gown is completely self-supporting without lacing, using only heavyweight linen interlining.** The structure is 3 layers of heavyweight (7.1 oz/yd) linen, carefully structured and cut to my body, and then sewn together all around. This is then attached as a lining to the interior fabric.
- **The entire gown is 100% patterned and constructed from scratch.** Machine stitching is used where possible, as I've got limited time before Pennsic.

What did you learn making this?

I learned that I'll want to do many things differently in the next version.

- **Period skirt cuts need to be adjusted when you're working with 60" wide fabric.** I used pattern cuts from Juan de Alcega's Tailoring Manual, but the first effort (the yellow dress) did not account for the extra width. The second effort accounts for it much better, which results in a far more pleasing skirt.
- **Pad-stitching will likely come in handy.** Pad-stitching is akin to quilting, where long stitches join the material together. There is evidence of it in use for period tailoring in some locations, and it does an excellent job of shaping pieces of clothing before they even go on the body. I want to explore it more, but I believe it may be very useful for future endeavors with this type of bodice.
- **It is possible to significantly shape the body without any kind of support beyond fabric.** One of the big questions in late-period fashion is "what did they use to create the unique body shaping before they used whalebone?" Reeds, hemp cording, and buckram are all possibilities, but nothing is really certain. The use of multi-ply heavyweight linen was an experiment – and it certainly looks plausible, given the shape it produces.