ARTISAN'S NAME: THLady Kathryn MacLuing (Kathy Kemmish)

Include both your SCA name and mundane name.

TYPE OF GARMENT: 10th-11th Cent dress for a noble (3 layers + accesories)

What is this garment (or outfit)? Is it related to a particular time period, culture, or geographical area?

BASED ON: Various drawings, paintings, and carvings of ladies in the 10th-11Cent. Saxon/Norman area deplicting a chemise, kirtle, and surcoat with knotted woven belt and veil.

What is this based on, or inspired by? (Give the name of or information about the an artifact, illustration or painting, or historical document. Please attach a photocopy or printout of the artifacts, illustrations, and paintings which inspired this project.)

FABRIC:

What did you use to make this garment, and why? If it's different from what would have been used to produce this in the Middle Ages or Renaissance, explain why you've chosen to use these particular fabrics.

This outfit was made for the Calontir Clothing Challenge, where I was to make a complete outfit of three layers plus a fourth "Accessory" layer. As the Calontir Challenge did not ask for fully period fabric, nor for documentation, I used what I had in my stash.
For the chemise, I used a mid-weight 60in widegold cotton. This is a little stiffer than proper for a chemise, but I wanted the gold to be the bottom layer, so I could use it for decoration on the other dresses.
For the kirtle, I used a medium-weight 45wide royal blue linen.
For the surcoat, I used a medium-weight 45wide red linen.
For the veil, I used a light-weight 45wide natural linen.
I used a 2.5oz Worsted yarn in red, gold, and blue for the card-woven belt
I used a #10 crochet thread in red, yellow, and blue for the lucet cording
Embroidery was done with standard DMC floss.

ASSEMBLY:

Describe how you made the garment. If you've used a particular pattern, fitting technique, or handsewing stitch, for example, you can explain whether you've chosen to do so because of something you'd uncovered in your research, or for other reasons. Also consider: if you had to do another garment like this, how would you do it differently?

The outfit was made for the Calontir Clothing Challenge, which required a full outfit of three layers plus a 'fourth layer' of accessories. The accessory must be constructed by ways other than sewing, so to test your skill, and it was suggested this also be something the challenger had never tried before. As the Calontir Challenge included sub-challenges based on patterns, each gown was patterned differently.

The gold chemise is a basic t-tunic that all new Scadians have used. The 60wide fabric meant I did not need to add any gores, just mark my size and seam allowance for where sleeve met bodice, then angle from the bodice straight down to the hem. It left me with a lot of excess fabric for later decoration. The side seams and bottom hem I used a machine to sew, but the wrists and neckline are both turned under and hand-sewn. From cutting to finishing sewing took me half a day.

The blue linen kirtle is based on a pattern I've had for decades (up til I went looking for it for this dress). As that pattern was missing, I extrapolated using an older gown and recent measurements.
The bodice and skirt are one long piece fitted to the bust and waist, then angled on the sides. The sleeve is inset into the bodice, and may be cut from scrap from the skirt. While the pattern allows for gores, I did not need them with the 45width. As with the chemise, the sleeves were machine-sewn onto the bodice, then the side hem sewn from wrist to bottom hem, and the bottom hem cut shorter than the chemise. I turned the hem and machine-sewed it.. As with the chemise, the neckline and wrists were simply turned over and hand-stitched. Again, from cutting the fabric to finishing sewing took half a day.

The red linen surcoat is made off a pattern seen in Coptic, Norse, Byzantine, and other tunics, where slightly tapered sleeves are sewn to a side gore, then the sleeves and gore sewn to a straight central panel. Again, my copy of this pattern was lost, so I went entirely off memories and my measurements. Which is why when I sewed the sleeve/gore to the central piece I realized I'd mis-measured and had to add a second set of gores to give the dress room under the arm and down the sides.
Before I started joining the pieces, I went ahead and cut a turned-out facing for the neckline, and facings for the 3/4 length sleeves out of the gold cotton. After hand-stitching the facings down, I free-handed a double scallop pattern on each sleeve, and a similar scallop geometric for the neckline. I then used an embroidery running stitch and blue and red DMC floss to make the scallops.
Then, I was ready to sew the dress peices together. As I said, the sleeves are cut on the fold, then a side gore is sewn to the bottom of the sleeve where it would attach to the central bodice. When using my sewing machine to attach the sleeve/gore to the bodice, I started at the tip of the shoulder and sewed to the hem, then sewed from the shoulder down the back to the hem. This prevented the fabric from slipping and throwing the gown out of line. Once I discovered the original gores weren't wide enough, I cut additional gores, machine-sewed them from the underarm down to the hem, but hand-set the tip of the gore to the sleeve. Then, I again used my machine to sew from the wrists down the gores to the hem. I trimmed the hem to be shorter than the kirtle and again turned the hem and machine-sewed it. Due to the extra steps, this dress took four days to finish.

After the gowns were hemmed, I used a Lucet technique where two threads of different colors are cast on the horn, and crossed or double-crossed to create either a chevron of both colors, or a solid line of each color 'laddered' down the cord. I made three sets of Lucet Cord - blue/red, red/yellow, yellow/blue, two 12ft lengths, and one 8ft long (I got tired of lucet). I took the red/blue cord and decorated the wrists and completely around the bottom hem of the gold chemise. The red/yellow cord was used on the neck, wrist, and complete hem of the blue kirtle. The blue/yellow cord was the shortest length, and it decorates only the froont hem of the red surcoat. I am debating weaving another 8ft of blue/yellow to finish the back of the dress at a later date. Making all three sets of cording took over a week, probably closer to ten days, as I treated it like a 'fidget', doing it while watching TV or casual gaming, and even during AEthelrel Court.

The next step was the oval veil from the lightweight natural linen. I used an older veil for the pattern, and cut on the fold. Then, I sat down with needle and thread to turn a narrow hem and hand-stitched it down. This took one full night of TV. The next night, I used a golden yellow DMC floss and a running embroidery stitch to create a scallop along the edge of the veil, and then embroidered 6-pointed stars in blue and red on the outside of the scallop. I was surprised how quickly I was able to finish the veil.

Finally, I started on the card-woven belt. This was my last project because I have never used Card-Weaving to create anything before. I was gifted a pack of playing cards, pre-punched and cut to proper size. I bought the 2.5oz yarn because I wanted a thick belt, and found a pattern on a Russian Pinterest that would make a border around running chevrons. The pattern took 14 cards in a simple turn 8 up, turn 8 back measure (See pictures). To match the dresses, I used blue, gold, and red yarn, and cut each string roughly 3.5yds long. Cutting, straightening the strings, and threading them properly through the cards took most of a day. I used the blue for the border, the red for the chevrons, and the yellow for the background. I also used blue for the shuttle thread, so it'd hide inside the border.
As I did not have a loom, I turned my collapsible cutting table upside down and tied the threads to the far leg, tied the working end to a chunk of wood to weight it, and proceeded to begin weaving. This jury-rigged "loom" unsurprisingly did not result in good tension, and having to stop and adjust it made me lose my count of turns more than once. Both these rookie mistakes show in the belt, where the pattern is broken, and how loose the weave is. However, I did manage to complete the belt surprisingly quickly. Working roughly 4hrs a day, it was completed by the fourth day. I braided the last 6inches of each end, then decided I wanted to add cheap metal bells. Those I knotted to the loose threads at the ends of each braid.

SOURCES:

Provide a bibliography or list of the books, websites, and other sources you have used for researching this project, getting guidance on how to make it, and so on.

Sources:
1. Virgin & Child Walrus Ivory Plaque circa 1020. Albert & Victoria Museum collection # A.5-1935. This plaque shows the Virgin wearing a kirtle beneath a shorter surcoat with what looks like either 3/4 sleeves or rucked over the kirtle's sleeves. The hem of the surcoat also seems to be shorter than the kirtle.

2. Matilda of Flanders marble statue, Luxemburg Gardens, Paris. circa unknown. This statue clearly shows a surcoat over a kirtle, with a knotted belt around her waist.

3. "Psychomachia" painted novel, circa 4th quarter of the 10th Cent/ early 11th Cent.. British Library, Cotton MS Cleopatra C Viii. This hand-calligraphed book, similar to a Psaltry-book, has multiple illuminations of ladies in kirtle and surcoat with knotted belts.

Feel free to attach additional information, including printouts or photocopies of images, articles or other resources that you have found useful in researching and creating your work, or which have formed the inspiration or basis for this particular project!