

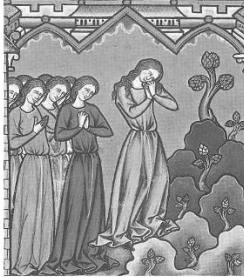
# Rectangular Construction (The Universal Tunic)

by Wenyeva atte Grene (Wendi Dunlap)



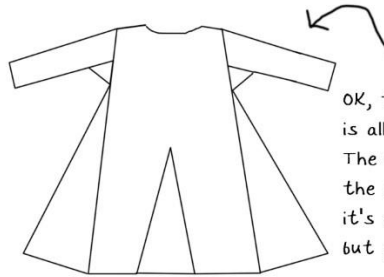
When most people start in the SCA, they are directed to the simplest garb of all: the “T-Tunic.” It’s easy to make, though somewhat wasteful of fabric, and the cut is not quite documentably authentic, though the results aren’t bad.

Once you start researching extant clothing of the Middle Ages, you realize that the clothing wasn’t cut like this:



Two pieces of fabric with a wide skirt, sewn together front and back -- this is very easy but wastes a TON of fabric and doesn't give a full enough skirt!

but instead, like *this!*



OK, this is more than two pieces of fabric... but it is all straight lines, so it uses very little fabric. The added gores give you the proper fullness of the skirt. And because all the lines are straight, it's darned easy to sew! This is a rough drawing, but you get the idea. :-)



Clothing of this style is documentable to the 14th Century (the Bocksten Man bog find, for example, is very similar, though it has sleeves that are set-in), but likely existed for some time before that. The illustrations to the left show tunics in the mid 13th Century (the Maciejowski Bible) and the early 14th Century (the Manesse Codex) that seem likely to be based on a similar pattern. If you make your tunic of a fine wool, you will see that the skirt hangs in a way that matches that shown in period artwork quite nicely!

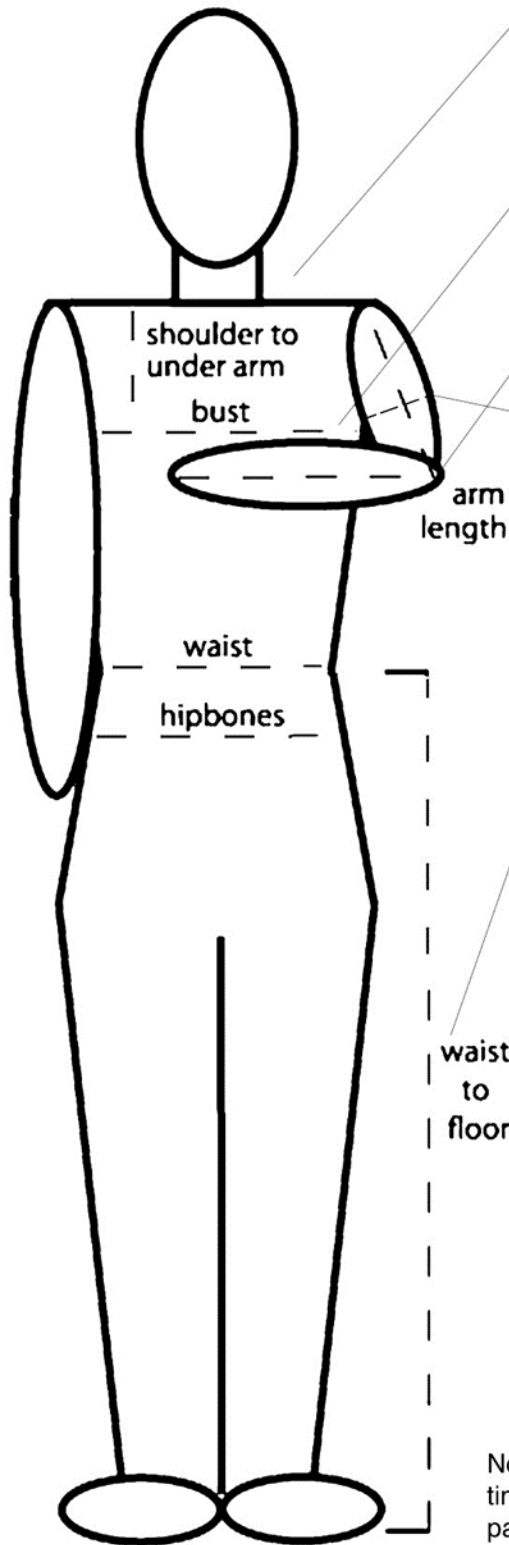
(These pictures are from the period 1250-1330. Toward the end of this period, clothing started to be more fitted and the construction began to change. So these tunics are best if your persona is early 14th century or earlier.)

Speaking of wool -- it is the typical fabric for this kind of clothing, at least, when worn as outerwear. (You can make undergarments -- *smocks* -- in this style as well.) Whether linen was used for outerwear is a hotly-debated topic, though it was definitely used for underwear! If you can't find wool, or you are worried about the heat, linen is a good substitute, and cotton is OK, too, though it's not really period for this type of clothing. Just stay away from knits, and from man-made fibers (you'll broil!), and you will be fine.

In the rest of this class we will measure each other to make your own pattern, then we will lay out the fabric (if you brought any) and draw the pattern onto your fabric. When you're done, you'll be ready to start sewing your own authentic tunic!

# Tunic Worksheet

Adapted by Wenyeva atte Grene from pattern by Kass McGann at [ReconstructingHistory.com](http://ReconstructingHistory.com)



A: From the bump at the base of your skull, to the planned hem of the tunic, + 3" \_\_\_\_\_

C: Around chest, +4", divide by 2 \_\_\_\_\_

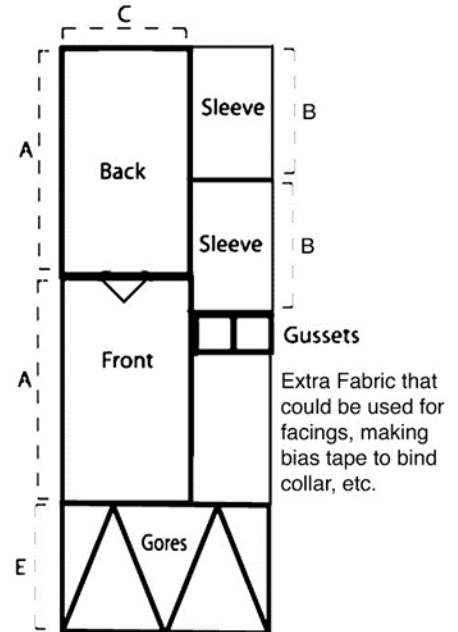
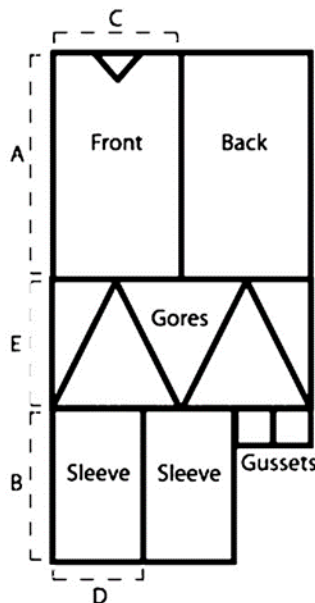
B: From point of shoulder, around bent elbow to wrist, +3" \_\_\_\_\_

D: Around the largest part of your arm, + a few inches (vary according to preference) \_\_\_\_\_

E: From waist to hem of tunic, +3" \_\_\_\_\_

## Some Possible Layouts:

Two possible layouts. The second might be used if you have extremely narrow fabric or if your chest measurement is large. I have used a similar layout with 32" muslin. You can always try other layouts depending on the situation. It's easy!

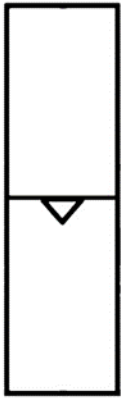


Now comes the sewing! It's pretty easy and can be completed in a very short time if you machine sew the seams. For construction info, see Kass' web page at <http://www.reconstructinghistory.com/beginners/FirstGarb.html>, or see the handout "Tunic Construction."

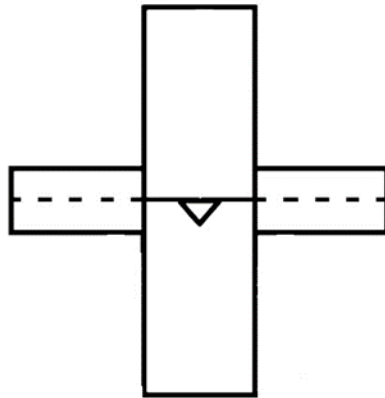
# Tunic Construction

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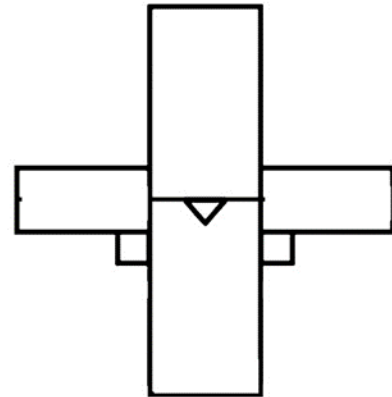
As a visual learner, I find it easier to follow Kass' pattern by seeing a drawing of each step. So here are my drawings of the process, adapted from the basic tunic diagrams on [ReconstructingHistory.com](http://ReconstructingHistory.com). Please see Kass' page for a more elaborate description as well as suggestions for fabric, etc.



1. Sew front to back at shoulders.



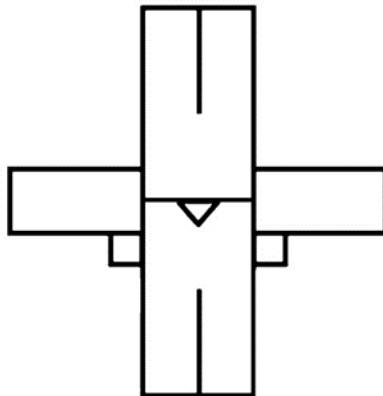
2. Fold sleeves in half (along dotted line here) Line-up fold with shoulder seam and sew to garment.



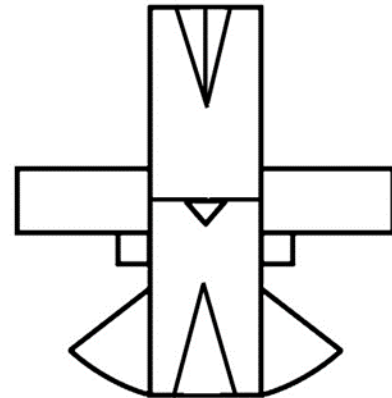
3. Sew one side of gusset to underside of each sleeve, and oneside of each gusset to front.



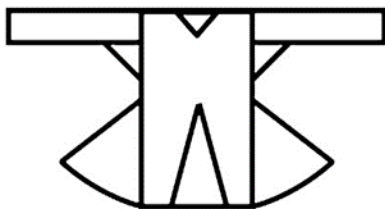
4. Sew the one split gore together along the FLAT sides.



5. Make a slit E" long up the exact center of the front and back pieces.



6. Insert the split gore into the back slit, another into the front slit, and two to the sides of the front.



7. Fold tunic along shoulder seams. Fold gussets in half diagonally and sew to bottom of sleeve and side of back.

8. Sew bottom of sleeves closed.

9. Sew the remaining edge of side gores to the back body piece on each side.

10. Sew the front to the back under gussets if necessary.

11. Cut neckline and finish edge (with facing, bias tape, etc. -- whatever you like).

12. Hem the bottom and the sleeve ends.

13. ENJOY your new tunic (and it's authentic, too!)