

Kamison/Tunica Eastern Roman Empire/Byzantine Garment Worn by Men and Women

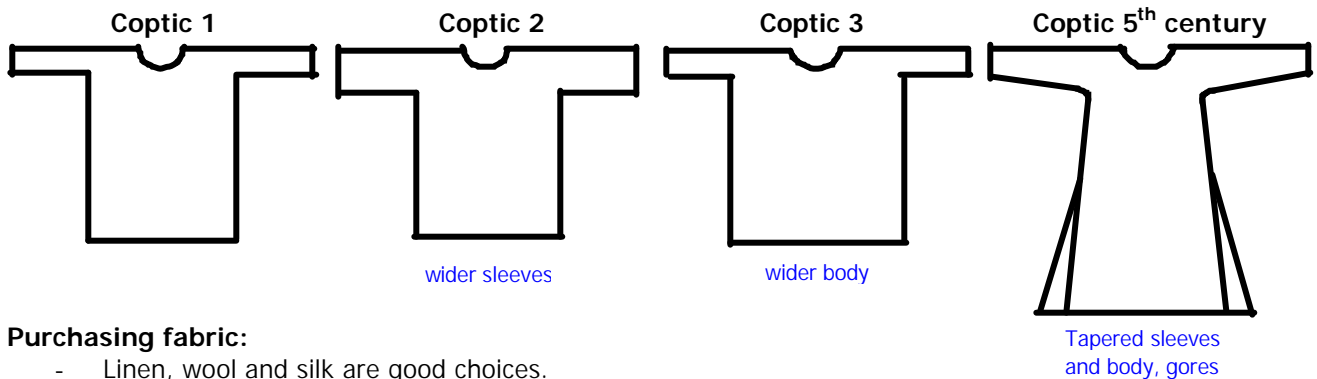
Project Sheet
Meghan Elphinstone

This is a garment with a round neckline and long sleeves worn under a delmatiki/dalmatica by both men and women. The garments illustrated as Coptic 1, 2 and 3 have been found the most often. It is a very loose garment cut straight from underarm to hem. The neck opening may be closed with a brooch.

It could reach to the knees for men, or to the feet for women and for men of high status. The 5th century Coptic is provided for someone who would like a moderately fitted alternative with some shape and flare to the skirt. This cut was probably not in wide use.

Note: the kamison/tunica should be loose. It is not meant to have a full skirt or a train.

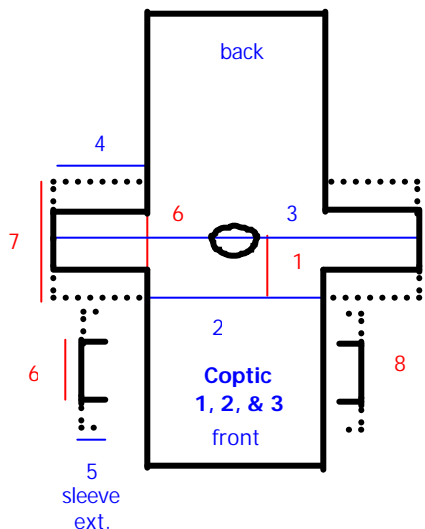
Please read the entire sheet before beginning and contact me if you have any questions.



Purchasing fabric:

- Linen, wool and silk are good choices.
- Kamisons/tunicas could be a color, but were usually of white or un-dyed fabric.
- If fabric is washable and you intend to wash the garment, wash and dry fabric before cutting.
- Purchase extra fabric if there is a possibility of shrinkage.
- .125 = 1/8 yd, .25 = 1/4, .33 = 1/3, .375 = 3/8, .5 = 1/2, .625 = 5/8, .66 = 2/3, .75 = 3/4, .875 = 7/8

Measurements: Choose between the Coptic styles and fill in the blanks for that style only. Numbers below correspond to numbers on the illustrations. Please print out this sheet and fill in the blanks completely to use as a reference as you mark your pattern.



- This symbol / means number divided by number.
- Measurements will be more accurate if someone else takes them.
- Vertical measurements are in red; horizontal ones in blue.

Measurements for Coptic 1, 2 and 3:

1. Shoulder to fullest part of chest in front ____
2. Chest ____ x 1.4 = ____ / 2 = ____ (for extra wide style **Coptic 3** multiply by a larger number than 1.4)
3. Garment Width: wrist over shoulders to wrist with arms at side
____ + 3 = ____ Total Width of Garment
4. Sleeve Length: #3 ____ - #2 ____ = ____ / 2 = ____
(Clarification: "#3 ____" = fill in the blank with the answer from 3. Width of Garment)

- Sleeve Extension: #3 ____ - width of fabric ____ = ____ / 2 = ____ (extensions may not be necessary with 60" fabric)
- Opening for Arm – Regular Sleeve (**Coptic 1 or 3**): under arm and over shoulder ____ + 3 = ____ . Make a circle of tape measure 1-1/2" smaller and slip over upper arm to check for comfort; flex arm.
- Opening for Loose sleeve (**Coptic 2**): under arm and over shoulder ____ x 1.5 = ____
- Shoulder to hemline in front ____ + 3 (more if belted) = ____

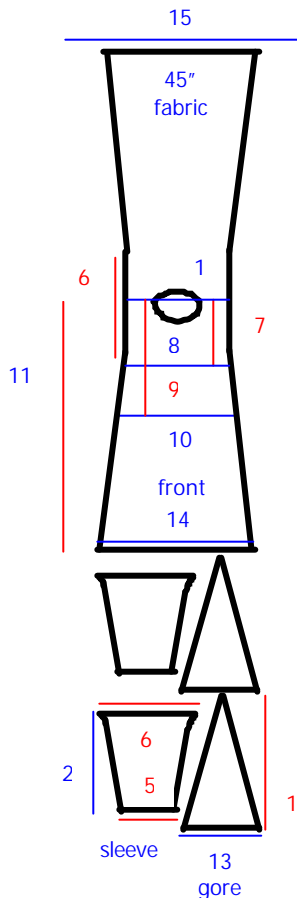
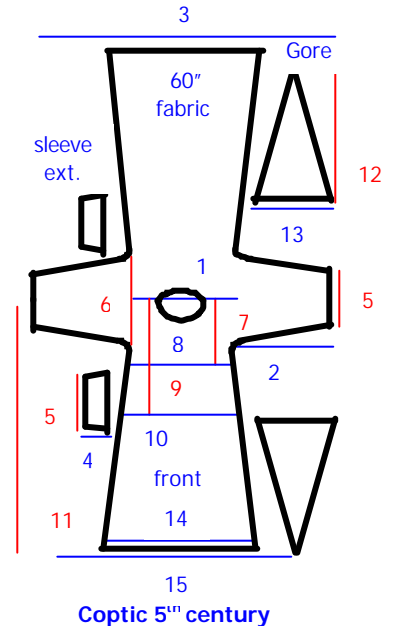
Write your answers next to the corresponding numbered line on the Coptic 1, 2 & 3 illustration of your print out (page 1).

Fabric yardage for Coptic 1, 2 & 3:

- 60", 45" wide: #8 x 2 = ____ / 36 = ____ yards.

Measurements for 5th Century Coptic:

- Shoulders ____ + 2 = ____
- Sleeve: shoulder point/top of arm to desired sleeve length ____ + 2 = ____
- Width of garment at Shoulders: 2 x #2 ____ = ____ + #1 ____ = ____ width (Clarification: "#2 ____" = fill in the blank with the answer from 2. Sleeve)
- Sleeve Extension: #3 ____ - width of fabric ____ = ____ / 2 = ____ (extensions may not be necessary with 60" fabric)
- Fist + 2 = ____ . Make a circle of tape measure 1-1/2" smaller and slip over hand. Use this for wrist.
- Opening for Arm: under arm and over shoulder ____ + 3 = ____ Make a circle of tape measure 1-1/2" smaller and slip over upper arm to check for comfort; flex arm
- Shoulder to fullest part of chest in front ____

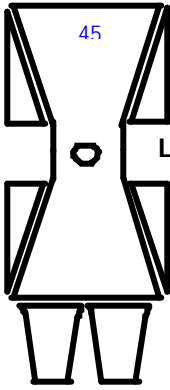


- Chest ____ + 6 = ____ / 2 = ____ (use a number larger than 6 if you would like the garment more than 3" larger than chest measurements)
- Shoulder to fullest part of torso - hip/stomach ____
- Hip/stomach ____ . Chest x 1.5 also needs to fit loosely over this measurement. <-- **Important**. Gores can help achieve fit.
- Shoulder to hemline in front ____ + 3 = ____ (more if belted)
- Gore Length: hip to hem ____ + 6 = ____ Starting the gore at the hip appears to be correct for the extant garment. Personal shape may dictate the gore start at, or slightly above the waist to fit over the hip. Alternate gore length: waist to hem ____ + 6 = ____
- Gore width: #4 ____ x .75 = ____
- Front or Back Panel at Hem: #4 ____ x 1.5 = ____
- Total Front or Back Hem: #8 ____ x 2 = ____ . Adjust both the slant of the armhole to hem on the body of the garment, and the width of the gore to achieve this measurement.

Write your answers next to the corresponding numbered line on the Coptic 5 illustration with the correct fabric width (this page).

Fabric yardage for 5th Century Coptic:

- I recommend using wider fabrics. Cutting the sleeves in one with the body gives the garment a better drape in the upper torso.
- **60" wide fabric:** #11 ____ x 2 = ____ = ____ / 36 = ____ yards.
- **45" wide fabric:** #11 ____ + #12 ____ = ____ x 2 = ____ / 36 = ____ yards.



- Yardage will vary depending upon the size of person and width of the fabric.
- Please do your own calculations and work up a layout before purchasing.

Layout and Cutting Suggestions for All Styles:

- I recommend drafting a pattern and making a mock-up at least to the hips to check fit before cutting into your good fabric.
- If fabric is directional (one-way design), decide which way you would like as “up”. Use layout elements showing all pattern pieces pointing towards the top of the page. It will be necessary to lay out the front and back separately. Add seam allowance to shoulder and create a front view pattern piece that looks like the illustration at the top of page 1.
- If fabric is not directional, it may be possible to cut split gores (2 flat sided triangles are sewn together to form one gore) next to the body of the garment. If cutting two triangles for each gore gives a sufficient hem, you will only need to purchase extra fabric for gores if you prefer a one-piece gore.
- **Pattern Coptic 1, 2 & 3:** create a pattern that looks like your choice of layouts by transferring your figures from #3, 2, 4, 6 or 7, 8 and 5 (if needed) under Measurements for Coptic 1, 2 & 3 above onto the corresponding area of your pattern or mock-up. The answers to numbers 1 will help you place your marks correctly. (#1 lets you know how far down to place #2)
- **Pattern Coptic 5:** create a pattern that looks like your choice of layouts by transferring your figures from #3, 2, 6, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 14 under Measurements for Coptic 5 above onto the corresponding area of your pattern or mock-up. The answers to numbers 1 will help you place your marks correctly. (#7 lets you know how far down to place #8) Then do the gores and sleeve extensions if necessary.
- **Neck** is rounded and higher in back (t-shirt neckline). If you fold fabric at the shoulders to cut it out, be careful to only cut the lower neckline on one layer of fabric.
- **Neck opening** – a slit was popular from the neck down the left shoulder. About 4” should be long enough.
- **Coptic 1 or 3 layout:**
 - o Follow solid lines for snug sleeves.
- **Coptic 2 layout:**
 - o Transition from solid lines to dotted lines for loose sleeves.

Note: All sewing will be with right sides of fabric together. Use a 1/2 - 5/8” seam. Pin edges together to keep the fabric from slipping while you are working with it. Press seams as you sew.

Decoration:

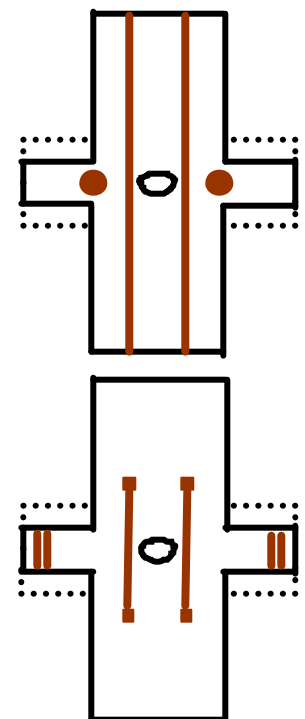
Although not all of these garments were decorated, most of the ones found have been. It is easier to add trim before the side seams are sewn. The most sought after color for decoration was purple, although extant examples include brown, yellow, red and green.

Look for trims, and for fabrics with stripes that can be used for trim.



Sleeve Ornaments whipstitched onto tunic. Coptic. Wool and linen tapestry on linen. Egypt. 6th c. 22x30 and 22x26cm

Stripes can be placed over both shoulders and extend to the lower chest or as far as the hem. Square, round and oval designs can be added at the end of the stripes or centered where the arm connects to the shoulder. Decoration was normally tapestry woven into the cloth as the garment was made. There have been a few examples of appliquéd decoration discovered. The illustrations at right show two suggestions for trimming your kamison. A variety of arrangements are possible.





Coptic Textile Fragment. Wool and linen. Tapestry and soumak. Egypt. 6th-7th century. 12½"x 6"

Basic Construction for Coptic 1, 2 and 3 –

1. If you are using a sleeve extension, sew the top to bottom portion of sleeve that is cut as one with the body of the garment. Press.
2. Sew trim over seam, if desired.
3. With right sides together, fold at the shoulders so that front and back face each other.
4. Sew from the underarm to the hem.
5. Sew from the underarm to the wrist, matching the seam/trim on the sleeve extension.
6. Check the size of the neck opening by pulling it over your head. If there is a chance you may stretch the

fabric out of shape as you sew the neck, stay stitch the neckline first. This is a small running stitch/straight stitch near the edge of the fabric to help stabilize it. Then finish the neck with a handkerchief hem. Roll fabric to wrong side or fold over twice as small as possible and hand stitch.

7. Try on and mark sleeve length. Cut off excess. Finish the sleeves with a handkerchief or small double-folded hem.
8. Mark hemline. Cut off any excess fabric beyond the amount allowed for the hem. Stitch hem.

— — — —
running stitch

Construction with Gores for 5th century Coptic –

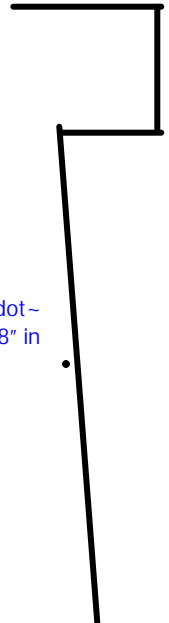
1. Follow #1 - #3 from basic instructions above.
2. Referring to illustration at right, cut off the tip of the gore so that a dot can be centered 5/8" in from top and both sides. Mark dot.
3. Mark a dot on the front of the kamison at mid hip/waist/slightly above waist (see Measurements for 5th century Coptic above).
4. Sew from underarm to dot at the dot.
5. Carefully match the dot on the gore to the end of the seam on the garment. Pin. Attach gore to front of garment by starting at dot and sewing to hem.
6. Carefully align and sew gore to back. Pin. Start at dot and sew to hem. Turn right side out and check appearance of gore.
7. Follow #5 - #8 under basic construction.

~dot~
5/8" in



gore top

~dot~
5/8" in



Fisherman, 5th

This is a simple project sheet meant for fabric layout and sewing instructions only. For more information on this garment, please refer to the downloadable PDF's on my web page:

Byzantine Court Ensemble, 5th-6th Century - female
Early Byzantine Clothing, Ornamentation and Accessories, 5th-6th Century - male

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Additional Bibliography

California Academy of Sciences. Stylistic Groups of the Coptic Textiles.

<http://www.calacademy.org/research/anthropology/coptic/Style.htm>

Marla Mallett Textiles. Coptic Textiles Tapestry Fragments from Late Antiquity.

<http://www.marlamallett.com/mm-index.htm>



mid 6th c, Ravenna, Italy