



New Varangian Guard Inc.

Handakas Garrison

**Basic T-Tunic Making Workshop Notes**  
*By Kelly Birch*

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## Introduction to Tunics

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The main difference between men's and women's tunics was their length. The basic T-Tunic pattern included in this document is suitable for many races and places. There are other highly recommended patterns for the Viking and Muslim cultures that can be considered when creating functional garb for your persona.

If you take part in combat, you will probably want at least two tunics: one for fighting and one for show.

This tunic is meant to be a loose fit, between thigh and knee length. It is ideal as a basic tunic for fighting, and can be decorated and made to look very nice for general wear.

For women: This pattern adapts very well to be made into a dress. To do this, elongate the body and gores to reach the desired length. A popular Byzantine style was to wear two tunic-like garments, with the outer one about 10cm shorter than the undergarment, which should be ankle length.

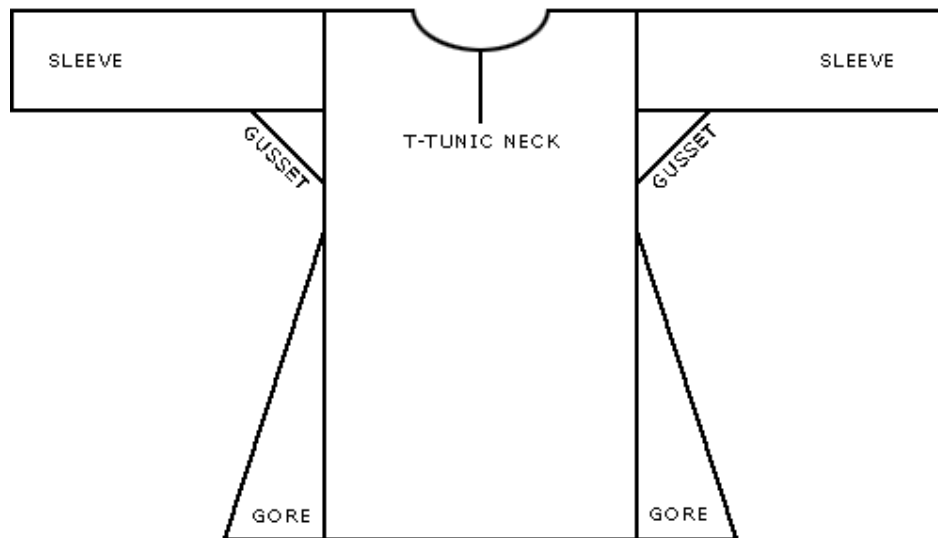
Please refer to the Introduction to Textiles for more information about materials, colours and patterns.

## Pattern Construction

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### Basic T-Tunic

The basic pattern for a T-Tunic consists mainly of rectangles, with squares and triangles making out the shape.



*Illustration 1 – T-Tunic Construction*

## Pattern Layout

The purpose of this style of tunic, and other medieval clothing from our period was to create comfortable and functional clothing with a minimum of resources. Material took time to make and was usually woven specifically for its intended purposes.

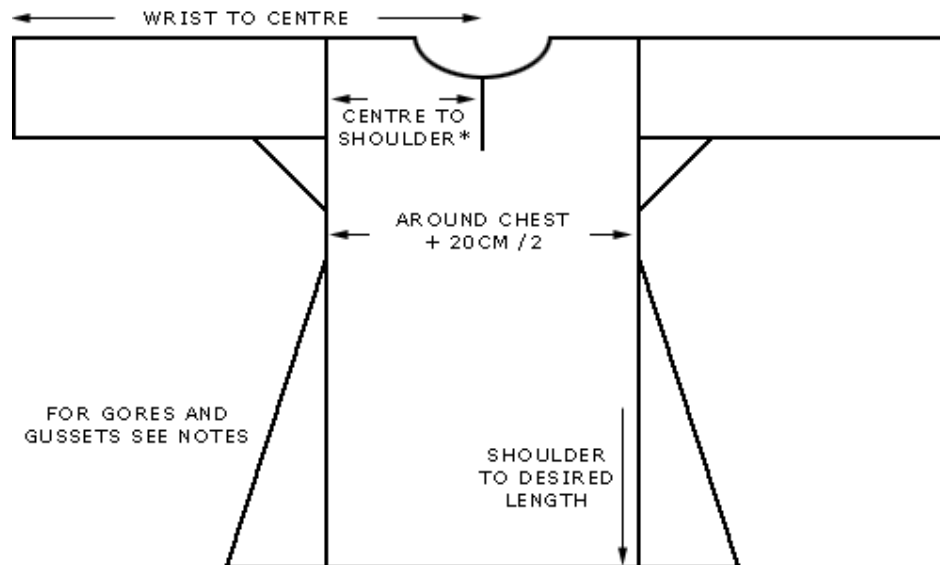
The good news is that it means we don't need a lot of material to create beautiful, authentic medieval clothing. For myself, I can construct a complete tunic out of no more than 2 metres of cloth.

Examine Appendix I for some examples on pattern layout that aims to reduce wastage and use the minimum amount of material.

## Measurements

Complete the following measurements to create your personalised Tunic pattern.

- A. Wrist to Centre of Body: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Around Chest + approx 20cm<sup>o</sup> / 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Centre to Shoulder (B/2)\*: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Shoulder to desired length: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Underarm Gusset: 10cm square
- F. Gore†: 15cm x \_\_\_\_\_ (bottom to just below gusset) then cut diagonally
- G. Arm Length: A-C (+ 4cm seam allowance and hem) \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Arm Width‡: \_\_\_\_\_



<sup>o</sup> Around Chest + approx 20cm OR Around chest allowing a comfortable amount (imagine wearing a loose fitting shirt).

\* We only need this measurement to approximate the length of the arms.

† The gore may be increased or decreased in width if desired. If making pattern floor length as with a dress, increase the gore width to give extra width at legs (recommended width approx 25cm or as preferred).

‡ Measure a comfortable loop around your upper arm (enough for movement) then add 2cm for seam allowance.

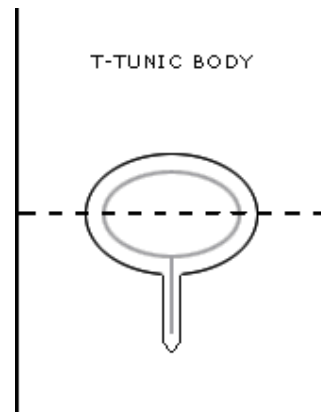
## Instructions

### Creating a Neckline

Before we begin sewing, there is one more section, which needs to be cut from the material. This segment re-enforces the neckline and makes it easier to create. See Appendix II for the pattern and cut one of these shapes – cut around the outside leaving approximately 3 cm around the pattern provided, and cut out the neck hole as well.

Cut your neckline, and then pin to the body rectangle along the fold line and in the centre. Now, cut around the inside whole, but do not cut down the line yet.

Stitch around the centre hole (grey line on diagram) about 1cm away from the edge until you get to the line down the front. Turn your material and sew down next to the centre line staying as close to it as possible. When you reach the end sew in a right angle for a couple of stitches, then sew back up the line. Continue around the edge of the hole staying about 1cm away from the edge.



Take your scissors and cut down the centre line (shown as grey), but be careful not to cut any of the stitching. Cut into the corners at the end and then cut at intervals around the neck hole. This aids in keeping your material flat and creating a nice curve when you turn this inside out.

Turn the neck hem inside out and use a basic hem stitch to hand sew the edges. This gives you a nice keyhole neckline. I like to finish this off before starting on the rest of your sewing as it is easier at the start and it prevents fraying.

### Sleeves

Take one rectangular sleeve piece and placing right sides together, pin sleeve lining up the centre line with the centre of the sleeve. Stitch leaving approximately 1cm at either end.

Repeat with second sleeve.

### Gussets

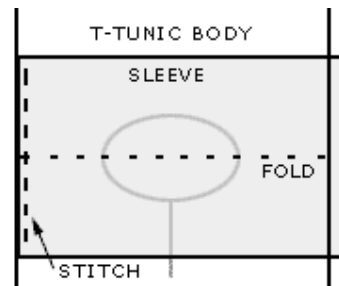
This is the most complicated part of the tunic, so take your time. Fold the tunic in half so that it is lying inside out. Take your square gusset and pin one side along the sleeve so that a corner is in the underarm (where sleeve joins to body). Following the corners of the square, pin the next side to the body. You should now have the square attached on two sides to one half of the tunic and at this point you may find it easier to flip over your material.

When you have finished pinning all four sides of the triangle you should be able to fold your material so that it appears like the first picture – the square should be folded into a triangle. You should also be able to see all your pins on this side and your tunic should be inside out.

Sew in the gusset and repeat for the other arm. Sew down the length of the sleeve.

### Gores

Turn your tunic the right way around, then take your four triangles and place the flat sides next to each lower corner of the tunic. Sew them to the tunic.



Turn the tunic inside out again and sew from the under arm, down the side of the tunic and the sloped sides of the triangular gores.  
**Your Completed Tunic**

To prevent fraying it is recommended that you treat any seams with a finishing stitch. This could be done with an overlocker before hand (but please use a similar coloured thread so it is not noticeable), or with a machined zigzag. There are also some fantastic period seam finishes which are very hardy and completely prevent fraying. Please refer to the Introduction to Textiles.

You are now ready to wear your tunic, or finish it with any embellishments.

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### Embellishment Ideas

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Embellishment is somewhat limited by your chosen culture and period, but mostly limited by your time and inclination. Some of these techniques are quicker to achieve than others, such as sewing on some tablet weaving or lucet. Others can take longer, especially if you decide to take on a complicated embroidery project (but I would love to see you do it!)

Here are some ideas for you to consider if you would like to embellish your tunic.

Tablet Weaving

Simple Embroidery – Chain Stitch or Stem Stitch

More Complicated Embroidery (Research your culture for ideas)

Fur trim

Appliqué Designs

Glass beads (especially one for a neck closure)

Lucet

#### One extant example

Of course embellishment does not have to be as complicated as this... unless you are trying to portray someone extremely wealthy, like a king.

This is a tunic from the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Henry II from Kohler, Germany.

Henry II seemed to really like these necklines as there are a couple of variations, with this being the most intact and detailed image.

The design consists of large circles, joined with smaller circles with stylised animals depicted within each.

The colours of the fabrics are unknown.



*166. Rock Kaiser Heinrichs II.  
11. Jahrh.*

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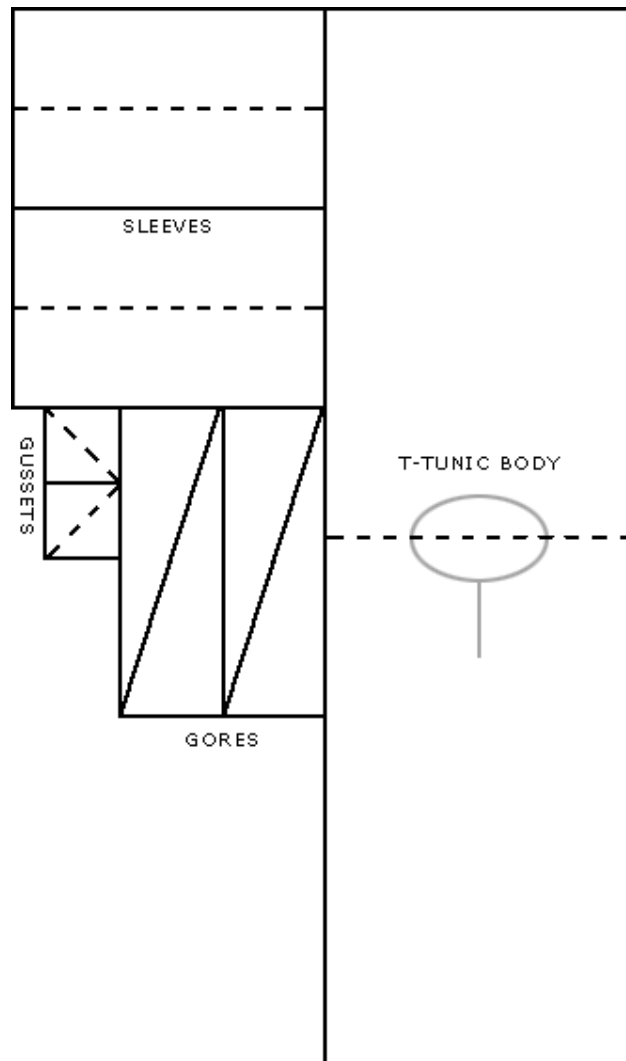
## Appendix 1 – Pattern Layout Examples

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### Example One of T-Tunic Pattern Layout

If you are smaller, it is possible to get your body and arm pieces from the single width of fabric as demonstrated by this layout.

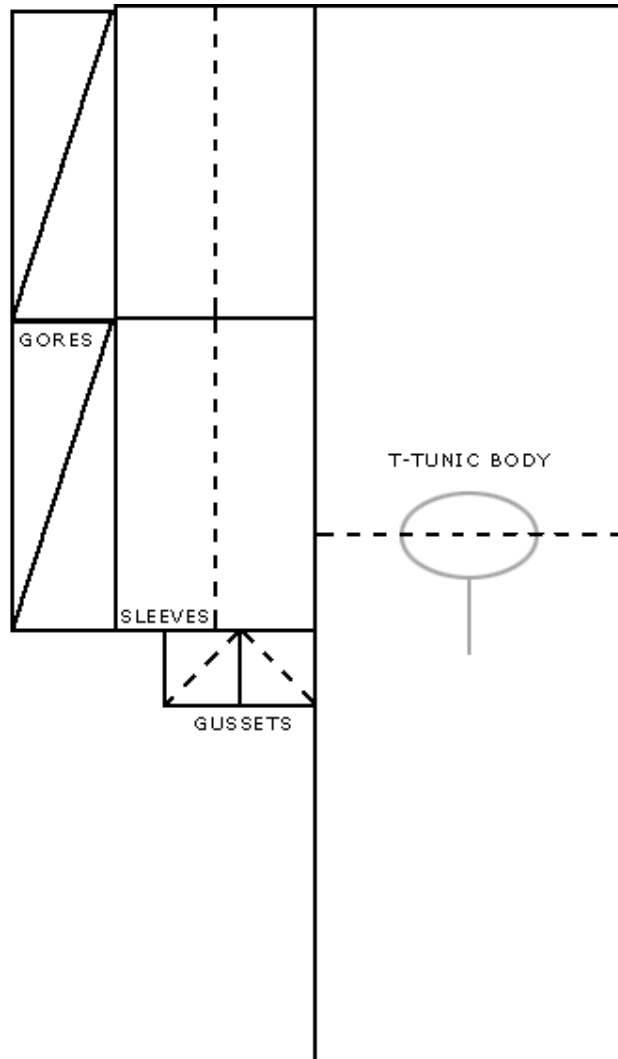
- - - - - denotes fold  
————— denotes cutting line



### Example Two of T-Tunic Pattern Layout

If your measurements will not fit on the width of your material, try this layout as another space optimising option.

----- denotes fold  
————— denotes cutting line



## Appendix 2 – Neckline Pattern

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Trace and cut out this pattern. The lines provided are the centre neckline. Please leave approximately 3-4cm around the outside of the lines and cut the centre area out along the line. Do not cut down the vertical line on your pattern or material until instructed.

Your cut out pattern should look roughly like the grey area highlighted to the right.

