

# Ancient Greek/Roman Customs, Culture, and Clothing

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 30, 2023 at 7:39 PM

I am still mulling over what Epicurus might have worn. Would Epicurus have worn something that conveyed the image of status and wealth? I personally would think that he would have worn something more plain (but perhaps there were festival days in which a finer weave of cloth was worn).

I found an article "What Did Jesus Wear" which also talks about ancient Greek clothing, and you can see a picture of a sculpture of Demosthenes, which gives some insight into possible clothing of Epicurus.

And so of course this would have been a little later than Epicurus:

Quote

Much is now known about clothing in 1st and 2nd century Judaea, because many fragments of the tunics worn by people then have been found in caves and tombs bordering the Dead Sea, where the dry climate has allowed their preservation. For example, picture 6 shows a tunic recovered from the Cave of Letters, a burial site near the Dead Sea. From the archaeological remains, and from comparable art from Egyptian mummy portraits, Pompeii and elsewhere, we can visualise what people wore. It is clear that Judaeans were part of the Mediterranean world and dressed much like everyone else.

An ordinary man in Jesus' world would wear a short tunic, called a chiton, in Greek (in Latin a tunica) and a woman would wear an ankle-length one.

The long version, the stole, in Greek (or stola in Latin), was understood to be women's clothing, when not worn by high-status men. A higher hemline indicated masculine wear.

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Quote

The long, rough mantle of some philosophers (worn without a tunic underneath) could be called a tribon – literally a ‘worn thing’, or even a ‘rag’ – or a peribolaion, a ‘wrap’. Their garment, if a long diploida, a ‘double’ piece of cloth, was distinguished by quality from the expensive type of wrap the gods would wear. These were generally worn wrapped around the middle of the body under the armpits and then slung over the left shoulder, as we see in the sculpture of Demosthenes.

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Regarding the Mediterranean (but not specifically Athens):

Quote

Colourful clothes, like long garments, were associated with women’s attire. ...However, one cannot be too absolute in an association between colour and women’s wear. In Pompeian frescoes, both men and women are shown with coloured tunics and mantles, even though the men are also dressed in white or undyed tunics. Tough guys might choose to eschew colour, but it was always a choice, and not a rule. One factor that could easily offset a manly preference for undyed or white clothing was the concern to show riches and status.

Clothing found in Masada and the caves by the Dead Sea is often highly coloured: bright shades of red, yellow, orange, blue, green, and types of purple, including bold, striped cloth for blankets and rugs. In visualising clothes in Jesus’ time, these remains ask us to imagine people wearing a kaleidoscope of hues. The question then is whether dyed clothes mainly belonged to women? Or did these clothes sometimes belong to wealthy men who wished to show they could afford expensive dyes,...

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