

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEXTILES NEWSLETTER

ATN, no 9 1989

EDITORIAL

The ninth issue of the *ATN* again covers a wide range of subjects both geographically and chronologically. After several issues with a bias on the Mediterranean World and the Far East it is now the North Atlantic and Scandinavia which are back in focus. The whaling stations on Svalbard or Spitsbergen have supplied a rich collection of workmen's costumes of the 17th-18th centuries. Dutch, Danish and Norwegian expeditions have all been working here and this time the Norwegian team is reporting on recent finds. Another North Atlantic site is the Orkneys where a Neolithic tomb containing textile remains has been found. Viking Age textiles on the Swedish island of Gotland is the subject of another note. Gotland situated in a strategic position in the Baltic is Sweden's richest archaeological field. Strangely enough Viking Age textiles from Gotland differ markedly from the contemporary Scandinavian material and Kathy Gow-Sjöblom's paper reflects on this feature and the reasons for it.

The Black Sea held an important position in the Ancient World so *ATN* warmly welcomes a note on textile ware pottery from what Classical scholars know as Colchis. The Near East is well represented in this issue too with notes by A. Sheffer on a surprisingly early group of cotton fabrics from Israel and two notes on textiles from the Nile Valley.

The *ATN* is printing its first obituary. Egon Hansen of Moesgaard Museum in Denmark died in September and thus will never see his long-expected book on his important work on tablet-woven braids. Another distinguished textile scholar died this summer. Agnes Geijer, Sweden's grand old lady. Her pupil and successor in *Statens Historiska Museum*, Stockholm, Margaretha Nockert has promised us an obituary for the next issue of the *ATN*.

The Textile Society of America announces its 2nd symposium next year and among other items can be mentioned two young colleagues presenting their research projects and asking for help and advice.

ATN now also issues an occasional paper series. The first volume (*The ATN Guide to Structural Sewing Terms and Techniques* by Anne Morrell) is now out (advertisement enclosed) a second is planned and subjects for further issues are called for.

ATN's extended bibliography this time gives an up-dated list of the works of the German scholar Klaus Tidow, director of the *Textilmuseum Neumünster* in West Germany reflecting his wide-ranging work on Prehistoric, Medieval and Early Modern textiles. Please remember that the library of the *Textilmuseum* is the closest thing we have to a repository library for archaeological textiles in Europe and send any offprints of your published papers to *Textilmuseum Neumünster Parkstraße 17 D-2350 Neumünster West Germany*. It is in your own interest! You never know when you may need a certain obscure book or paper that your local library claims does not exist!

This issue of the *ATN* is the first to carry photographs. How do you like them? If you think they are sufficiently clear please don't hesitate to send on some with your next note for the *ATN*. And this leads to the final editorial comment: notes may be in English, German or French with a maximum of 750 words on current research, recent discoveries, conferences (both to be and reports on those already held), queries etc. The *ATN* is your newspaper on archaeological textiles - the more you use it the more you write for it the better for all of us.

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

The *Archaeological Textiles Newsletter* aims to provide a source of information for those who are studying textiles primarily as archaeological objects. Contributions to the *Newsletter* are welcome and should be in accordance with this concept

1 Contributions can be in English German or French. If necessary items in Russian will be accepted but these will be translated into English

2 Contributions may include short (1) references to recently published books journals articles and to forthcoming exhibitions seminars conferences special courses lectures etc information concerning work in progress (see note 3) and any queries concerning the study of archaeological textiles

3 Work in Progress this is a general category which includes for example work on archaeological textiles from recent excavations or in museums. Items in this section should contain information (if available) about the following: where the textiles were found, the relevant dates, who excavated the site and when, the range of textiles found, who is responsible for the cataloguing of the textiles and where they are to be published. These notes should not exceed a maximum of 750 per item. Maps showing the position of the relevant sites would be greatly appreciated

4 Line drawings will be considered but photographs cannot be accepted at present

5 The editors reserve the right to suggest alterations in the wording of items sent for publication

6 The deadline for contributions is the 1st April and the 1st October for the May and November editions respectively

The views expressed by the various authors are not necessarily those held by the editors

LOGO

The logo is taken from the famous depiction on a Hallstatt urn found at Odenburg/Sopron Hungary. The original illustration shows three women who are spinning and weaving

Colophon

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The wood-block illustrations in this issue
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OBITUARY

In September 1989 Egon Hansen Prehistoric Museum of Moesgaard Denmark died at the age of 67

Many archaeological textile specialists met Egon Hansen at the NESAT meetings in Bergen 1984 and York 1987 and found him a very pleasant and extremely competent expert especially on tablet-weaving

Egon Hansen will be remembered at Moesgaard for starting and encouraging experimental archaeology During the last decade he built a reconstruction section where with his craftsmanlike competence he was able to gain considerable knowledge of the production of prehistoric textiles

Egon Hansen was an independent person who had an enormous capacity for working with theoretical problems in a practical way As a result the quality of his work on archaeological textiles was widely respected

In a few months time his last and most important book about tablet weaving will be published an imposing work in which almost all known prehistoric tablet-woven textiles have been examined and described This monumental work is a fitting reminder of Egon Hansen and we are deeply grateful for the work he accomplished in the field of prehistoric textiles

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THE ATN OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES

The first ATN occasional paper is now out! It is a guide to constructional details and repairs i.e. seams hems button holes patching mending etc by Anne Morrell Dept of Textiles and Fashion Manchester Polytechnic England M13 9PL Copies are available from J P Wild Manchester Ancient Textile Unit Dept of Archaeology Manchester University Manchester England

The normal price of the booklet is Dutch fl 19.50 (including postage and packaging) or the equivalent in pounds sterling Cheques or postal orders should be made out to either G M. Vogelsang (Dutch guilders) or Manchester Ancient Textile Unit (pounds sterling)

Members of the ATN however are entitled to a reduction on the price Dutch fl 15'

The next occasional paper will be on one of the few datable groups of Coptic tapestries namely the contents of a mid-fourth century grave from Hawara Egypt

If anyone has an idea for further items in the occasional papers series could they please contact G M. Vogelsang-Eastwood

NOTES ON COTTON TEXTILES FOUND IN ISRAEL

Among the most puzzling textile finds in Israel are cotton textiles and cotton threads

Cotton fabrics found in earlier excavations were discarded on the assumption that they had been left by the Bedouin who visited the site or the cave It was assumed that cotton was brought to Israel by the Arabs in the 9th century A.D.

The first cotton textiles known to be earlier than the 9th century were found in En-Boqeq [1] Cotton textiles were also found in a mass grave near Jericho The people buried there were lepers living in an isolated monastery They were probably killed and buried there during the Persian invasion (7th century A.D.) They were buried in their white clothes in their hand a rare flower known to grow in Egypt One of the assumptions is that they came from Ethiopia perhaps to be healed at the holy waters of the Jordan

A striking find were two small textile fragments in cotton from Masada (A.D. 70) The two pieces were woven in a damask-satin technique This kind of weave is not known either in Europe or the Near East at such an early date The cotton textiles found in Nubia are mostly woven in simple techniques and most of them date to a later period

The most puzzling of all the cotton finds is the spun threads found at Uza an Israelite site in the Negev dating to the 6th century B.C. The bundle of threads (fig. 1) were found inside an oven The colour of the threads is a purple rose They are beautifully spun and twisted Each thread is about 5 - 10 cm in length

If anyone has any information about cotton textiles of a similar date then please contact Avigail Sheffer at the address given below

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i For further information about these sites see A Sheffer and T Schick Israel ATN 2 (1986) 5-8

PREHISTORIC TEXTILES FROM THE ORKNEY ISLANDS

There has recently been an article in *The Independent* newspaper in England about some cloth which has been found in a prehistoric burial near Kirkwall in the Orkney islands [1]. According to the article the material in question is up to three square feet in size and dates to the second millennium B C at the earliest and possibly to the third millennium B C. There is some doubt about the date.

The textiles were found inside a tomb discovered by workmen in a sand quarry 20 km west of Kirkwall. The cloth was probably used to hold cremated human remains. It would appear that the burial was of a high-status individual, probably a tribal chieftain and possibly of colonist people from southern Scandinavia or the Mediterranean. The tomb is without parallel in Britain as it was cut out of the solid rock in the form of a pit 6ft deep, 10ft long and 8ft wide and was roofed with sandstone. Inside there was a stone-sided coffin which was 6ft 2in long, 3ft 6in wide and 4ft high. The only other rock-cut tomb known in Britain is also located in the Orkneys on

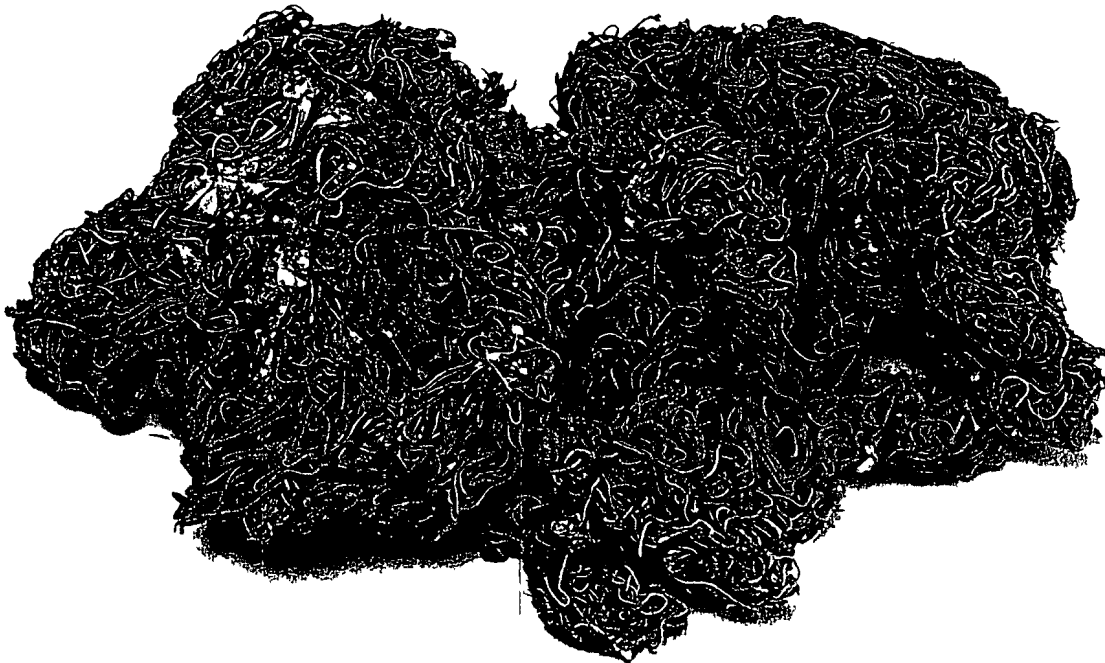
the island of Hoy. Other rock-cut tomb cultures are found outside Britain but the only known examples within Europe are in southern Scandinavia (1500 B C) and northern France and around the Mediterranean (from 3500 B C).

The Kirkwall rock tomb could date back 5 000 years while the coffin and textiles could be from the same period or added in a re-use of the tomb some 1 000 years later. The remains of flowers, possibly part of a prehistoric wreath and a joint of meat were also found in the coffin.

The site is 0.5 km north of Britain's best preserved prehistoric village, 5 000 year old Skara Brae and may be connected with it.

1. The above information is taken from D Keys article in *The Independent* Friday 21st July 1989. D Keys is the archaeology correspondent for the newspaper.

Fig 1 Cotton threads from Tell-Uza



"TEXTILE WARE FROM THE EASTERN SHORE OF THE BLACK SEA

Over the last fifty years or so very considerable archaeological effort has been devoted to the eastern coast of the Black Sea. This area was called Colchis or Lazica by the ancients and is now part of Soviet Georgia in Transcaucasia. Survey and excavation have revealed Late Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements closely-spaced along this coast which are termed settlements with textile ware and are mostly dated to the first half of the first millennium B.C. These sites run from Gagra in the north-east to Gonio in the south-east and may continue into modern Turkey where work remains to be done. The vast majority of these settlements were situated on dunes hard by the sea shore though a very few are found a little inland. Their beginning at Gagra coincides with the start of the dunes with which they are clearly linked.

The characteristic feature of these settlement-sites is a large quantity of very coarse pottery which seems to be briquetage generated by salt-production. This pottery may be divided into two broad categories though there is substantial variation in shape and size both within and between sites. First there are small pillars (known as *rozki* or hornlets) which are commonly some 20 cm. high flat at one end and forked at the other. Second there are

shallow rectangular (so-called bath-shaped) vessels of some 30 cm in length 20 cm. in width and 1-2 cm. in thickness with a pronounced rim. Most scholars suppose that the pillars were used to support the bath-shaped vessels in which salt was obtained through the boiling of evaporated sea-water. These vessels were made with the help of textiles and are therefore termed textile ware.

The method employed for the production of these bath-shaped vessels seems to have been as follows. A shallow pit was scooped out in the sand and lined with a piece of textile. Low-grade clay containing much sand was then moulded to the shape of the lined pit and left to dry. The coarse vessel was then removed bearing the imprint of the textile. The example here illustrated is typical and comes from a particularly extensive site in the region of modern Ochamchira (ancient Gyenus) which is being destroyed by sand-quarrying. Thanks to the British Academy and the helpful co-operation of Soviet colleagues I have been able to visit this and other such sites in the area.

A large fragment of textile ware on permanent exhibition at the Djanashia State Historical Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi is most unusual. This fragment is an

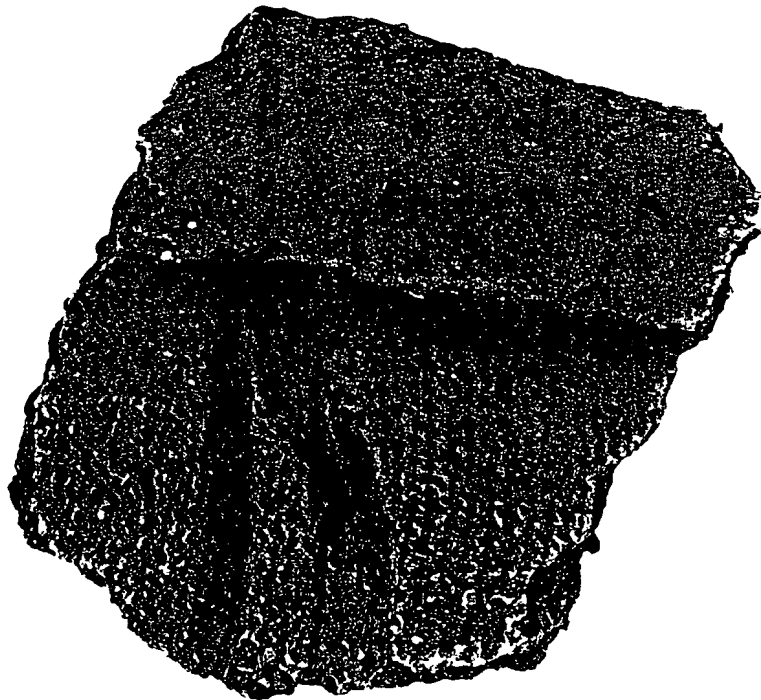


Fig 2 Textile ware from the Black Sea

especially thick example in which a piece of textile can be seen sandwiched between two layers of clay (fig 2) It is supposed that an extra piece of textile had been inserted to help to achieve the required extra thickness The explanation is uncertain but this example constitutes further evidence of the use of textiles in the production of this type of pottery

Production of this pottery ended sharply in the sixth century B C when settlements with textile ware were abandoned The reasons are unclear but it is tempting to connect this sudden change in centuries-old practice with the attested arrival of Greek colonists along this shore which began where textile ware stops - in the sixth century B C

In fact the notably wet conditions of western Georgia have preserved actual fragments of textiles in a range of contexts These have been recorded by excavators but not conserved Large pyramidal loom-weights are commonplace finds on most sites in Western Georgia both on the coast and on the plain and foothills further inland Ancient literary sources - notably Herodotus Xenophon and Strabo - make it clear that the textile products of this area included high-quality goods traded and valued in the Mediterranean world flax providing at least some of the raw material

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LOOMWEIGHTS?

Two triangular objects were found while excavating a middle to late iron Age site in Kontich near Antwerp (Map 1a) One of these objects is complete the other is fragmentary They are both handmade out of grey-brown clay They have one hole in the centre and two holes in each of the sides

Similar objects are described from a few other excavations for example in *Getekend Zand Tien jaar archaeologisch onderzoek in Oss-Ussent* They are described as loomweights typical for the southern part of The Netherlands in the late Iron Age and Roman Period [1] Similar objects from the Bavai Museum collection dating to the same period are also described as loomweights [2]

We could not find in Marta Hoffmann's *The Warp-Weighted Loom* information about how or why triangular weights with four holes could have been used

Our questions are

- Is the object in question really a loomweight or does its use lie in a completely different direction for example a weight for a fishing net?
- If it is a loomweight how can the holes in the sides be explained?

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- 1 W A B Van der Sanden and P W Van den Broeke *Getekend Zand Tien jaar archaeologisch onderzoek in Oss-Ussent Bijdragen tot de studie van het Brabantse Heem* 31 (1987) 38 G J Verwers *Das Kampsveld in Haps in Neolithikum Bronzezeit und Eisenzeit Analecta Praehistorica Leidensia* (1972) 117-118
- 2 J-C Carmelux *Fouilles et Études Archéologie et Pédagogie Lycée de Bavai 1979-82* 23 (unpublished)

THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY WHALING AGE ON SVALBARD

The Conservancy for Svalbard and Jan Mayen University of Tromsø Norway is responsible for mapping and investigating the cultural heritage of the Svalbard archipelago - also known as Spitsbergen - located off the northern coast of Norway. In connection with these activities conducted during the 1985 and 1986 field seasons eight graves were recovered from Likneset (The Dead Man's Point) on Smeerenburgfjorden which is situated off northwest West Spitsbergen. 235 graves have been registered in this burial area making it the largest cemetery from the 17-18th century whaling period on Svalbard.

The recovered graves were all in danger of being swept away into the ocean as a result of the severe coastal erosion in this area. In future field seasons it will be necessary to rescue additional graves.

The excavated material has been transferred to the conservation laboratory at the University of Tromsø where it is being analysed. Three graves were recovered as complete units. Following analysis and conservation one of these will be included in a new permanent exhibition currently under development at the Polar Museum Tromsø. This exhibition will present whaling on Svalbard during the 17th and 18th centuries.

All the graves recovered contain well-preserved textile material of animal origin. Knitted stockings and caps of wool - some machine knitted pillows filled with feathers and down wool jackets and shirts and two large wool blankets (2 0 x 3 0 m). In addition the material exhibits a wealth of colour indicating the preservation of dyestuffs. Through microscopic examination it has been possible to identify a considerable number of vegetable fibre textiles for example shirts trousers and blankets.

The textile material is presently dated to the turn of the 17th-18th century. This corresponds to Phase 2 of whaling on Svalbard. Phase 2 the pelagic whaling period occurred from the middle of the 17th century to the end of the 18th century. Historical documents indicate that the individuals buried at Likneset were whalers from either the Hamburg area or one of the provinces of The Netherlands.

Analysis of the textiles continues. Upon completion the results will be published in *Acta Borealia* (in English published by Tromsø Museum, Tromsø) and reported in a future number of the ATN.

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THE GOTLANDIC VIKING AGE TEXTILES AS A REFLECTION OF SOCIETY AND TRADE (Map 2)

In connection with a graduate thesis an attempt was made in the spring of 1989 to compile all the scattered information on the Gotlandic Viking Age textile finds.

Since both Birka and Gotland were engaged in trade with the same market areas and since fabric and dress played a central role in Viking Age trade a comparison was made between the Gotlandic material and the Birka finds.

Great discrepancies were noted. Whereas 70 graves yielded flax in Birka only 2 fragments have been unearthed on Gotland. Although wool has been the most frequent raw material in both places the quality differs considerably. Birka's fine worsted yarns were totally lacking on Gotland. The thread count is considerably higher in Birka (24-60 warp/12-20 weft threads and 11-22 warp/7-13 weft threads) with a disproportion of the threads counts between the warp and weft systems. This quality is lacking on Gotland where a well-balanced ratio (10-14 warp/1-12 weft threads) prevails. The majority of textiles in Birka were woven in tabby (61%) followed by broken lozenge twill (25%). Seventy-six percent of the Gotlandic fabrics were woven in 2/2 twill with z/z-spun yarns. Birka's 2/2 twills were woven with z/s-spun yarns. Birka's silk and fabric with gold and silver decoration are also lacking on Gotland.

Briefly it would appear that while the Birka finds reflect an up-and-coming upper class of merchants formed under the influence of the Byzantine model for court and government classes with all pertaining symbols of office the Gotlandic finds seem to represent a well-to-do farming population with an economy based on farming and cottage industries.

Hypothetical reasons for this divergence include different marketing methods insular conservatism, different political - and thereby social - ties and different funerary traditions. Even present-day flaws in research methods may result in distortions of the true picture.

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Map 1
The Gotlandic Viking Age textiles

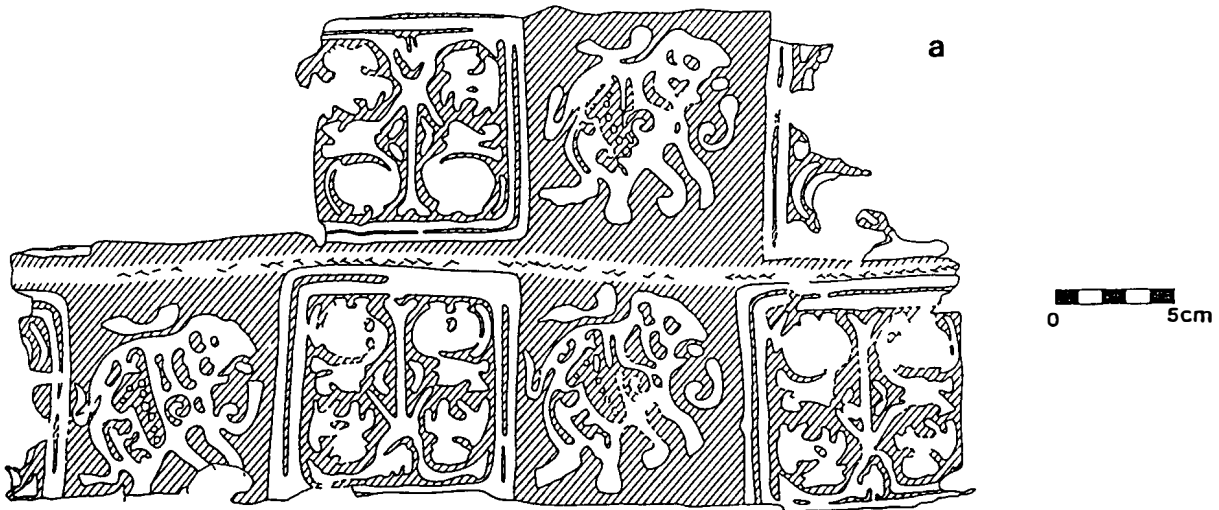
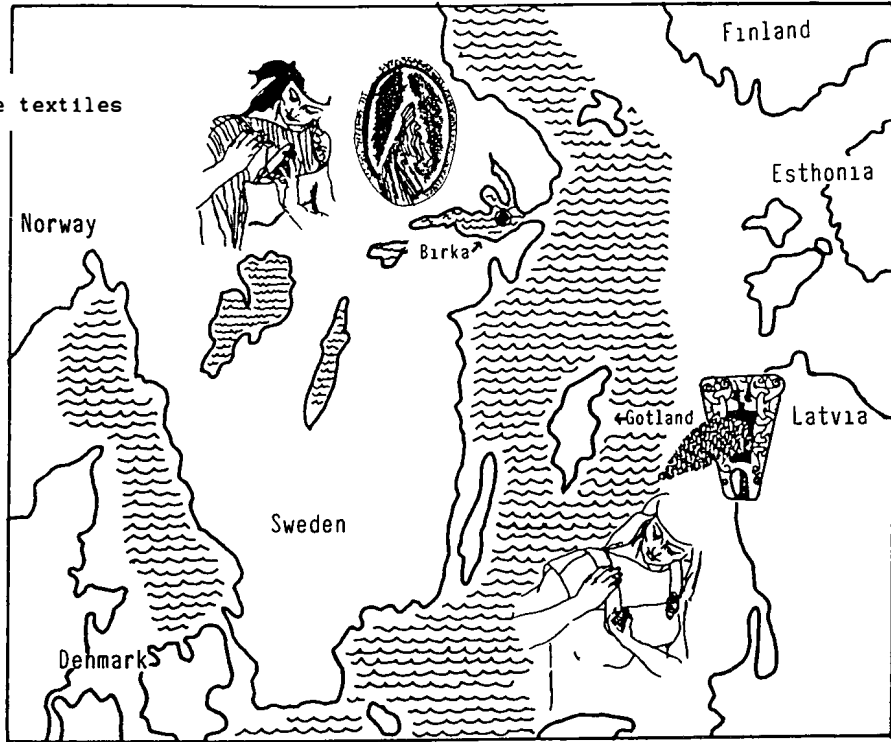


Fig 3 Resist-dyed textiles with an elephant and tree-of-life design from Quseir al-Qadim. The drawings show the development of the design into a simple rectangle with upright line and paired crescents.

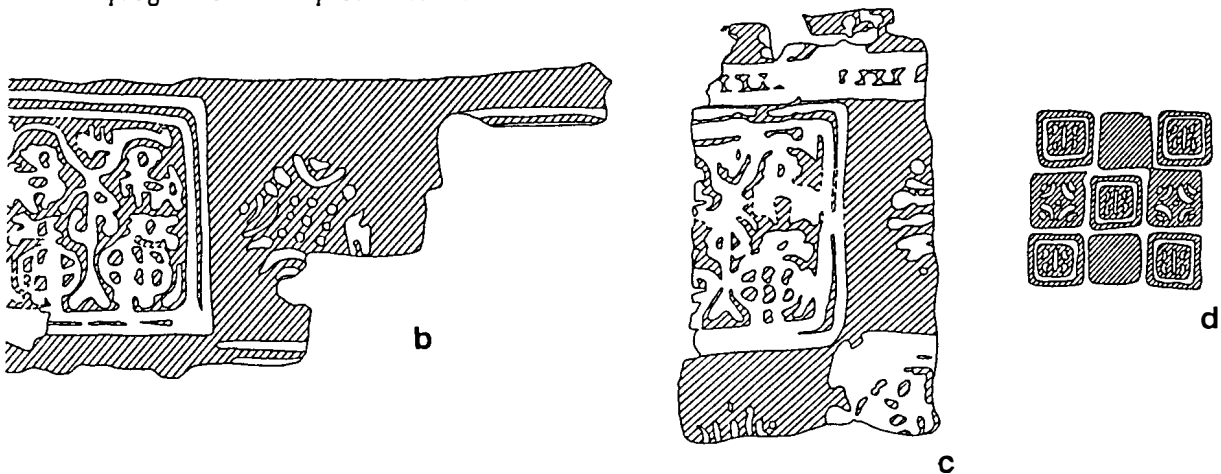
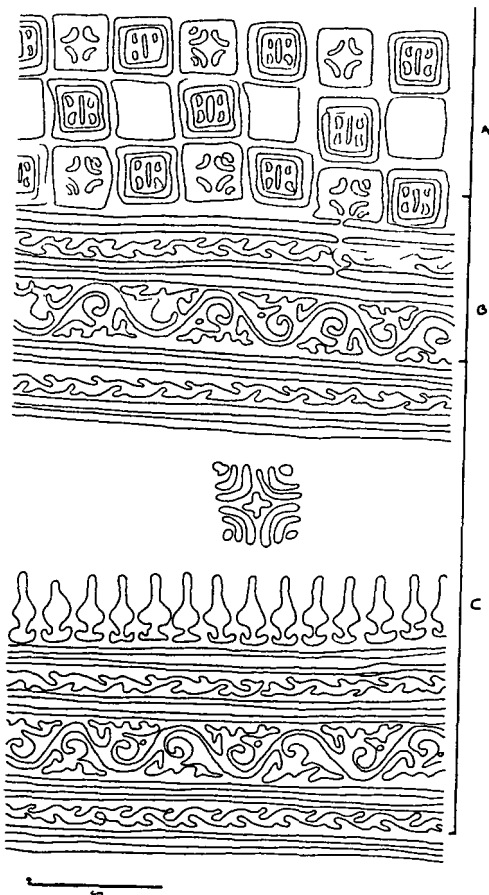


Fig 4 The border design from the final form of the tree-of-life pattern



RESIST DYED TEXTILES FROM QUSEIR AL-QADIM, EGYPT

A large number of resist (block printed) textiles were excavated in the Medieval Islamic levels at Quseir al-Qadim, Egypt. Many of these would appear to have come from India. They were all made from z/z spun cotton cloth. Most of the examples were produced either in blue and natural or in red and natural and incorporate a wide variety of designs.

One particularly interesting group of block printed textiles includes in various combinations elephants (natural and light blue), a geometric pattern of curves and dots, and a tree of life motif (fig 3). The latter design has a central stylised tree form, sometimes with branches flanked by two pairs of somewhat indistinct creatures. An elephant and tree of life textile was published by R. Pfister in *Les*

toiles imprimées de Fostat et l Hindoustan in 1938. It is clear from this example that the lower creature was a bird with long neck and tail (peacock?). The small animal above was described by Pfister as possibly being an antelope, although it could equally be some other four legged creature [1].

The same arrangement of stylised trees plus paired animals/birds has been found on other textiles from Quseir al-Qadim which vary quite considerably in quality and size. This would suggest that several blocks were in use which were at different stages of wear and which had been copied from an original idea with varying degrees of accuracy. This is not really surprising considering that the site was occupied for at least 200 years during the Islamic period and that the pattern may have been used throughout this time. It should also be noted that three different sizes of the tree of life block have been found at the site, namely 5.3-5.5 cm, 6.0 cm and 7.0-7.5 cm.

In its final form the tree motif became a vertical line with the paired animals simply becoming two sets of crescents. However, the idea of the paired animals remains in the way the top crescents curve outwards while the lower set curves inwards. Again, this motif is found with a simplified design of the geometric crescent and dot form mentioned previously.

It has been possible to reconstruct a large section of the final form of the tree of life textile including part of a border (fig 4). If anyone has or knows of fragments which would finish the pattern, could they please let me have the details?

G. M. Vogelsang-Eastwood

1 R. Pfister *Les toiles imprimées de Fostat et l Hindoustan* Paris (1938) XXXV 1

LATE MEDIEVAL TEXTILES FROM KULUBNARTI
SUDAN (part 2)

The 11 specimens of goat hair and possibly some camel wool are among the most interesting of the Kulubnarti collection. All of the items are fragmentary but five can be recognized as strips of varying widths. These were originally animal girths used for fastening a saddle around the belly or were used as other types of animal trappings. Four pieces were probably used as rugs or heavy bags; one fragment is too small to classify. The original form of a final specimen is a complete mystery.

The majority of the items in this class are of very dark brown to black goat hair. Three patterned specimens have the addition of white goat hair and one has undyed cotton yarn. Goat hair of a medium brown color and possibly camel wool occurs in three of the specimens.

The one common trait shared by all of these heavy textiles is that all of the yarns are Z-plied. However, the initial twist of the yarns is quite variable; some are S-twisted and some are Z-twisted. Many appear to have been simply grouped without any twist. Most of the yarns are used as Z-plies but in some specimens the plies have been twisted together in groups of 3 S and 4 S.

There is a great deal of variety in the fabric structure of the goat hair items. Five of the 11 are some form of plain weave. Only 1 example has a balanced weave 2wp/3wf per cm. It has been used as a patch on a fragment which is warp-faced 8wp/2.5wf. Two other specimens are similar. Another warp-faced piece, a strap 10 cm wide, is made with two weft threads in each shed. Instead of being paired and used as one, the weft has been woven in opposite directions, entering and leaving each shed on the opposite sides. A weft loop is thus formed at each shed change on both selvages instead of alternating sides. This practice makes a strong, tough edge important for a strap which is under a great deal of tension and may often be twisted. A final plain weave specimen is weft-faced 1.5wp/8wf.

Turning to other forms of interlacing, one specimen has countered twining over paired warp threads. Although very fragmentary now, it appears that originally the warp threads were completely covered by the twined weft threads. Another specimen, a strap, has been plaited with 11 elements in 2/2 twill. Each element is made of 4 Z-plied yarns twisted together in the S-direction. It is 6 cm wide; the incomplete length is 56 cm.

A second strap is also plaited but uses a technique completely different from the one just described. The maker began with warp elements lined up side-by-side. The outer right-hand warp was then interlaced through the rest of the warp threads in 2/1

twill thus acting as a weft. When it reached the left edge it became a warp again, taking its place just beyond and beside the last warp on that edge. Each right-hand warp took its turn as the weft, becoming a warp again on the left edge. This process is more complicated to describe than to do; it is so simple it must be well known. I have been unable to find a name for this technique and would be grateful if someone could supply it.

There are 2 examples of straps with patterns in black and white. These are fragments of the same type of animal girth described by G. M. Crowfoot [1]. They are ca. 10 cm wide and entirely warp-faced. Complementary warps have been manipulated to form geometric designs. The weaving is done in such a way that the pattern appears in opposite colors on each side of the girth: that is, a white area will be black on the reverse. Squares and triangles can be seen; other patterns are not entirely clear. Several examples of this type of girth have also been found at Qasr Ibrim [2].

The final specimen is unlike anything I have seen. Its incomplete measurements are 38 x 20 cm. The top edge, which is the only one intact, is 20 cm across and consists of 8 rows (2 cm) of countered twining over paired warps. This border is followed by 5 cm of plain weave with paired warp and weft threads (basket weave). Below this, the warps hang freely. The fragmentary state of the piece has left the warp lengths irregular, but the longest one is 31 cm.

The extraordinary feature here is the decorative wrapping, which is found on the warp threads. At intervals each warp pair has been wrapped in colored wool yarn using a figure 8 configuration. The wrapped areas are no more than 1-1.5 cm in each color, which include red, blue, green, yellow, cream, purple, burgundy, and medium brown. The wrapped areas are S-spun wool. There is no discernible pattern to the arrangement of wrapped and unwrapped areas, nor can one be seen in the distribution of the colors. The overall effect is that of a random mosaic of narrow colored rectangles on a dark brown ground.

In its fragmentary state it is difficult to imagine what the original use of the specimen was. In form it is most like the *rahat*, the fringed leather apron worn by women and girls during the Ottoman period in Nubia. It is possible that this specimen was used in that way also, in which case the long, loose wraps were following a tradition going back to the Meroitic - X-Group period (ca. A.D. 125-500) in Nubia. At Qasr Ibrim, portions of kilts with very long fringes have been found, and a woman wearing this same type of kilt is depicted on a bronze bowl from the Meroitic site of Karanog, very close to Qasr Ibrim [3].

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- 1 G M Crowfoot *Kush IV* (1956) 34-38
Sudan Notes and Records XXXII (1951)
71-76
- 2 W Y Adams *Medieval Qasr Ibrim*,
chapters 10 Agriculture and 14
Textiles (in preparation)
- 3 D Randall-MacIver and C L Woolley
Karanog the Romano-Nubian Cemetery Vol
IV Philadelphia (1910) pl 27

TEXTILES IN TRADE

Textiles in Trade will be the topic of the Textile Society of America's biennial symposium to be held September 14 15 16 1990 in Washington D C U S A The format will include panels structured about a common theme independent research papers and short reports on research in progress In addition modest facilities will be available for visual presentation of problems related to independent research projects to be presented in a poster board format If you would care to organize a panel or present a paper please submit a brief description to Dr Mattiebelle Gittinger The Textile Museum, 2320 S Street NW Washington D C 20008 U S A

HEMP

Recently a number of 9-8th century B C textile fragments from Deir Alla Jordan have been examined by Dr W D Cooke at the Manchester Ancient Textile Unit Much to everyone's surprise it was discovered that they were not made of flax as first thought but of hemp The analysis of the textiles was carried out using both conventional microscopes and a scanning electron microscope

Dr Cooke's discovery raises several questions notably when was hemp first used how much wool flax and hemp was used during the Bronze Age in Jordan and more worryingly how many textiles originally identified as being flax were actually made of hemp?

The textile fragments plus photographs taken microscopically are currently on display in the Deir Alla exhibition Leiden The Netherlands The exhibition is open until the 7th January 1990 An exhibition catalogue (Dutch and English versions are available) contains further information about the site and the evidence for the production of textiles The catalogues cost Fl 24 95 and are obtainable from the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden Rapenburg 28 Leiden The Netherlands

AN UNUSUAL WARP-WEIGHTED LOOM DESCRIBED IN NJAL S SAGA

Njal s Saga is a late thirteenth century Icelandic saga It was based on historical events in Iceland some 300 years earlier The story describes a 50 year blood feud

On the morning of Good Friday it happened in Caithness that a man called Dorrud went outside and saw twelve riders approach a woman's bower and disappear inside He walked to the bower and peered through a window inside he could see women with a loom set up before them Men's heads were used in place of weights and men's intestines for the weft and warp a sword served as the beater and the shuttle was an arrow And these were the verses they were chanting

Blood rains
From the cloudy web
On the broad loom
Of slaughter
The web of man
Grey as armour
Is now being woven
The Valkyries
Will cross it
With a crimson weft

The warp is made
Of human entrails
Human heads
Are used as weights
The heddle-rods
Are blood-wet spears
The shafts are iron-bound
And arrows are the shuttles
With swords we will weave
This web of battle

Njal s Saga chapter 157
(Taken from M. Magnusson and H Pálsson
Njal s Saga Harmondsworth (1960)

WETLAND SITES TEXTILES AND CORDAGE

I have just completed my final year at Exeter University reading archaeology having studied wetland archaeology under Mrs Bryony Coles and hope to go on to undertake postgraduate study taking *Prehistoric Textiles and Cordage from European Wetland Sites* as my research topic I aim to pursue new lines of approach including environmental aspects such as the cultivation and preparation of the raw materials as well as examining the distribution of various types of evidence on various levels per site and per period along with an assortment of comparative studies e.g decorative motifs shared with other artefact forms I also hope to undertake some experimental work on processing weaving dyeing etc so as to comprehend more deeply the evidence itself Then finally I hope to view the evidence along broader lines as part of both its chronological and technological framework

I would be grateful if any fellow researchers could offer any help whether it be in the form of information advice or criticism, in any language

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FLAX AND LINEN IN THE PRE-MEDIEVAL
ARCHAEOLOGY OF BRITAIN

I am currently researching the above subject and would be very grateful for any help advice or information from people whose work concerns this subject especially if they can contribute with respect to the following points

- 1 People currently working on linen textile finds from Britain
- 2 Anyone interested in or developing new approaches in methodology and/or theory with respect to linen and its production from any period and location European or Worldwide

In addition to surveying the British evidence I am interested in comparing and contrasting methodological and theoretical approaches with respect to the recovered material between periods e.g Neolithic as compared with Medieval Also to see how the British approach differs to non-British approaches and whether the British evidence could benefit from modern approaches

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEXTILES MEETING LEIDEN

On Friday November 3rd 1989 an informal meeting was held at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden Leiden for Dutch speaking members of the ATN and others interested in archaeological textiles Earlier this year in spring a questionnaire was sent to Dutch and Belgian readers to see if there would be enough support for the organization of such a meeting (ATN 8 1989) People responded enthusiastically to the idea Forty-five people from all over The Netherlands as well as from Flanders and even Scotland attended the gathering Besides ample time for valuable informal contacts and discussions seven lectures were given by the following Maarten Raven a general introduction to the textile collection of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden Jenny Barnett on the conservation of an Egyptian fifth dynasty funerary dress Daniel De Jonghe on technological analysis of archaeological textiles (especially on weaving faults) Sandra Comis on recent research on the so-called *veenmummies* from The Netherlands Philomeen van t Hooft on iconographical research and Coptic textiles and problems with dating these Willeke Wendrich on the differences between weaving and basketry Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood on textiles from Egyptian excavations

The various lectures clearly showed the variety in approach to the study of archaeological textiles During the day participants were offered the possibility to visit the current exhibition about the excavations at Deir Allah Jordan (ATN 8 1989) In addition they could visit a special mini-exhibition visualizing several aspects of archaeological textiles such as general analysis fibres dyes tools uses and survival of cloth and iconographical studies

The congress papers will be published in the annual museum bulletin A second congress in Leiden or at some other venue will be considered seriously in a year or two's time

Ph van t Hooft

SPANISH-INFLUENCED COSTUME

C Ollerhead has a particular interest in and wishes to learn more about Spanish influenced fashions between 1500-1600 and would like to establish contact with a like interested party to discuss and learn about design cut and construction in this period

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AWARD

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) announces the annual VERONIKA GERVERS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN COSTUME AND TEXTILE HISTORY of up to \$9 000 (Can) to be awarded to a scholar working on any aspect of textile or costume history whose research makes direct use of or supports any part of the ROM collections that cover a broad range of time and geography For information contact Chair at the address given below

Chair
 Veronika Gervers Memorial Fellowship
 Textile Department
 Royal Ontario Museum,
 100 Queen s Park
 Toronto
 Ontario
 Canada M5S 2C6

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Issue 7 of *Dyes in History and Archaeology* (formerly *Dyes on Historical and Archaeological Textiles*) is now available in a new type-set form

This year s topics include notes on the history of kermes dyeing the analysis of madder and other red dyes dyes of the Viking Age contaminants in indigo dyeing clubmoss as a dye mordant the behaviour of early synthetic dyes The previous A4 size has been retained but a more up-market format (38 pages of type-set text illustrated with 18 line drawings and a cover photograph) has been adopted

Copies may be obtained from the editor
 P Walton Textile Research 12 Bootham
 Terrace York YO3 7DH England

Price £2 95 postage free within the UK (subscribers outside UK please add 50p) Cheques should be made payable to *Dyes in History and Archaeology* (Pounds sterling please) or money may be transferred to DHA s Girobank account 63-935-5906 (Leeds)

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