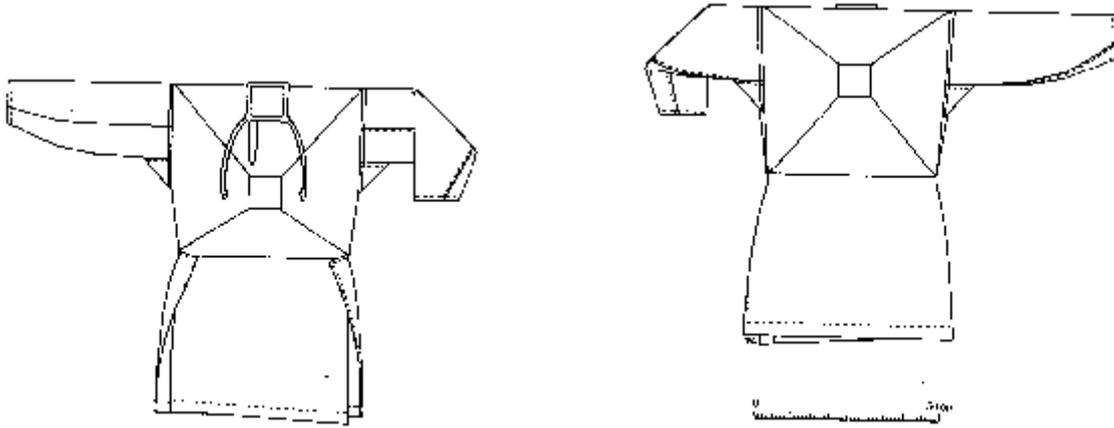


## Male linen shirt of 11th century, from Viborg, Denmark

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A greater part of the original shirt, with some preserved seams, was found during the excavations in Jutland in 1981 and 1984 – 1985 (picture 1) and the reconstruction (above) was made based on an interpretation. The shirt had been a rather slim-fitting poncho, without seams on top of the shoulders, and the so-called skirt had been open on both sides. The neck lining continued into two ribbons for tying. The sleeves were constructed from 2 pieces and a gusset, and it is presumed that the shirt had long sleeves. It is considered to have been a man's shirt - an innermost or in some seasons only garment - since women wore floor-length serkr.

The shirt was ordered from me by herr Hákon, who has a Viking persona. Being more of a 14<sup>th</sup> century persona myself, I had to plunge into Viking carb from “scratches”. According to Mytte Fentz:

During the Viking Age and older Middle Ages men wore a shirt, possibly both an under- and an over-shirt/tunic; additionally trousers that could be tight fitting and reach the ankles, or wide and ending underneath the knee, a kind of plus fours with more or less stuffing; for these stockings or hose were used, possibly with garters. Finally a cloak held together with a clasp on the right shoulder. Material, cut and decoration could vary: wool and linen spun to finer or coarser thread, woven in different weaves and tightness were the most common materials, but silk, which was of course imported, was also used. (page 10)

Most of our knowledge concerning Viking male costume derives from written documents, depictions and surviving textile fragments from archaeological excavations. The Viborg garment is the only profane shirt/tunic from the Viking period so far found in Scandinavia or in Europe as a whole. These tunics, the cut of which is Persian-inspired, can be followed throughout the Mediterranean countries in the latter half of the first millennium. (page 2)

The original shirt was made of undyed, linen tabby, and it was woven with great evenness. I used undyed, coarse (even lumpy) tabby woven linen, with some hemp added, because it was available and affordable, it had that nice, archaic touch, and it matched the rough personality and the outdoor needs of the wearer-to-be.

The publication "*Vikingskjorten fra Viborg*" was an unequalled help in the process, even though it was written in Danish. First of all, it provided me with patterns on the scale (a rare treat for a recreationist! - Picture 3). I made the shirt slightly bigger than the original had been, since the wearer is a broad-shouldered man. The cloth I used was wider than 95 cm (the presumed width of the original cloth) so unfortunately I had less selvages to make use of. I still cut out the lining of the chest ("*bryst foer*") in two pieces, even though the reason for doing that in the original, was the lack of material, and I had plenty of it. I simply wanted to do a more truthful reproduction.

Secondly, "*Vikingskjorten fra Viborg*" also presented the 9 different seams used in the making of the shirt. (An example in Picture 2) I did the sewing by hand, using linen thread, as was done in the original. All the seams are flat. The diagonal seams and the squares on the chest and the back, turned out to have a useful as well as a decorative function: they attach the lining to the top layer. Interestingly enough, the sewing would have been very difficult, if not impossible, with a sewing machine.

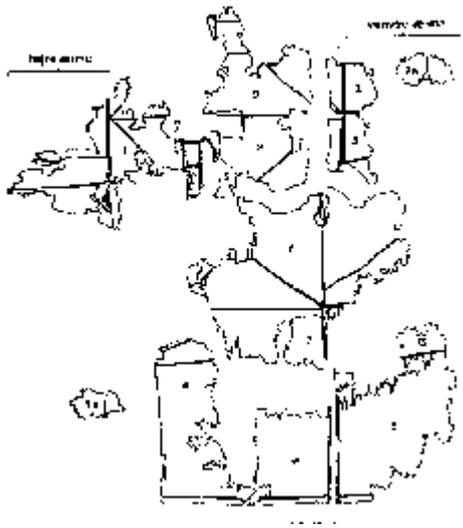
The shirt was completed and given to the owner a year ago, so it probably shows some wear and tear, and the cloth has become softer, if it has been washed. The owner promised to "make it neat" for the competition, but since I'm not there to verify that, I'll just have to take his word for it. All in all, the project was an interesting leap further back in time (from my usual 14<sup>th</sup> century, that is) and left a hunger for more hand-sewn projects. Coarse linen worked with linen thread proved to be a great material to start with.

Sources:

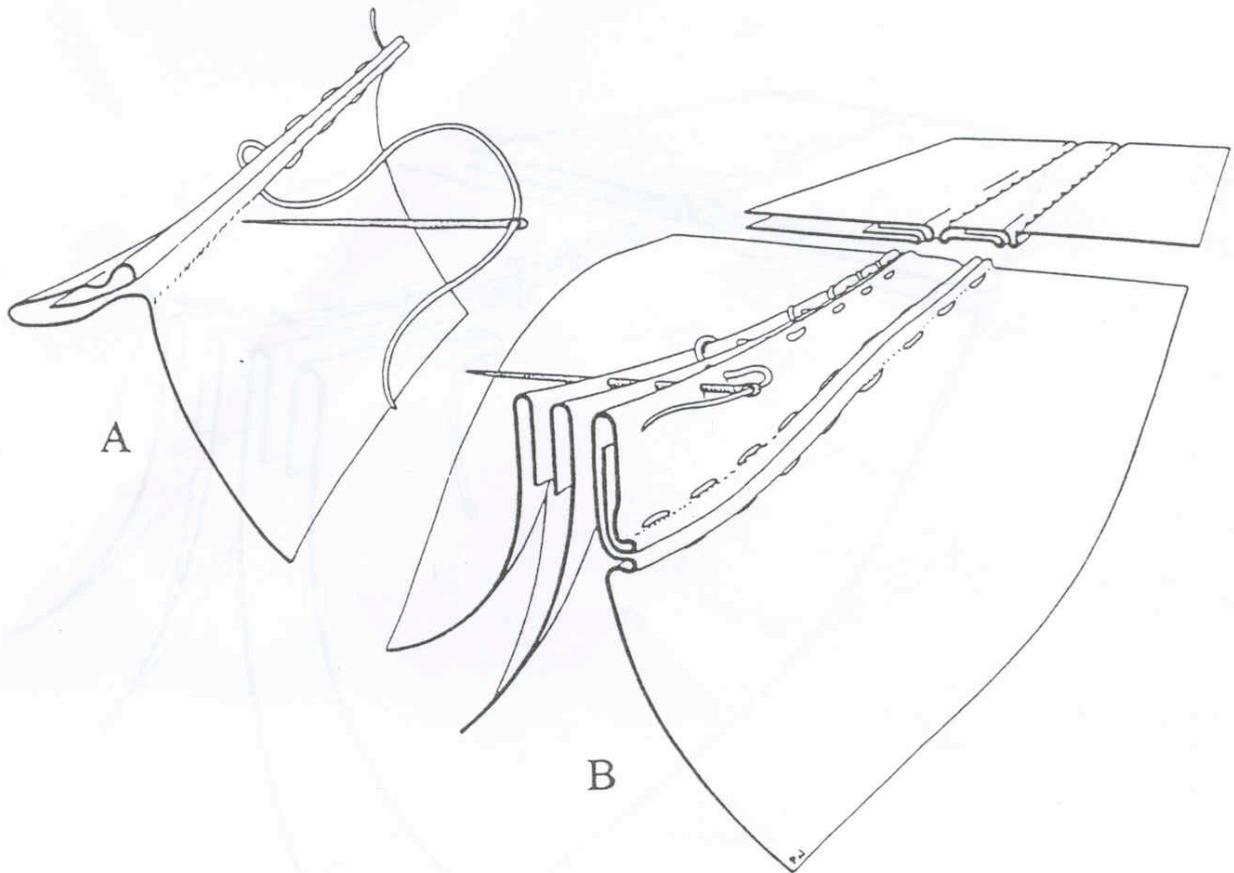
FENTZ, Mytte: "*An 11<sup>th</sup> century linen shirt from Viborg*". Translated from "*En hørskjorte fra 1000-årenes Viborg*", appeared in KUMML 1987, Årbog for Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab. (The article can also be found on the Internet at

<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~mforest/Medieval/articles/Viborg/VIBORG.HTM> )

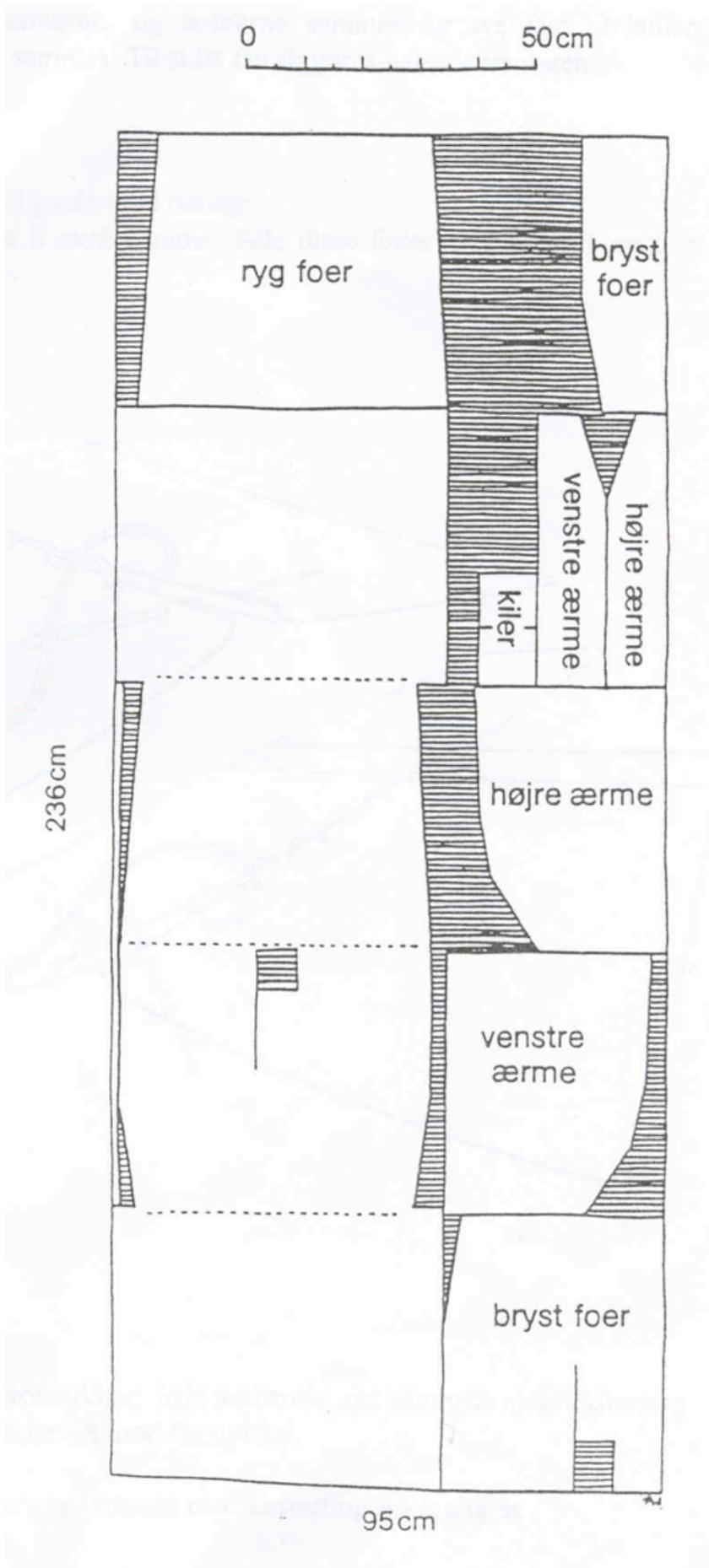
"*Vikingskjorten fra Viborg*". A publication by Viborg Stiftsmuseum.



Picture 1: The preserved parts of the original shirt.



Picture 2: A seam for the underarm.



Picture 3: The cut order plan