

16th Century Florentine Partlet
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An embroidered partlet in the style of “Portrait of a Florentine Noblewoman” by an unknown artist, c. 1540 (see Picture 1).

Attached are portraits of Florentine noblewomen from 1540-1560. Nearly all noblewoman of this time period wore some form of shoulder covering, called a partlet. Partlets varied greatly between 1540 and 1560. There are the net and pearl partlets that Eleonora di Toledo is famously portrayed in (see Picture 2), as well as sheer gauze-like partlets, and heavier linen partlets. While sheer partlets typically did not have a collar (see Picture 3), the heavier partlets frequently had standing collars, left open at the neck. These partlets were typically decorated with pearls and embroidery (see Picture 1 and 4).

The partlet is an interpretation of Picture 1. This style of collared partlet is seen in portraits ranging from 1540s (see Picture 1) through the 1550s (see Picture 4). My partlet is completely hand sewn, handkerchief weight linen. The embroidery pattern is designed to be similar to, but not an exact replica, of Picture 1. To construct the partlet, I started with a commercial pattern for a collared partlet and made modifications to the center front and shoulder seams to achieve a Florentine look. I cut the pieces out and hemstitched the edges, stitched the shoulder seams and attached the collar and ruffle. I then began the embroidery by stitching all of the rows across the partlet and then filling in the starbursts. After the embroidery was complete, I hemmed the body of the partlet and attached ties.

Orsi-Landini, Roberta, and Bruna Niccoli. *Moda a Firenze 1540-1580: Lo Stile di Eleonora di Toledo e la sua influenza*. **Town**: Polistampa, 2007. Print.