

Boy's Frock

UNDERTAKING THE MAKING
LACMA Costume and Textiles Pattern Project

Boy's Frock
India for the Western market, c. 1855
Goat-fleece underdown (cashmere)
twill with silk embroidery and silk tassels
Purchased with funds provided by Suzanne A. Saperstein and Michael and Ellen Michelson, with additional funding from the Costume Council, the Edgerton Foundation, Gail and Gerald Oppenheimer, Maureen H. Shapiro, Grace Tsao, and Lenore and Richard Wayne
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This English boy's frock is made of soft, lightweight cashmere twill woven in Kashmir, India. Prior to being cut and sewn, professional Indian embroiderers used silk embroidery thread (probably imported from China) to embellish the fabric with traditional stylized floral motifs with curved tips (*buta*) often seen on Kashmir shawls.

The frock was constructed with many pattern pieces that were cut and sewn slightly off-grain and in irregular sizes. The heavy piecing of this garment suggests that it was remade from existing attire, possibly a woman's unfitted jacket called a *paletôt*. For example, pattern piece 1, which comprises the center-front panel of the upper skirt, is of a similar shape to a typical sleeve-head pattern.

This boy's frock not only illustrates the great care of the maker to reuse the fine cashmere fabric, but also the skillfulness and aesthetic in piecing the frock together to maximize the embroidery at the bodice and sleeves and along the skirt hems.

- NOTES:
1. Fabric grain follows vertical lines of the graph paper.
 2. Pattern pieces are drawn without seam allowance, with the exception of upper skirt pattern piece 1.
 3. Ten thread-covered ½-inch-diameter buttons with attached 1¾-inch-long silk tassels adorn the center front from neckline to bottom hem; four buttons and tassels are placed at the center-front bodice, four at the center-front upper skirt, and two at the center-front under skirt.
 4. The neckline and waist seam are finished with piping.
 5. The sleeves are pieced (**A, B, C**); sleeve seams do not line up with the bodice side seams. Each short sleeve has a mancheron oversleeve (**D, E**) with a decorative ½-inch-diameter button with three 1¾-inch-tassels attached at each point.
 6. The center-back bodice closes with eight hook and loops; closures are equally spaced from the neckline

- to the waistline. An 8¼-inch-long and ¾-inch-wide placket from the center back neckline to notch **AA** at the upper and lower center-back skirts conceals the closure. The hooks are of metal and the loops are of thread.
7. Pattern pieces **1–8** comprise the upper skirt. The center-front panel of the upper skirt (**1**) is attached to the waistline at the fold; the rounded upper portion of the pattern piece (possibly a sleeve head from a reused pattern) is folded under. Center-back pattern piece **4** is slashed to the notch (**AA**) for the center-back placket. Pattern piece **8** is covered in embroidery and trims the skirt edge.
 8. Pattern pieces **a–h** comprise the underskirt; the pieces are cut and sewn so that the existing embroidery trims the skirt edge. The center-back seam of pattern pieces **d–e** is sewn below the notch (**AA**); above the notch (**AA**) is open and unsewn to accommodate the center-back closure.
 9. The upper and under skirts are knife pleated and attached to the bodice at the waist.
 10. The frock is unlined.

