

A *peplos* is a long garment: it can be a long dress or robe (on its own) or a cloak (worn over something else). The Greeks would have woven the fabric to the size that they wanted, so that there was no need for cutting or sewing; but they also used folding to change the size.

First, fold along the length of the longer edge to make a flap (fig.2); this fold will be the top of the *peplos*,



or it can fall to the waist or below. On the *peplos* in the pictures, gold braid has been sewn near the long edges at the bottom of both the *apoptygma*/flap and the main part of the *peplos*.

The main part of the *peplos* should be roughly long enough to reach from your shoulders to your ankles, although you can make it a little shorter if you like. A growing child could



your own, you can add buttons and button-holes, or ribbons like the ones in the photographs, to join the two sides together; if you are using a sheet that needs to go back to being a sheet at the end of the day, you can just use safety pins. Rich Greeks would have used elaborate brooches.

The next step is to pin the front and back together at your other shoulder as well (fig.6).



at your shoulders. Then fold the rectangle in half, folding across the first fold, so that the flap hangs down from the top at both the front and the back. The second fold will be one side of the *peplos*, and the two edges will be the other (fig.3).

The flap is called the *apoptygma*, which just means "the folded-back bit". The *apoptygma*/flap can be just a short frill at the neck,



continue wearing the same *peplos* for years, just folding a smaller and smaller *apoptygma*/flap so that the main part of the *peplos* still fell to the ankles.

Make a sleeve by attaching the front and back of the top together, near (but not too near) the second fold (fig.4). This makes a hole that the arm can go through (fig.5).

If you are making a *peplos* of



The *peplos* will hang open at the side. Greece was a warm country, and images in art sometimes show people with their peplos hanging open and a naked body underneath. You might also leave the *peplos* open to show off a beautiful underdress; alternatively you can pull the front and back together (fig.7).



Use a belt to hold the *peplos* closed (figs. 8/9). You can tie the belt over the *apoptygma*/flap if it is long enough (figs.8, 1). This makes a little frill over the long skirt underneath. Alternatively, you might tie the belt under the *apoptygma*/flap (figs.9-10), especially if your *peplos* was made of elaborately decorated material that you wanted to show off.



fig.10

This leaflet produced by the Department of Classics, University of Nottingham, 2014. Contact: classics-enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk. Text by Lynn Fotheringham. With thanks to our lovely model, Abby (& Amy).

MAKING HISTORICAL CLOTHING: THE GREEK PEPLOS



fig.1

A *peplos* is a very ancient and very simple garment: you can make one at home using a sheet, towel, or any other rectangle of cloth – the only other things you need are two safety pins to hold it together at the shoulders, and a cord to use as a belt.