

The Horde of Vigdis

I have been a member of SCA since 2005 and have been trying to learn as much as I can about period garb construction.

Norse Project 2011

Experimenting with Italian...2012

Disney Challenge 2013

Friday, August 5, 2011

Documentation-Apron Panel

This is probably the most speculative piece of garment in my entry but definitely the most fun and the piece I spent the most time on embellishing. I was introduced to this concept By Viscountess Inga the Unfettered from An Tir. She taught a class at Kingdom Collegium 2010 in Sentinels' Keep called 'Survey of Viking Clothing' and the evidence she presented as well as her logical application really stuck in my head. When I began my Norse clothing project, this was the first piece I wanted to work on.

HE Inga had the most beautiful representation that someone had made for her.



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About Me

I have based the theory of the cloth and my design on the figure from Tuse and backed up with other carved designs and figures. I elaborated on the design to include the dragon shapes that I liked from some of the stone runic carvings that have been discovered.



The panel is made from a reclaimed piece of wool from an old coat and is already fulled. I have embellished my panel with textile techniques used in the Viking time period and based on various extant finds. I may have stretched it a bit by using lucet cording and nalbinding as trim but the figures I used for reference had decorative geometric looking trims and could have easily represented woven yarn trims such as can be made by nalbinding or lucets. I embroidered with the stitches documented by Heather Rose which included overhand hem stitch, running stitch, backstitch and herringbone stitch. I added some small bone and silver bead and discs for interest.

I used commercial yarn for much of the decorative work but included pieces of yarn I hand spun from some Icelandic sheep fleece that I won from an auction. The dragon shapes are a wheel spun yarn from my friend Ygrainne that I couched down with a wool embroidery thread using herringbone stitches. The shield shaped medallion in the middle included some of my hand spun which works up a little irregular and bumpy... I decided to use it to remind myself later of where I began! I used nalbanded pieces tacked down with overlapping decorative stitches. Some have been hand and machine felted and some were left as is. I like the look of the nalbinding un-felted because it looks almost like decorative runic characters and adds interesting texture to the piece.

Note on the asymmetry issue: Norse artwork especially with knot work designs sometimes do not match completely. They liked the whole presentation to have a symmetrical look but had variation within the designs as times.

I want to make a personal comment in favor of the panel. At our Harvest event, I did a LOT of dish and pan washing to help the very busy cook and crew. After slopping mass quantities of soapy dish water down the front of my apron dress, I could definitely see the advantage of popping on the panel and going to court. But I thought a lot about it afterwards...

In my time period, they would not have been working in the kitchen and then going to court in the same way as we do in the SCA. However, it would seem to be more practical to have panel/s ready to dress up a worn or messy apron dress when company arrived. Working aprons could have been worn (as we do now) but they would have needed to be washed each time they were worn and I imagine a woman in that era would have tried to wear clothing for as long as possible before washing due to the work involved in doing laundry with fabric such as linen and wool.



Vigdis Ionsdottir

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needed. I can also see having a fancy one for special occasions/rituals and definitely you would want a special one to be buried in so your people could see the successful homemaker/wife/mother/craftswoman/etc. you had been before dying!!! Or how successful your hubby was, depending on your interpretation-ha!

I do not have hard evidence for the use of nabinded and lucetted trim but since both techniques can be documented to the time period, I feel a woman wishing to be creative would have adapted any technique she felt would enhance her work. Also, if you look at the stone carved figures, the clothing they wear seems to be embellished and decorated in this manner. There is evidence for card woven trim so I do want to try to make some if I have time. I just learned to do the weave a few months back and need to sit down and refresh my puny brain cells!!!

I also feel that trim and decoration would have been added to cover worn spots or stains and the panel would become more decorative as time went on. Several pieces of my previous garb have evolved in this way in the past few years.

During my research I had a light bulb type moment about the dome shaped brooches. I kept wondering about the symbolism or whatever of the dome shape pins but then it hit me... With all of the layers of clothing and accessories that is proposed to be pinned through the brooches, they would almost have HAD to be domed for all the fabric, jewelry, and hanging implements to fit under and still lay nicely against the body?



I have included small bits of the only hand spun yarn I have finished...and that is not much!!! The lighter gray in the middle of the 3-color piece, the lighter gray that is couched over the darker gray trim on the right side and around the wider white trim next to that, and the very thin white that is couched from the bottom curls of the dark gray trim and around.

Update: I have added a couple more rows of trim and some stone and bone beads. Friend (now household aunt) Ygrainne gifted me with a skein of her beautiful home spun yarn which will also reside on the panel eventually.



Lucet cord in the making.

Lucet forks have been found in many burial sites but they are of bone or antler (wood may have disintegrated) and usually are more irregular shaped than the one above. The harp shaped lucet fork was probably a Victorian era design. This shape seems to be commonly accepted in SCA but I have plans to make myself one out of antler for a more authentic representation.

nalbinded pouches. I am anxious to see how well they fare as apron dress straps. I call lucet cords my version of Viking bungee cords.



The panel is recycled wool from an old coat that I pieced together in the middle. The Nalbinding strips down the middle are covering the seam. The dark gray in the middle of the

auction at Crown Tournament 2011 in Sentinels' Keep. I started spinning on it that day. It is lumpy and bumpy but it is all mine! I decided to use it anyway as a reminder of where I started! I have nalbinded and felted the white trim from an alpaca yarn I purchased and the red trim was made with a lucet and commercially spun wool...not felted. The lucet cord will be used for the loops that will attach to the apron brooches. I will probably do more lucet trim and do some knotwork designs. The rest is basic embroidery of blanket stitch, herringbone and running stitches that have been documented from some of the remains found.

Some Basic Information:

Most of the fabric recovered by archeologists are scraps that were protected under metal adornments. Under the tortoise brooches are remnants of several strap fabrics of linen, wool and silk. There is much speculation of what the brooches held and it is reasonable that an apron panel could have been connected there too.

The pages below contain drawings of carved designs that illustrate several layers of clothing and what could be a decorated apron panel attached to the brooches on top of the apron dress.

I based my panel on the piece below because...well I look like it! I believe the upper area at the neck represents a necklace but I incorporated that into my panel design. The panel here seems quite plain (her work apron?) but I am embellishing mine with strips of embroidery, and nalbinded and lucetted trim.

<http://www.vikingsonline.org.uk/resources/articles/dress.htm>



Figure 11
Gold Hnafatafl piece
from Tuse in Denmark

I searched for Tuse and found a site with wonderful photos by Sofie Regenthal

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/sofieregenthal/473391171/>


<http://sites.google.com/site/sregenthal/>

My grandmother was Norwegian and was raised in North Dakota before moving to Montana. She was a very practical, resourceful and unassuming woman who loved to cook, craft, and take care of her family. She never wore pants even on picnic and camping outings (although she

wore sturdy shoes) and at home she almost always wore an apron and had a hanky in her pocket. I sometimes reinforce the information I gather on Norse women clothing by thinking of what my grandma would have done in the same instances. She would definitely have worn apron panels while cooking and cleaning to protect her clothes underneath and she probably would have had a very nice one (probably a gift from someone) put away for 'good' and/or her burial clothes. I will call these WWGJD* moments in my documentation.

*What Would Gramma Johnson Do?

Posted by Vigdis at 7:47 AM

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e1202930-cad4-11e0-ae86-000f20980440 October 16, 2011 at 1:26 PM

Well, after cooking and washing dishes for an event recently, I decided apron panels would have been a very valuable piece of clothing. As I looked down at the water splashed on the front of my apron dress, I realized that it would have been harder to have daily aprons that you messed up and had to wash and get ready for use quickly. Also since the garments were hand made and out of fiber that was difficult to wash, the more practical solution might have been to have the apron panel available to attach and hide the messiness underneath when needed.

I am also speculating that the panels may have been always in a state of embellishing to keep them looking at their best. A burial panel may have been highly decorated as it would have needed to cover the signs of wear and tear.

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