

# AMT GARD

SUPPLEMENT #2: BASIC GARB





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## GARB - AMTGARD STYLE

(Or why "Amtgard" garb may be more authentic than you realize)

As a member to two medieval societies I have become aware of a dichotomy between the two organizations' definition of garb. After several seasons and myriad events the conclusion is that one society seems to be pretty well established in the 15th century garb wise. Amtgard clearly is not. Our garb runs the gamut of medieval dress codes but by and large it would seem we are definitely pre-15th century. "Ah, ha", said I. The search for Amtgard's century is on! I have borrowed from friends, harassed libraries, scrounged book stores, but could establish Amtgard's "period" no closer than 12th century and before. I have seen 3rd century barbarians and remarkably close versions of 12th century knights on any given Saturday. This nine plus century span also includes our exotic; fauns, dryads, wizards, and etc. but that's another article somewhere up the garber's road.

By and large this modest literary effort will be concerned with the 3rd through the 12th centuries and will concentrate on common dress for the Norman, Welsh, Saxon, Celts, and similar type peoples. Now, if this seems to be an unwieldy time span recall fashions did not change every year as in our modern world. Also keep in mind that fashion followed function. The people we are following fashion wise wore clothes as a survival tool first and as a fashion statement second so the primary thrust of this article will be on common sense and practicality producing good looking, functional, and (reasonably) historically accurate garb.

Observing that due to lack of central heating the layered look was a fashion of necessity in the medieval eras. The climate in the British Isles and Northern Europe did not vary substantially from what we know today, i.e., mostly damp and cold for much of the year. Add to this the fact that material was damned hard to come by even for the nobility. You had to literally grow your own wool and flax and then harvest, prepare, spin, weave, and finally construct your clothing.

Also recall that some ladies and most men were also what we would call managers in modern parlance. There were indeed ladies and gentlemen but they often ran large households. They were working executives and as such their clothing had to be practical and efficient. So, given the prerequisites of:

Cold Damp Climate

Lack of Central Heating

Relative scarcity of material and the man hours involved in producing it

Practicality

and add what has been gleaned from myriad historical sources and a strong dollop of common sense and you come up with garb remarkably like that worn by most Amtgards on Saturdays and on camping trips. The one exception would be ladies dress. Many of our ladies prefer the convenience of pants and tunics and this was not commonly so in the middle ages (although not unheard of). I



do tend to smile a lot at some of the ladies garb I see at some larger events especially the yards and yards of velvet and the ones consisting mainly of sequins and veils. I will ask you to remember the costs of materials. Some volume was necessary in dress skirts for warmth but too much would be quite literally impossible. These ladies climbed stairways, trecked over stone or dirt floors covered with rushes, and frequently checked out the south forty to make sure the milk maids weren't stroking the cowherders rather than the cows - all this wearing acres and acres of velvet or see through dacron? I beg to express some small amount of skepticism. (In other words "Bovine excreta you all").

Obviously all of the above is leading up to something. It will be called the Amtgard Garb Book, fully illustrated, and will attempt to bring garb and the making thereof out of the Middle Ages. Publication will be before December, 1988.

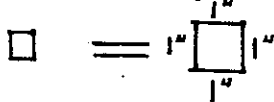
Countess Gwynne,  
Garbers Guild



## THE 1001 TUNIC

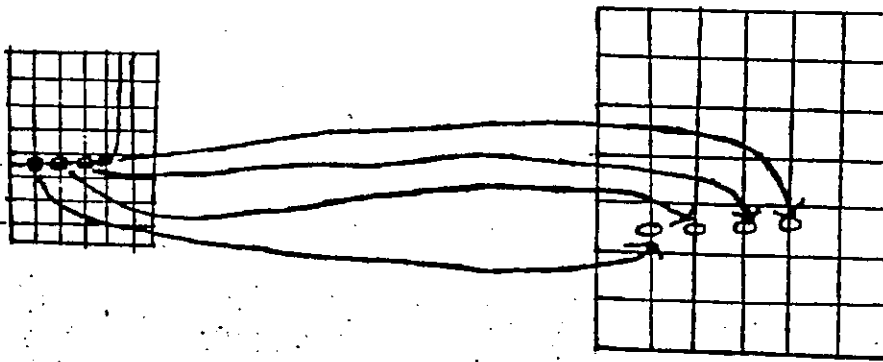
OK, so maybe it doesn't have quite as many variations as Scheherazade's stories, but there is lots you can do with this tunic. First, I will explain the patterns and how to enlarge them. Secondly, I'm going to give you the basics of putting the tunic together. Finally, I'll go through some of the variations.

The patterns for this tunic have been reduced on the following pages. The scale for the reduction is 1/4 inch equals 1 inch. This means that each square on the grided pages equals one square inch ----->



In order to enlarge these patterns, you will need some newspaper, butcher paper, paper bags, old sheets, etc. Any of these materials will work well as your new pattern.

The easiest method of enlarging the pattern will be to grid your pattern material into one inch squares and then graph the reduced pattern onto the larger squares ----->



This allows you to transfer your pattern directly, without having to do tons and tons of measuring.

The second method is to measure tons and tons. You can start at one point on the reduced pattern and measure to another point, now calculate (multiply by 4) the inches involved and draw this on your large pattern.

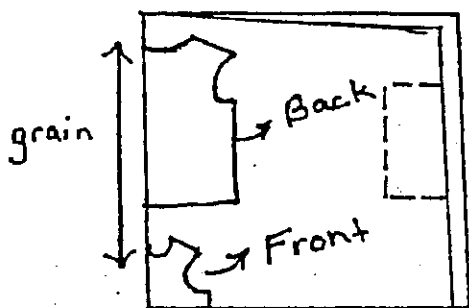
When enlarging your patterns, you will notice lots of diamond shapes (notches) and small dots on the reduced patterns. These are not necessary, but they will help when putting the tunic together so you may want to transfer them to your large patterns. Also note that these patterns have a 5/8 inch seam allowance.

Now that the enlarged patterns are completed, we need to think about material. This pattern works well with most any cotton or cotton blend material. Broadcloth is probably the easiest to work with (and fairly inexpensive). You can also use wool, denim-like materials and light weight knitted velours. I would not recommend most types of very stretchy knits.

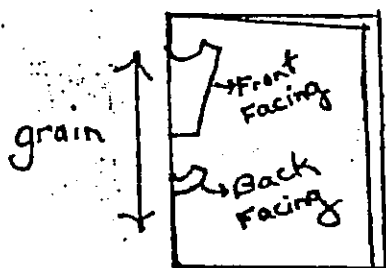
To make the basic tunic you'll need approximately 4-4 1/2 yards of 45 inch material. With 60 inch material, you can probably use about 3-3 1/2 yards. With the variations noted at the end, you will have to adjust the amount of material.

When cutting out the patterns, make sure to place the ones that should be cut on the FOLD on the fold. This is very important because 1) you will have seams in the middle of your front and back if you don't, and 2) your tunic will be too small because there is no seam allowance for seams in the middle of the front and back. The patterns that must be placed on the fold are the Front and Back on page 7 and the Front Facing and Back Facing on page 8.

To cut out your patterns on 45 inch material, lay the Front and Back on the fold. You can place one or the other upside down to make this easier ----->

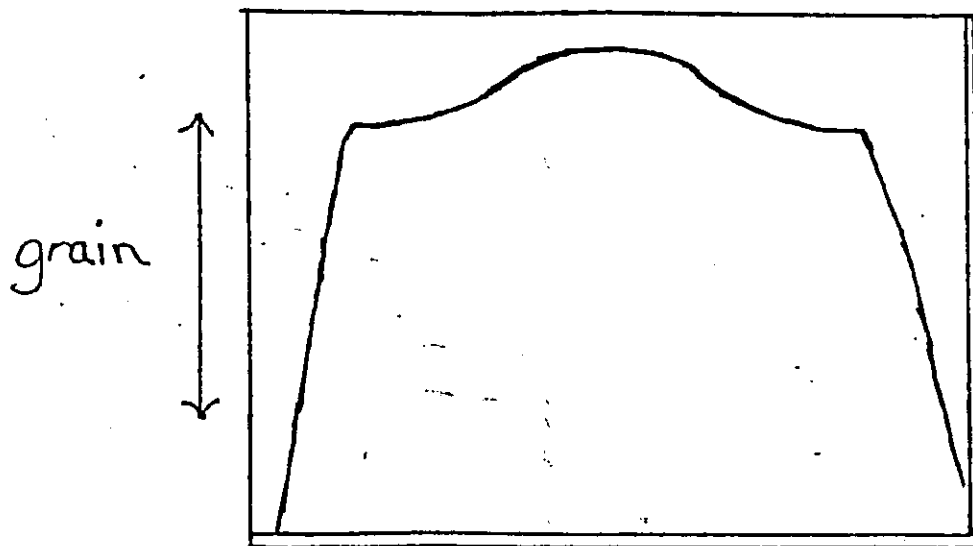


In order to use your material wisely, place the Front and Back Facings on the excess after you cut out the larger pieces.



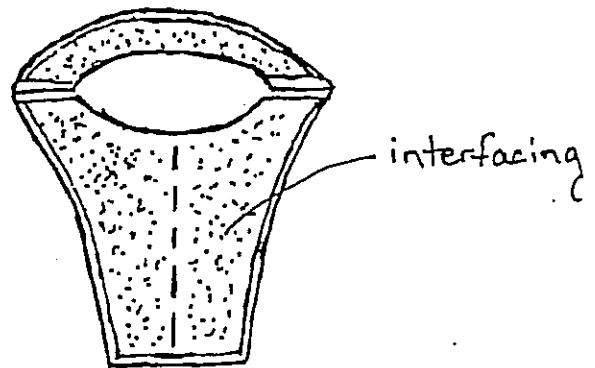
This piece comes from about here and is folded side to side along the same grain as the larger piece.

For the sleeve (if you are using the large sleeve use 4 1/2 yards of material), fold the material from top to bottom.

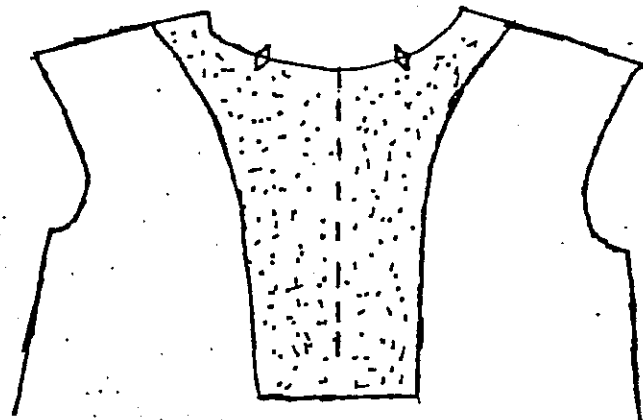


You will need to cut out pieces of light to medium weight interfacing for the Front and Back Facings. Attach these to the facings and then sew the facings together at the shoulder, matching the small notches (diamonds).

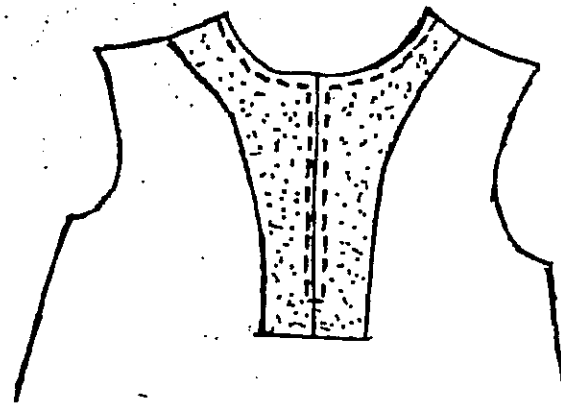
Finish the unnotched outer edges of the facing by rolling them 1/4 inch and sewing, or cutting them with pinking shears. Your finished facing will look like this ----->



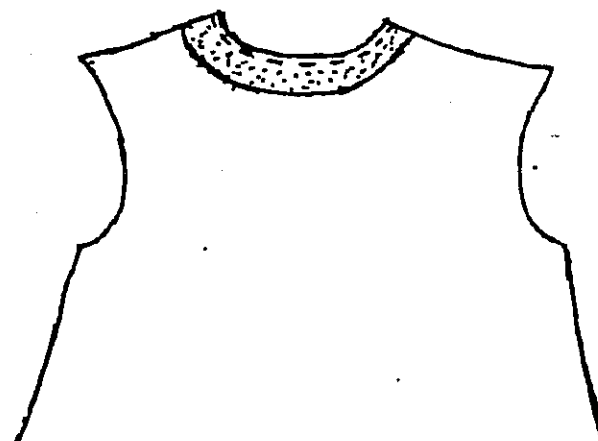
Now lay the Front Facing on the Front of the tunic, right sides together, matching notches ----->



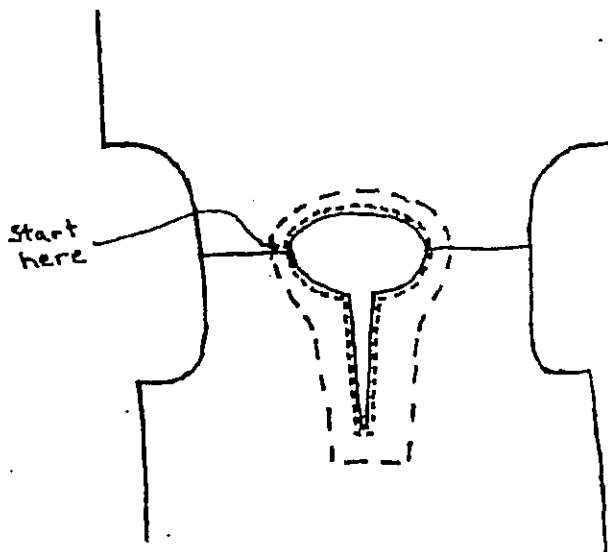
Sew along the neck and approximately 1/8 inch from the center line down about 10 inches, square and come back up the other side ----->



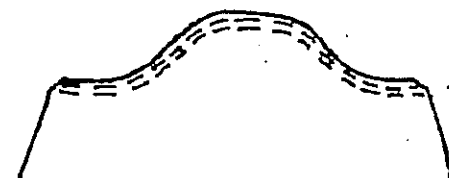
Now attach the Back to the Front at the shoulders and then sew the Back Facing to the neck of the Back, right sides together ----->



Cut down the center line of the Front Facing and Front tunic almost to the lower stitches. Turn all the facing to the inside and top stitch approximately 1/4 inch from the edge, starting at one shoulder ----->

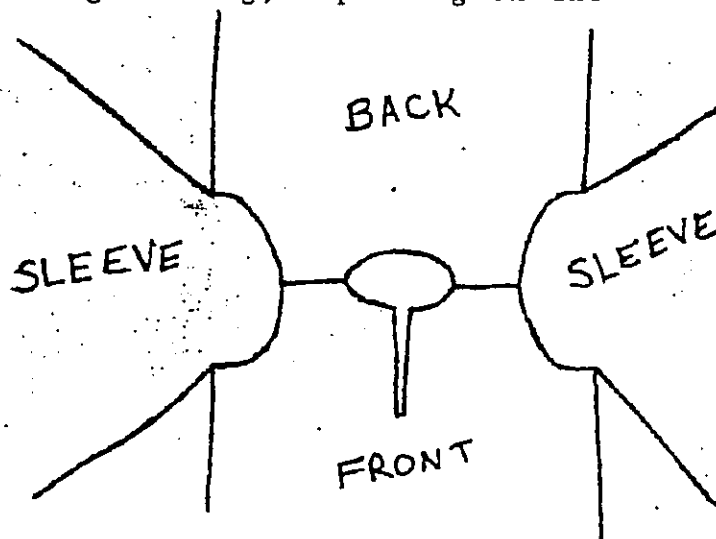


Now you need to add a gathering stitch to the top of the sleeve. This is a very loose stitch that you will use to pull up small "puckers" or gathers in the sleeve in order for it to fit the tunic ----->

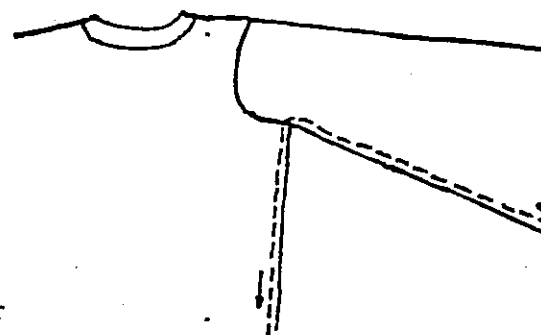


Match the middle dot of the sleeve to the shoulder seam of the tunic and the small dots on sleeve and tunic. Also match the large notches to the back and the small notches to the front. These sleeves will require very little gathering, depending on the type of material used.

To gather the sleeve, pull the string on one side of the material only. You will need to gather the material only if there seems to be excess between the dots or the notches. You will gather, or pull, the material up until the sleeve material is even, or flush, with the tunic material. Now sew the top of the sleeve to the tunic. You have something that looks like this ----->



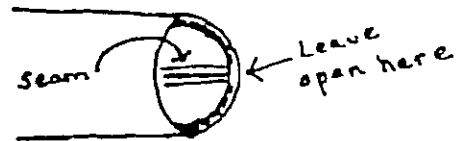
Turn all of this wrong side outwards, match the underarm seams and the notches and sew from the sleeve all the way down to the bottom of the tunic ----->



Now you need to make a small casing for the elastic on the sleeve if you want a



gathered sleeve. Fold up approximately 1/4 inch of the edge and then fold again about 1/2 inch. Sew along the edge, leaving an



opening to slide the elastic through. Insert your elastic and fit the sleeve comfortably to your wrist. Sew the ends of the elastic together, push them into the casing and sew the small hole shut.

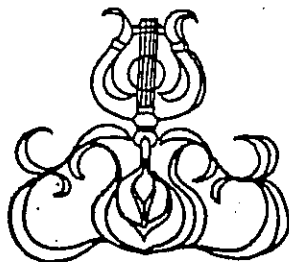
Finish the tunic by hemming the bottom. Turn up 1/4 inch and then another 1/4 inch and sew along the edge. This keeps you from having exposed raw (or frayed) edges.

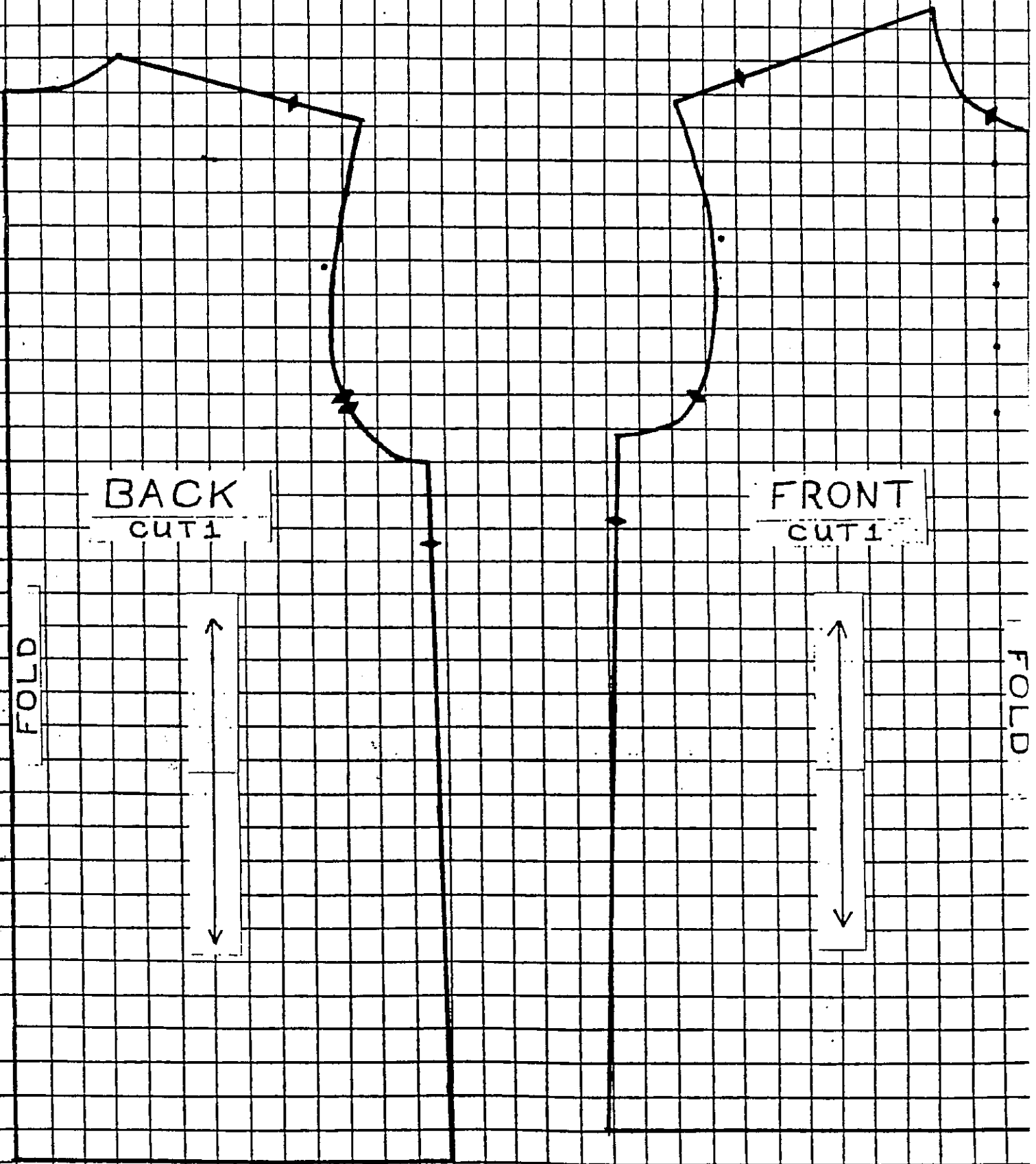


For variations on this tunic try:

- 1). Adding grommets for lacing the front opening (the 5 small dots on the Front pattern piece).
- 2). Adding a cuff to the sleeve and grommets for lacing the cuff.
- 3). Using the narrower sleeve pattern on page 19.
- 4). Adding a collar.
- 5). Adding a hood.
- 6). Making the front facing a contrasting color on the outside.
- 7). Making the front facing and collar contrasting colors.
- 8). Making the front facing and the cuffs contrasting colors.
- 9). Making the gathered sleeves a contrasting color, etc., . . .
- 10). So its not quite 1001 variations, but use your imagination.

*Ariona*





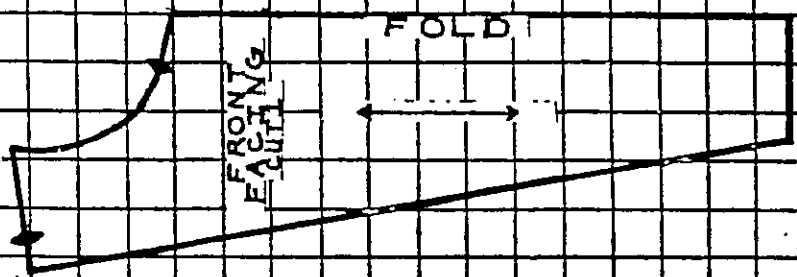
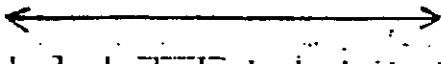
BACK  
CUT 1

FRONT  
CUT 1

FOLD

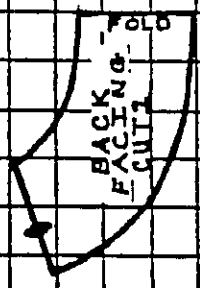
FOLD

SLEEVE  
CUT 2

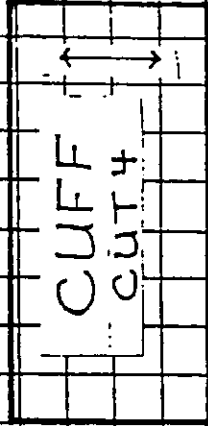


FRONT  
FACING  
CUT 1

FOLD

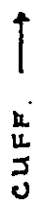


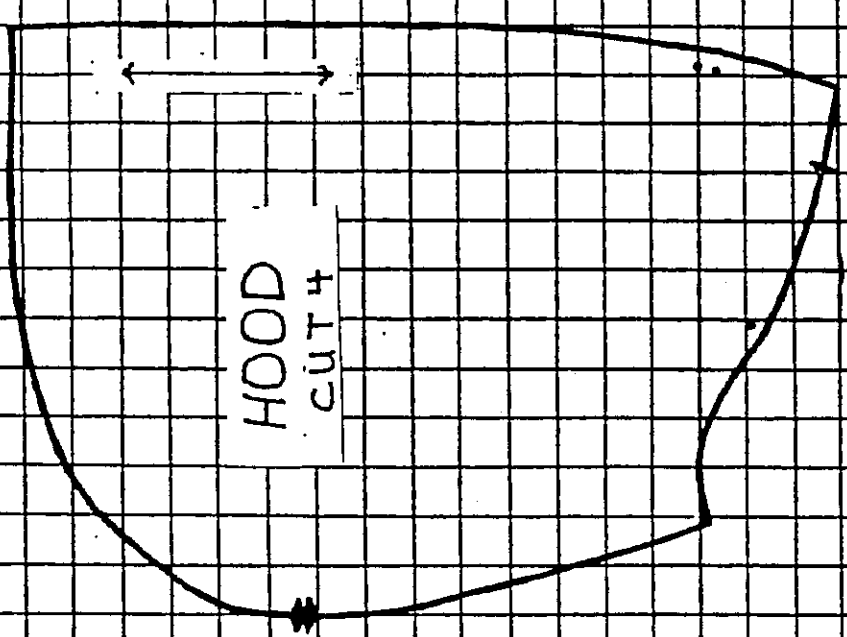
BACK  
FACING  
CUT 1



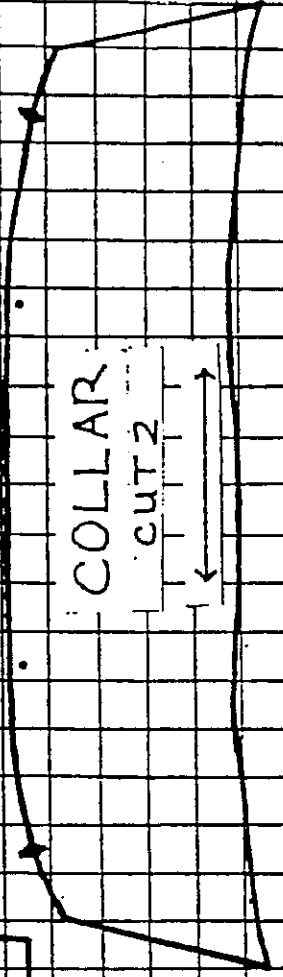
CUFF  
CUT 4

SEW TO HERE  
WHEN USING  
CUFF →

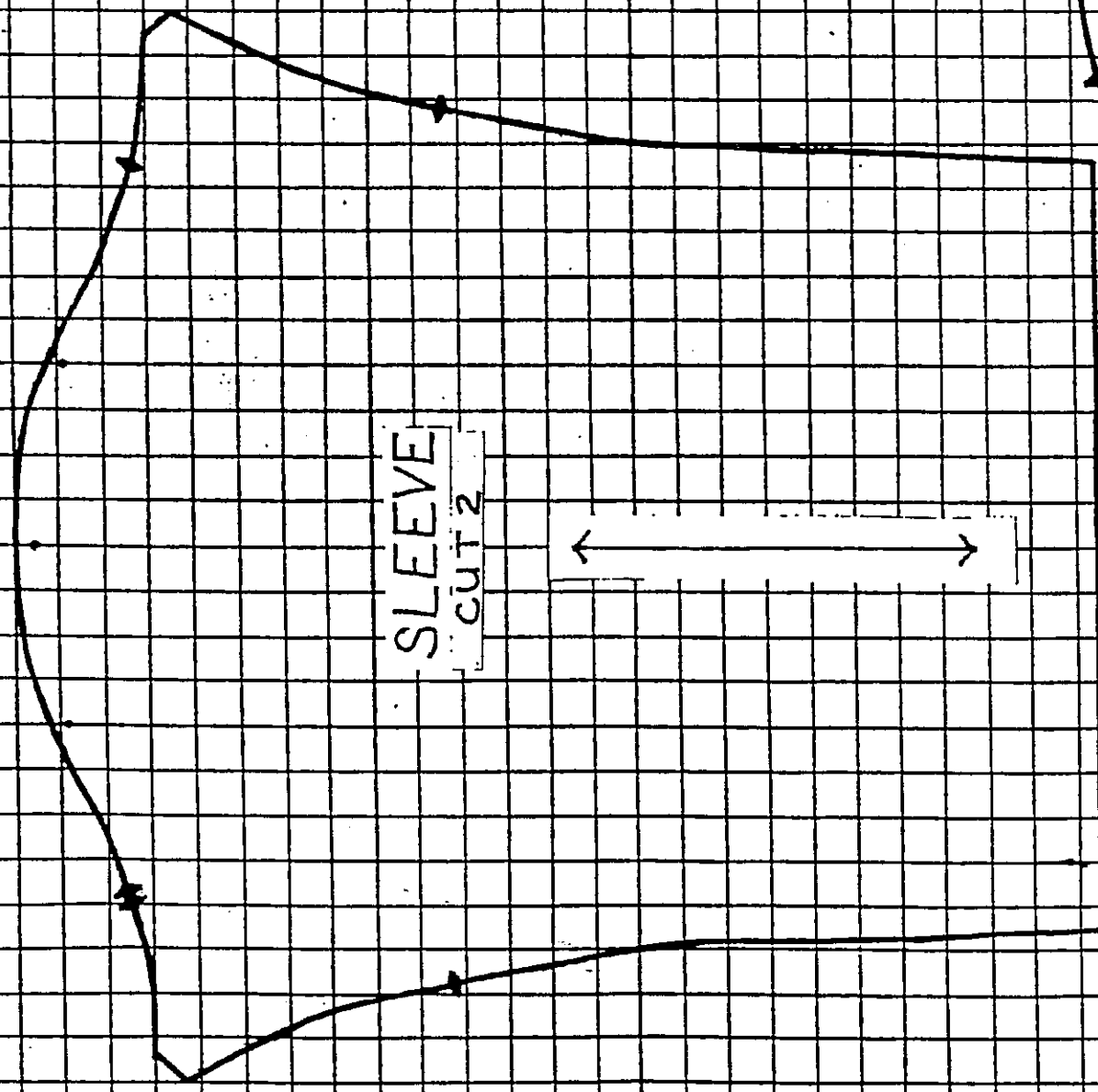




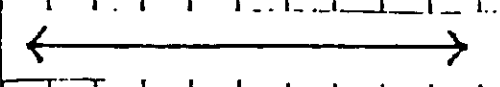
HOOD  
cut 4



COLLAR  
cut 2



SLEEVE  
cut 2

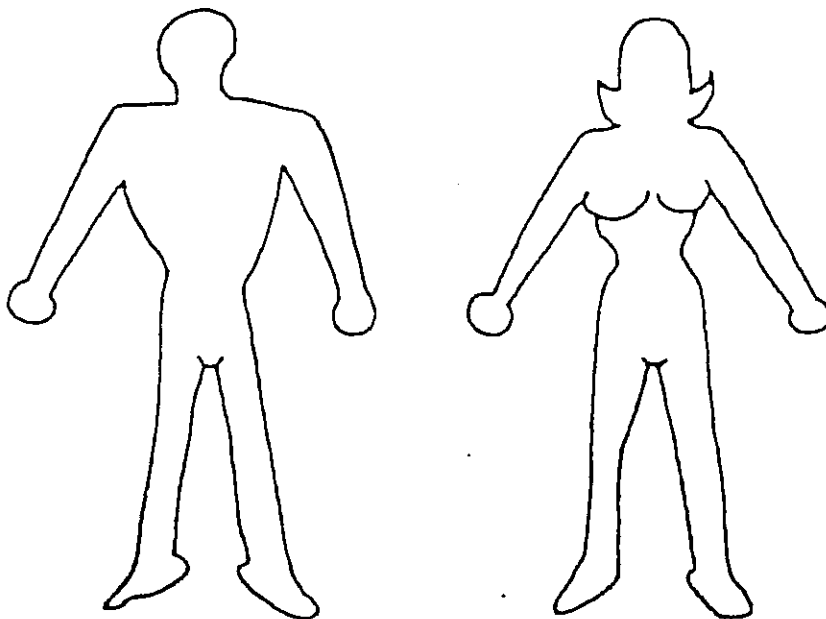


# Sewing 101

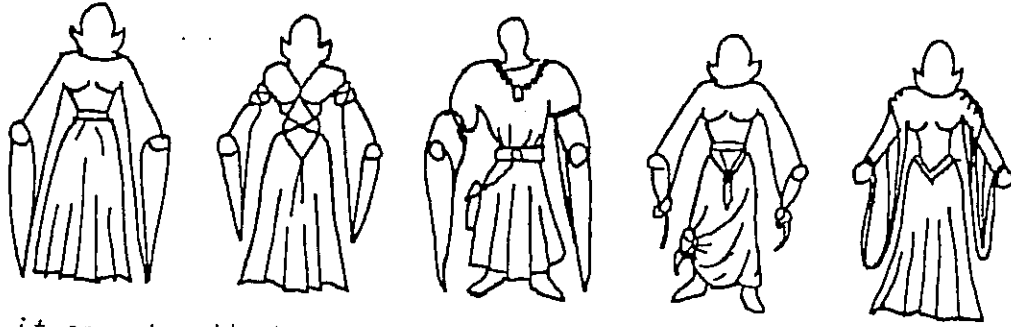
The Garber's Guild and Newsletter have printed a number of excellent and informative articles on the making of garb, including grid patterns and sewing tips. These articles have no doubt proven vastly helpful to those who know how to use them. However, those club members who don't have any idea how to sew by a pattern still don't.

When I joined Amtgard, my only experience with sewing had been stitching together vinyl blaster holsters for science fiction conventions. I had never sat down at a sewing machine till I took sixteen yards of satin and turned it into a 16th century French court dress. This is what I call a trial by fire. I broke five needles, invented invective which would skin the ears off a tavern wench, and ended up hand sewing half of it. My relationship with the infernal monsters (aka sewing machines) has not been much improved, but my skills have. I taught myself, mostly, and so can you, male or female. There's nothing about the masculine anatomy that makes it any more difficult to sew. For beginners, I suggest something less complex, and materials less costly, than those I learned my first lesson on. Following are a set of really simple patterns. These are admittedly much more easily sewn on the machine. But sewing machines are a relatively recent invention, and people have been wearing clothing for a long time. They can be sewn by hand, and you'll get points for authenticity to boot.

But before we get started on our projects, I'd like to introduce you to Fred... and Ethel. They have generously agreed to be our models for this demonstration.

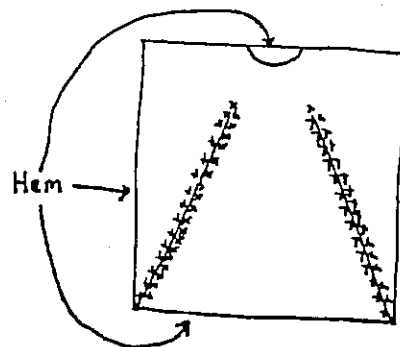
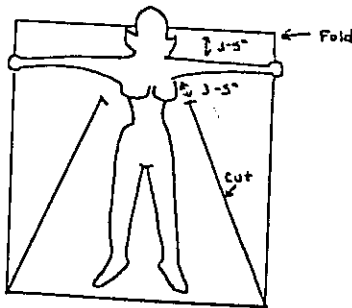


# The Ever Popular T-Tunic

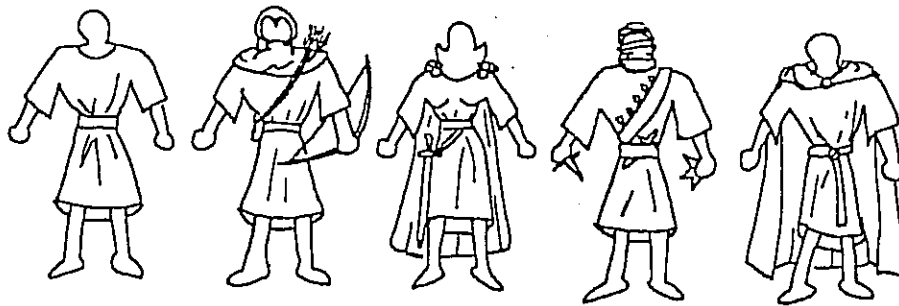


Believe it or not, all the pictures in the diagram above are of the same tunic. Not just the same pattern, mind you. Fred and Ethel are wearing the exact same piece of garb in every picture (yeah, Fred's a little weird, but he's getting help). This just goes to show you the versatility of the basic T-Tunic. Here's how to make one:

To start, you need 4 yards of 60" wide cloth, preferably something inexpensive with some stretch to it if you're a beginner. Fold the cloth lengthwise, so you have a somewhat rectangular shape of cloth two thicknesses deep, 60" wide by 2 yards long. Lie down on it, as Ethel is demonstrating below. Place pins at an angle as shown 3-5" from your armpit. No, this isn't because your armpit is offensive, its to allow for the depth of your body. If you are particularly "gifted", you should allow a little more. Remember, if its too big, you fix it. If its too small, you give it away and start over again. When lying down on the cloth, also allow a couple of inches at the top for your shoulders, more for men. Draw or otherwise mark a line along the line. Cut a shallow scoop at the neckline for the headhole. Is your cloth inside out? Good. Sew along the "x's", going over the armpit region twice. Make small snips (don't cut your seam!) from the outside edge of the fabric to near the seam in this region. This allows you to raise your hand. Try it on, make sure it isn't somebody's Christmas present yet. Make sure you like the neckline, if you don't, then cut it out the way you want it to look. Unless you're a giant, it will be too long at this point (I use 3 yards of fabric, but too much is better than too little). Just pin it at the right length and cut it off. Don't worry about cutting the ends off your seams, the hem will keep your ends together. Now hem the neckline, sleeves and hem by folding under a small edge of the cloth and sewing it down. I always sew with the outside up, for two reasons. The bobbin (the bottom thread) messes up more often than the needle. And you can see what its going to look like as you go. Trim off all those yicky threads, trim up the inside of the sleeves where the seam shows and...voila! You're ready for the Cinderella routine. Try different belts, knots, etc., to bring out the versatility of your new garb.

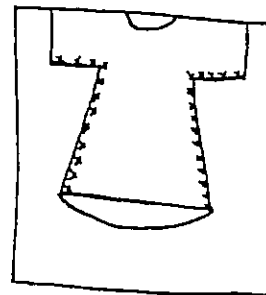
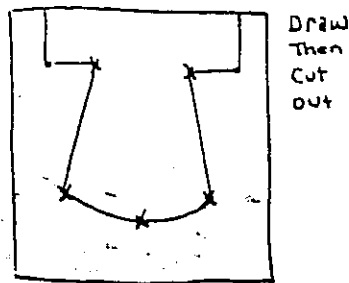
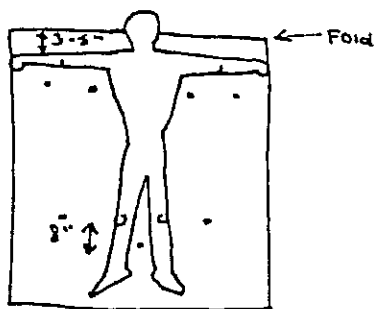


# Riding Tunic



A variation on the same theme, more appropriate for fighting in (you trip over the sleeves of the other one). As you can see, Ethel likes wearing Fred's clothes as much as he likes wearing hers. Hey, don't laugh, it doubles both their wardrobes. This pattern is not nearly as versatile as the basic one, but by using different accessories and types of fabrics, the pattern can be specialized.

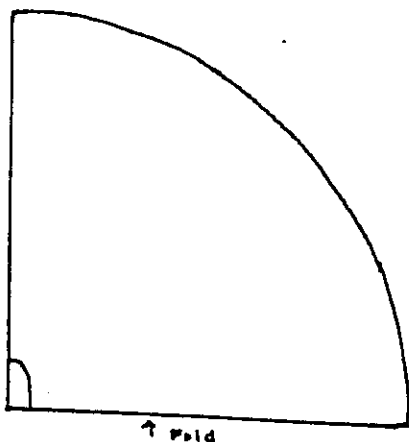
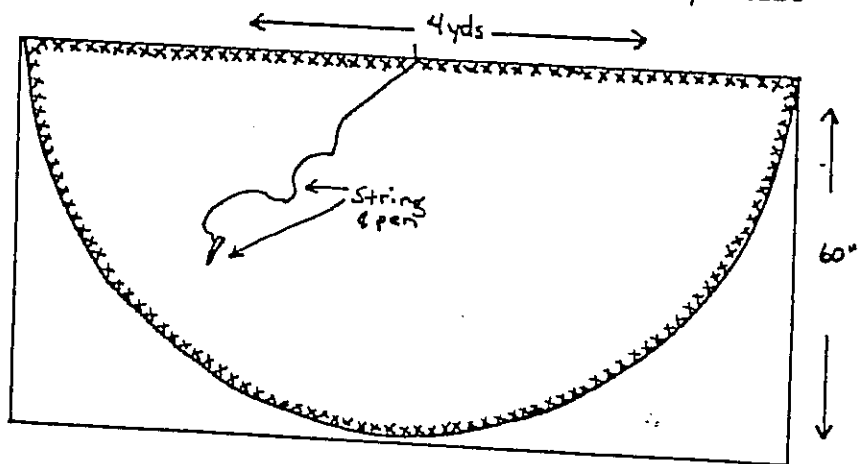
You'll need 3 yards of 45" wide or wider fabric. Fold as before, lie down on it as Fred is demonstrating. As before, mark the armpit and leave a shoulder allowance. This time, though, mark just past the elbow and about 8" below the knee as well. This will be the back hem. On a level just below the knee, mark spots almost as wide as the sleeves for the front hem (I know it's confusing, but look at the pretty diagram). Draw lines from pin to pin, with the bottom line curving, as in the middle diagram. Cut out this shape through both layers of cloth. Then, as in the diagram on the right, cutting through only one layer of cloth, cut the front hem straight across. Cut out a shallow neckline. Follow all the rest of the T-tunic instructions from "Is your cloth inside out?"



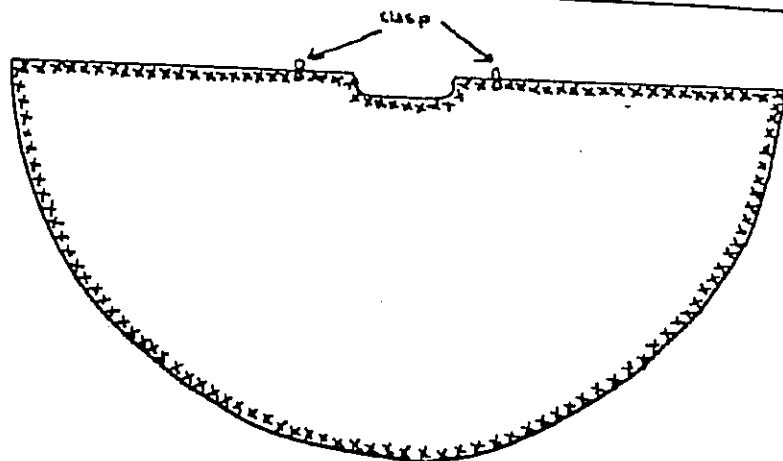
# Half-Circle Cloak

If you've ever been on a camping event, you know that it may be 112 degrees during the daytime, but it will be 12 degrees that night. This is what cloaks were invented for. I have heard the rumor that they were invented for the sole purpose of inviting fair members of the other sex to "share body heat" as it were. This is an exaggeration. Just try getting someone to share a cloak with you when it's 112 degrees outside.

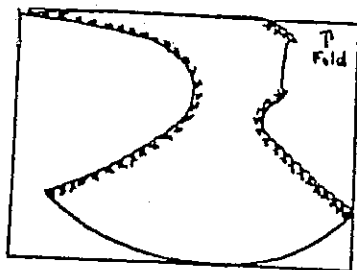
The hardest thing about making this cloak is finding enough space to lay out the fabric. You'll need 4 yards each of your outer fabric and your liner. The outer fabric should be a dense, tough material like condourou. The liner should be something soft and warm, like flannel or velour. Lay the outer fabric with good side facing up. Lay the liner on top of it with the good side facing down. Your fabric should now be "inside out". Measure the length from your shoulder to the floor. Add 5-8", cut a string to that length. If the answer is greater than 60", use 60". The cloak will not reach to the floor on you. Tie a felt tipped pen or a piece of chalk to one end. Lay the pen on one corner of the fabric, then stretch out the string along the long side of the cloth till it is taut, and pin it there. Keeping the string taut, draw a semi-circle, as if you were using a compass (kind of an arcane ritual, eh? What do you want from the Guildmaster of Wizards?). Cut along the line. Don't worry if you don't use all the fabric, people come in all sizes. Sew all the way around the edges (trust me, I know what I'm doing). Fold cloak in half so you have a semi-triangular shape. Cut an oblong quarter circle from the pointy corner. This quarter circle (soon to be your neckline) should only be about 3" x 5" (you can always make it bigger). Now, reach through the neckhole and gently turn your cloak right side out. Make sure to get the corners. Test the neckline to see if it fits, if not, adjust it. Carefully tuck the edges inside the neckline and pin. Sew shut, using a decorative stitch if available. Continue around the entire cloak, pulling the edges out so that they lay flat as you go. Take care to keep the weight of the cloth from bending your needle. This is a heavy cloak, so you'll want a strong clasp or frog. Set them about 4" below the actual neckline or they'll strangle you. Metal clasps should be set with cloth or leather tongues. You may wish to Scotchguard the outside of the cloak to protect against inclement weather.



cloak folded in half







## Hoods

Best made of scrap cloth, at least until you have a working model, hoods are easy to make and add a lot to your garb. They are a simple method of making warm winter headgear, and really make an archer or scout costume. Not including the hems, they take about fifteen minutes from scissors to mirror. The only disadvantage is that sizing them is a drag. It's really easier to simply make a few out of scrap fabric (a yard or a yard and a half will do), until you get one that fits. Then keep it and use it for patterns.

This brings me to an important point. When you get a piece of garb which fits and looks good, use it for a pattern to make more. I've never made a riding tunic from "scratch". Aredhel was once kind enough to lend me one made for him by an SCA personage. I used it cut out Gilos' brown and black one, which won the Best Fighting Garb contest at Crown Qualifications. I used that one to make my grey one. The grey one has been used as a pattern for the black ones for my entire company, and a dozen or more for other club members. All from borrowing one piece to use as a base pattern.

Don't be disappointed if your first few efforts don't come out looking as you'd planned. I've been doing this steadily for six years now, and only about half of my projects come out as planned. What matters is that it comes out looking good. Often accidents turn into serendipity, making the finished product look better than it would have if you had not messed up. Fabric can be had for .59¢ to \$1.25 per yard downtown in an astonishing variety of colors, weights and textures. Don't be shy. The absolute worst that could happen is that you'll end up with some new dishrags and the same old garb you've got now.

On that note, we'll offer Fred and Ethel our thanks for their time and cooperation. I don't think high heels are "period", Fred.

**SCOUT**



## GARB IN THE BEGINNING

It is truthfully said that the clothes make the man. A person's character and personality are mirrored by the clothes he wears. In our medieval society, Proper raiment is essential in building a persona. Everybody develops a character that he can be. Complete freedom exists as long as the time frame chosen doesn't exceed 1650 A.D. unless the character is created as a fantasy persona, i.e. an elf. The picture of the new being is enhanced by the use of clothes. An elf doesn't wear blue jeans in literature nor does an assassin wear a heavy metal rock concert T-shirt. These bits of mundane life help destroy the illusion that the club is attempting to build.

Since Amtgard is mainly a fighting organization, fighting garb is the first consideration. A garbers guild was established to aid in the designing and making of garb. Mundane patterns can, with a little time and effort, be changed into medieval garb. For a new initiate to the club, it is acceptable that he will have little or no garb the first few times he is present. There exist, of course, exceptions to the rule. People have shown up on their first time with garb and weapons, a rare sight. What is unexcusable is the sight of fighters who have been there for weeks, lacking proper garb. A pattern for a T-tunic is so simple that anyone could make it. The two pieces have to be joined and hemmed only. A belt makes the tunic fit better. With the cost of cloth found in downtown stores so low, a simple tunic can be made for probably no more than five dollars. The cost of building a weapon is at least the same.

Correct fighting class garb would help immensely with efficiency on the battlefield. A warrior could see immediately what class his companion was playing if the companion was wearing what his class required in the way of garb. A belt should be discernable from at least a distance of six feet. Having a scouts sash hidden beneath another belt is very confusing. Having a phoenix drawn on a person's chest should not be allowed. Neither should a

small two inch phoenix sewn or drawn onto one side of the garb. It isn't easily visible. Having armor covering up a phoenix should not be allowed either.

Another noticable problem is that warriors are mistaking squires for healers as both of them wear red sashes or belts. A simple solution is for healers to wear red shoulder sashes only which most of them do anyway.

While most people own nothing but jeans or shorts, an effort could be made to find pants of another color such as tan, white or black. Fleas markets and garage sales are good places to find pants that can withstand heavy wear with little cost being spent on them. Pants can be made but it is rather complicated for an amateur seamster. The easiest pattern requires an elastic waist which many fighters dislike.

Footgear other than tennis shoes are also rare on the battlefield. Most find that moccasin boots are above their limited budget. Tennis shoes or old boots can be altered so a more medieval shoe is visible. Covering the boots in fake fur by either strong glue or hand sewing can be done in a day and if well done, they last for a long while. Fur leggings which cover a large part of a shoe are more easily made. An elastic strip can be attached on both sides of the bottom of the fur and slid under the shoe to hold the fur in place. The fur can also be found downtown for those who are willing to search.

A final problem which is less important than fighting garb is garb that can be worn to qualification events, feasts, and demonstrations. Armor just isn't appropriate at a feast; it's too noisy and clumsy. Elaborate T-tunics and cloaks made a fine start toward a person's better garb. Adding trim, elaborate belts and jewelry liven up the appearance even more. Good costumes can't often be worn on the battlefield because they are too fine and might be ruined so they are only needed every once in a while.

Dressing in persona is very enhancing. It adds dimension to a character. It is easier to believe a person is a barbarian if he is wearing fur, not T-shirts. Many

books are available at libraries to aid in the research of a costume of a particular time period. If a persona is not history based, then a person can use his imagination to design costumes.

When people enter a club and wish to be a part of it, then they should try to conform a little with the ideal of the club. Amtgard's ideal is to build a fighting medieval society with a little culture added if possible. It is harder to do so if people are not willing to take the effort in making proper counterments so as to fit in more easily. There are many members who are willing to help if people would just take the time and show interest in themselves and the club.

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