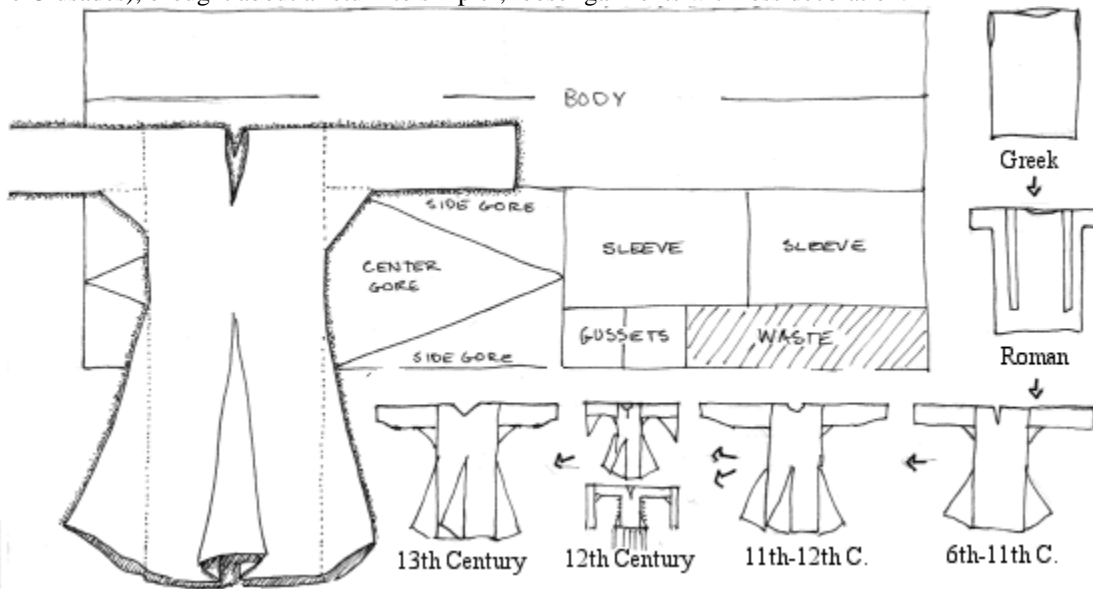


# Basics of Geometric Garment Construction

## Main Points:

- Geometric Construction, also called “rectangular construction” applies to any garment cut chiefly from geometric pieces. For the purposes of this class, however, we are focusing on upper body garments worn in W.Europe.
- Garments made this way can be made with a minimum of scissor cuts, and very little waste.
- Much of the cutting can be done by tearing the cloth along the straight grain, which gives a pure straight edge.
- Shaping and movement ease are provided by gores and gussets inserted into seams rather than shaped or tailored pieces. Center gores for more even fullness seem to have become more common in the 11th C.
- It is one of the oldest forms of garment construction and possibly the oldest form of constructed garment construction.
- This method of garment cutting was fairly highly developed by the middle of the 12th century, and was pushed to its limits in variety of shapes and figure-accentuating designs. At the end of the 12th C, fashion, combined with a widespread, relative impoverishment of the nobility and wealthy merchant classes (caused by wars and the funding of the Crusades), brought about a return to simpler, looser garments with less decoration.



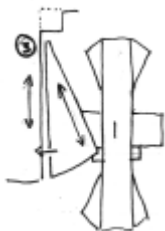
## Assembling a Basic Geometric Cut Tunic



**1:** Sew the gussets to the sleeves and finish the seam (1). Fold sleeves in half lengthwise, mark center point of sleeve. (1a)



**2:** Fold body of tunic in half, hem edge to hem edge, and mark the center point. Match fold on sleeves to fold on body (2). Pin and sew. Finish seams. You should end up with a t-shape like the one in the illustration.



**3:** Pin side gores to body, starting at hem and matching the bias edge of each gore to the edge of the body. Make sure you are working on the right side of the tunic. Sew gores in place (if sewing by machine, sew from hem to point to reduce stretching), and finish seams.

**4:** Lay center gores out and mark length of slit by the bias edge, marking the slit about 1" shorter than you need it. Cut the slit (4) and pin the gores in place, and when you reach the point, clip a little further if necessary, but end the slit in a “y” shape (4a). Sew gores in place (if sewing by machine, sew as above) up to points. Sew points by hand and finish seams.



**5:** Finish neckline (not covered here due to variety of choices), and sew side seams in this order: Hem to armpit (protruding point of gusset), then armpit to cuff (5). Finish seams.

**6:** Hem the tunic. You are finished.



This is not meant to be an in-depth set of instructions, but a shorthand overview of the basic steps involved in constructing a typical geometric-cut tunic of the period we are discussing. For example, if you want to make earlier styles without center gores, omit step four.