

# A Men's 11th c. Danish Costume

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This was my documentation, notes and findings for a Golden Seamstress Competition.

Using extant examples from Danish and surrounding areas we are able to extrapolate what would have been worn by an 11th c. man from Daneland. All materials used are natural fibers with colours chosen to reflect dyestuffs available at the time and location. All garment pieces are sewn by hand and all patterns used are drafted on site. Men wore tunics reaching down to about the knees long trousers and a cloak fasted with a buckle on the right shoulder. (Fentz, 2)

## **The Under Tunic/ The Viborg Tunic**

In the town of Viborg, centre of Jutland on the shore of Sonderso there was habitation from about 1000- 1300. (Fentz, 1) "(T)he most impressive archeological survival is the almost complete linen shirt from a post hole at Viborg, Denmark. The extant shirt from Viborg, which was probably buried in 1018, is of a very similar quality to the fragments from Hedeby graves." (Ewing, 81-2)

As to the unique construction of this garment, "...the neckhole is slit on the right side and opens on slip knots to reveal the lining beneath, which is similarly slit on the left. The lining is secured back and from by a series of decorative seams; only the body of the shirt is lined." (Ewing, 82) "The square neck opening with an asymmetric slit has an edging consisting of a narrow piece of linen that continues as two free ties, each with its own preserved overhand knot fixed to the front corners of the neck opening. The shirt has no shoulder seam, and its cut, with straight lines..." (Ostergard, 124) The sleeves taper assumingly to wrist length. "This smock has the split sides of a Viking age garment defined by Hagg (1984, 177) as an undergarment; it is also unusual for having a clear waist seam on both front and back panels." (Priest-Dorman, Viking tunic construction 6) The shirt skirting is arranged so that the back skirt covers the front skirt by about 5cm on each side. (Fentz, 1)

The mathematical arrangement of the quilted body panels are simpler than they at first appear. The central square is about 1/5th of the length of the fabric. The square sits below the centre line on the front and above the centre line on the back. The corners continue in straight angles to the corners of the body panels. "Seam treatments used in the Viking Age usually involve both a running stitch and an overcast stitch. Another interesting technique shows up in late tenth-century Hedeby: the seam is sewn with a running stitch on the inside of the garment, and the two raw edges are folded in and overcast together, giving the effect of a French seam." (Priest-Dorman, Viking tunic construction 10)

## **Overtunic/ Ronbjerg Tunic/Mose**

The Ronbjerg Tunic is from around 1200 c.e. Unlike the Moselund or Kragelund gown the ronbjerg is sewn up the central seam as opposed to a slit. This construction made a more logical combination with the location of the slits on the Viborg tunic. It is of similar design to the Herjolfsnaes garments wherein it has side gores and centre front and back gores. The tunic length is approximately 42 inches and the hem circumference is 94

inches. (Priest-Dorman, Viking Tunic) It seems to have angled shoulder seams and a keyhole neckline.

### **Pants/ Thorsberg/Damendorf Trousers**

“Iconographic evidence in such forms as the Gotlandic picture stones and the Oseberg tapestry suggests that the Vikings wore at least two types of leg coverings: a wide, knee-length, baggy type and a narrow, full-length, more fitted type. Unfortunately, not many finds are clearly identifiable as trousers, and in most cases the cut of the garment is not obvious from the remains. “ (Priest-Dorman, Viking men’s clothing , 4) However “(p)rior to the Viking age... between 180 and 360 c.e., a man was put into a bog at Damendorf, and his pants, shoes, leg wrappers and belt were bundled up and thrown in beside him. The pants were probably footed, and tight to the leg.” (Hubbell, 52) The extent pants from the Thorsberg and Damendorf finds indicate a slim fit, belted at the waist and have an attached foot covering. The picture of the Thorsberg indicates a simple foot covering of one piece of fabric. Similar to the “...Romano-Gaulish woman from the Martres-de-Veyre, Paris. The burial shows stockings made of a two-piece construction. The sock was sewn as a tube sewn up the back for the leg and a one-piece wedge for the foot with a seam running along the bottom of the foot.” (Goubitz, 359)

### **Leg Bindings/ Wickelbänder**

These leg-wrappers would have been worn by spirally wrapping the strip around the calf starting just below the kneecap and finishing at the ankle, where the excess can be tucked into a shoe. (Priest-Dorman, Viking men’s clothing 8) “The bands are usually 75-100mm broad and were deliberately woven to this narrow size rather than cut, as selvages exist on both sides. The weave is almost invariably of ‘herringbone’ type, often of a very fine quality. (Beatson, 1) “The selvages are characteristically of simple unreinforced type, ie the weft thread simply turns back on itself to pass through the next shed at the edge of the fabric.” (Beatson, 1) However, reinforcing the edges by looping around the warp threads near the edge at each pass to avoid floats at the selvages seemed to be a cautious decision to avoid loose threads. “In some examples different coloured warp and weft were used to accentuate the weaving pattern.” (Beatson, 1-2) “Unique among Birka finds are two small hooks from grave BJ 905, which were worn just below the knees. “ (Ewing, 79) The ravens design is from a penny of Anlaf Guth-Frithsson circa 940 c.e.

### **Cloak**

“The cloak described by Ibn Fadlan, which covers one half of his body, leaving one of the arms uncovered is the same cloak that was worn by the Germans in Tacitus’ day; a large rectangle of cloth wrapped round the body and pinned at the right shoulder, leaving the right arm completely free. This cloak is the feldr, is the classic male cloak of the early medieval period, and is the equivalent of the Roman Sagum.” (Ewing, 103) “In Kormaks saga ch. 10, the size of cloak for a holmganga, a kind of duel fought on a feldr, is specified as ‘five ells in the sheet’ (fimm alna I skaut); the early medieval Icelandic ell was reckoned at 18in (45cm) so this cloak works out at 7ft 6 in.” (Ewing, 103) The penannular brooches were worn at the right shoulder to fasten the feldr. (Ewing, 124)

## **Hat**

Many images of the time show a conical style of hat of a very utilitarian design. "It relies on four identical pattern pieces whose shape is basically the same as those in two archeological discoveries: the leather cap of the Tollund Man (a pre-Roman Iron Age find in Denmark) and some of the headwear found at Moscevaja Balka, an eighth and ninth century burial ground with a Scandinavian influence near the Black Sea in what is now Turkey." (Priest-Dorman, Viking Hat 2)

## **Shoes**

"A well-known ankle shoe of this type comes from York, England, while high models are known from for instance Haithabu (Hedeby) in Germany. Fragments found at Fribourg, Switzerland, could be reconstructed as parts of shoes with two or three-lobed flap closures..." (Goubitz, 147) "The overlap may have various shapes, and be attached in different ways. Very often a rolled toggle is used for fastening, a detail which in itself points to a date before 1300. Other characteristics of a pre-1300 date are a sole ending in an upturned point at the back, as seen in some variants of this model, and the occasional occurrence of a decorative seam down the vamp. The overlap, like the flap, is fastened on the lateral side of the shoe." (Goubitz, 147)

## **Accessories:**

A buckle of walrus tooth was found at the excavation of O34. (Ostergard, 110) Our recreation is of bone. The Thor's Hammer is based on a 10th c. silver hammer from Uppland, Sweden. (Hammer of the North, 70) The knife has a dragon head design from a silver arm ring found in Gotland. The pouch is based from Bergh Apton Nf1 G42 where a trio of strap-ends were found close to the belt of a similar but less elaborate design than the purse from Sutton Hoo Mound 1. (Walton-Rogers, 224)

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