

Viking Age jewellery on Gotland



ArkeoDok

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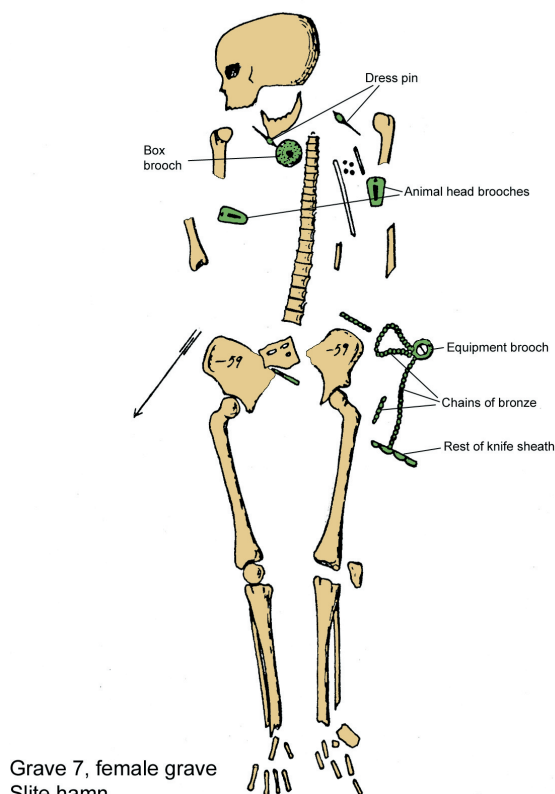
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Dress and dress jewellery in Viking Age

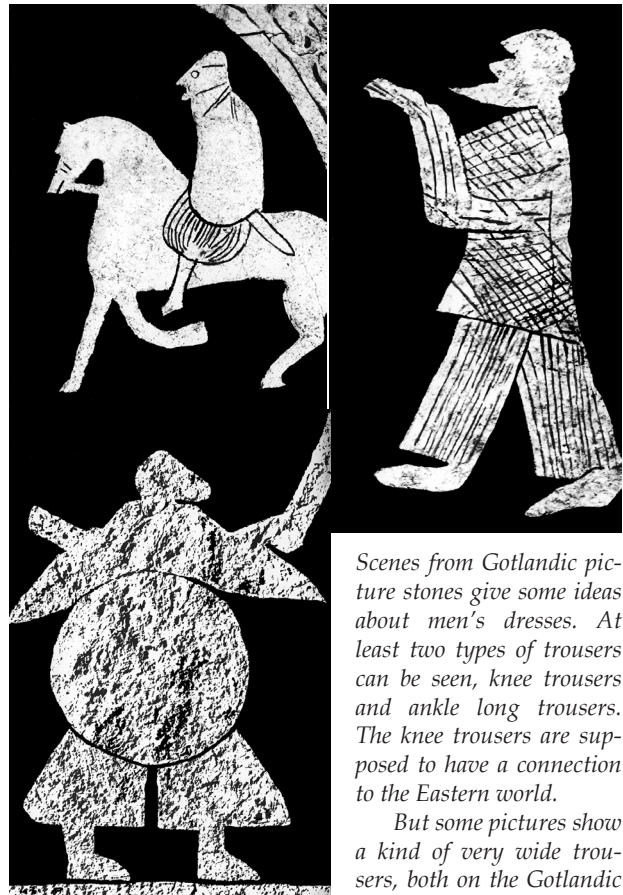
The Viking Age dress is known from contemporary reproductions and through finds from graves. People wearing clothing have been depicted in scenes on Gotlandic picture stones and on rune stones. But also on small metal mountings and embroidery on dresses etc, mainly showing females. The different sources give a broad idea of the Viking Age clothing in Scandinavia at this time.

On the other hand, the jewellery worn by men and women is very seldom reproduced in these images. To understand what kind of jewellery was worn, and how they were used, one has to refer to the graves from the period. The jewellery in the graves also gives an indication of what kind of clothing was worn. But it has to be remembered that people, obviously, were often buried in other clothes than those used to wear in daily life.

The position of the pieces of jewellery in the graves gives an indication of how they were used. But it should be noted that the jewellery as a rule has moved from its original location during the decaying of the body. In most graves that have been investigated, one can clearly see that the jewellery has moved from its original position.



Grave 7, female grave
Slite hamn
Gotland. Investigated 1916



Scenes from Gotlandic picture stones give some ideas about men's dresses. At least two types of trousers can be seen, knee trousers and ankle long trousers. The knee trousers are supposed to have a connection to the Eastern world.

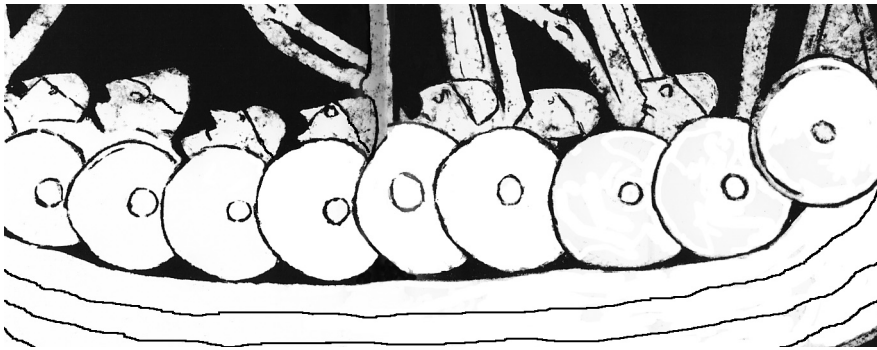
But some pictures show a kind of very wide trousers, both on the Gotlandic picture stones (to the left) and rune stones from the Swedish mainland, like the man on the rune stone at Ledberg down left, who actually seems to be carrying a kind of skirt.

The warrior to the left is obviously having a helmet, he also is equipped, as well as the man above, with a shield, sword and an axe.



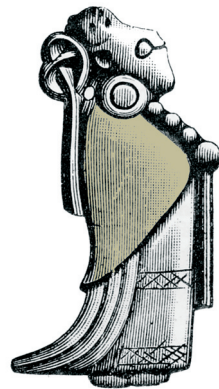
Specifically of course in connection with graves where the deceased has been placed in an upright position, like sitting on a chair, which can be seen in some of the chamber graves at Birka, the Viking Age town west of Stockholm. Here, the position of the artefacts found during excavation, have moved from their original position.

The main focus in this paper, as well as in the photo galleries, concerns the Gotlandic clothing and jewellery. The clothing on Gotland did not differ very much from the general Viking clothes, worn by the people in Scandinavia and the Eastern Baltic area, including part of Russia. But when it comes to the jewellery, there are some very clear differences, where most specifically; the Gotlandic women had a very distinctive range of jewellery, only worn by



A scene from a Gotlandic picture stone showing a Viking ship and its crowd. The men are sitting holding ropes connected to the sail, and along the side of the ship are their shields. It looks as if the men are carrying a cap. There are no sign of any helmet, and that is rather typical for the picture stones.

There are, in the whole Viking world, very few pieces found of helmets, in comparison to what has been found from the preceding period.



The women dress seen on two different items from two different regions of Sweden. To the left, a woman, probably a Valkyria, greeting a dead man welcome to Valhalla and giving him a cow horn full of mead. The picture of the woman is depicted on a Gotlandic picture stone from the 9th C. To the right, a proud woman depicted on a small dress object of silver, some 2 cm high, found in Aska in Östergötland, middle Sweden. The two pictures are remarkable like each other, probably showing a kind of dress used by many women.

Gotlandic women.

This paper about Viking Age clothing is very short, as it is not the main object of this work. The CD is concentrated on the question of Viking Age jewellery, and to give the reader a good view of how different objects looked like and how they were worn.

The Birka finds have played a crucial role in the interpretation of Viking Age costume (Geijer 1938, 1980; Hägg 1974, 1983, 1986, 1991; Bau 1982). Analyses show that many people were buried in high quality clothes skilfully crafted, but there are also textiles representing the more ordinary Viking Age quality.

There are very few textile fragments found on the island of Gotland, and the ones that have been discovered are not systematically investigated. In spite of this, there is much in favour of the conclusion that the women dress on Gotland, to a very high degree, was the same as the one from mainland

Sweden, or from Finland and the Baltic area. To get an idea of what kind of clothes that were used, one can look to the graves excavated at the Viking town of Birka, situated just west of Stockholm, the capital of Sweden

Men's dress

The men probably normally wore a shirt or a tunic, completed with trousers, and on top of that a coat or a mantle. The tunic was put on over the head and over the underwear. It had arms and was held together around the waist by a belt. During the early Nordic Middle Ages and probably also during late Iron Age, the man's tunic was a short cloth. The female tunic however was during Viking Age, as well as during most part of the Nordic Middle Ages, an ankle length clothes.

The trousers seem to have been either knee-trousers, or ankle length trousers, both types of trousers can be seen on Gotlandic picture stones. According to these figures, the trousers were





sometimes very wide as the amount of cloth used denoted the wealth of the wearer, and closely resemble the male's mode of dress in the Arabic world.

The top cloth was the mantle. It was held together with a ringed pin or a big pennanular brooch at the right shoulder. Smaller pennanular brooches hold the underwear together. Around the waist, the men had a leather belt, decorated with mountings.

Socks and/or *leg-wraps* were sometimes worn, the leg-wraps were fastened with small hooks, as can be demonstrated in one of the graves from Birka. Also men, like women, wore *covers* for hand, foot and head, but here also, we know very little about this area.

In graves at Birka, textile fragments have been found that can be connected to oriental clothes, for instance decoration bands sown to silk that probably belong to a long coat, or "kaftan". A kaftan is a long, open coat; held together by a belt. Normally it had very long, tight arms, that broaden towards the end (hand). This kind of coat has its origin among the Asiatic horsemen. Some fragments found in graves at Birka, might have been a Kaftan type of coat.

The Gotlandic dress was very much the same as in the rest of the Viking world. But what stands out with the Gotlandic dress is, most of all, the style of the jewellery holding the clothes together, as well as many other Gotland specific pieces of jewellery. On Gotland, we find many unique items of jewellery not used in other areas in the Viking world, for example the animal head and the equipment brooches worn by the women.

We know less about the small clothes, like for instance headgear. It is rather difficult to decide from reproductions if the male figures are wearing a helmet or any other kind of headgear. The few pieces of conical male caps that have been found in graves seem according to the decoration of it being brought in from Eastern Europe or further away. We know from the Viking Gods world that Odin was known among other things by his hat with broad edging.

The jewellery of the men's dress

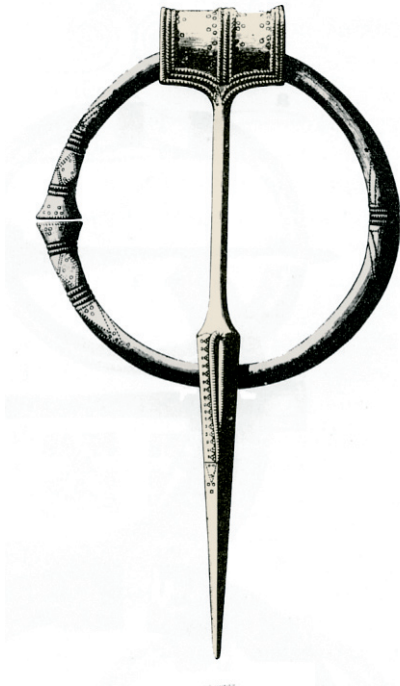
The man's equipment of jewellery doesn't have the same regional impression as the women's dress, even if sometime local variants of international common forms developed. The cloak has been held together with the help of *ringed pins* and *pennanular brooches*, and around the waistline a *leather belt* decorated with *mountings* of thin metal plates, normally of bronze.

Pennanular brooches of different size has been adapted to the weight and the thickness of the clothes, and worn as a brooch close to the neck, both in a shirt and a coat, as well as a cloak brooch.

The biggest brooches, as big as a hand-basin, must have needed a strong piece of cloth to be able to withstand the penetration of the needle. One might also guess that the very big ringed pins made of silver, with a diameter of sometimes up to 10-12 cm and a weight of 0.2-0.3 kilo, has been intended for a heavy cloak, possibly a fur of sheep skin.

Ringed pins and pennanular brooches

Two types of *ringed pins* have been used. One type is sporadically found from Norway in the west to far into Russia in the east, have its main concentration in Birka and the surroundings in middle Sweden. It consists of a long, slender pin with, from the head, a down falling ring of cast bronze, decorated with



Ringed pin from Gotland, made of silver. The pin is about 10 cm long. This kind of ringed pin is made of silver or bronze, very few of iron. Drawing from ATA, Central Board of National Antiquity, Sweden.

animal style of typical Nordic style. This type of ringed pin seems to be a common object all over Scandinavia.

The other, far more common head type is the bigger ringed pin with an open ring. On the mainland they are often made of iron, but on Gotland as far as we know they are always made of silver and very decorative. This kind of ringed pin are very seldom found in graves, most of them coming from silver hoards.

These types of rings made of silver are sometimes found outside Gotland in both east and west, but is then usually of a more slender dimension and lesser artistic quality, when it comes to the punched decorations and the profile of the pin and the mount of the ring. The Gotlandic exclusive forms are easily identified and are totally different from the Western European silver ringed pin found in Norway and the British isles.

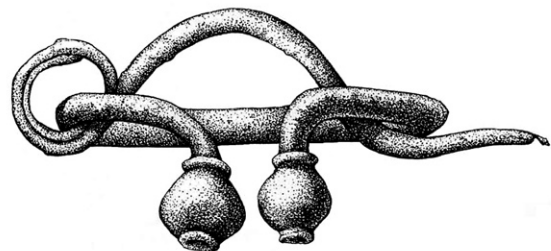
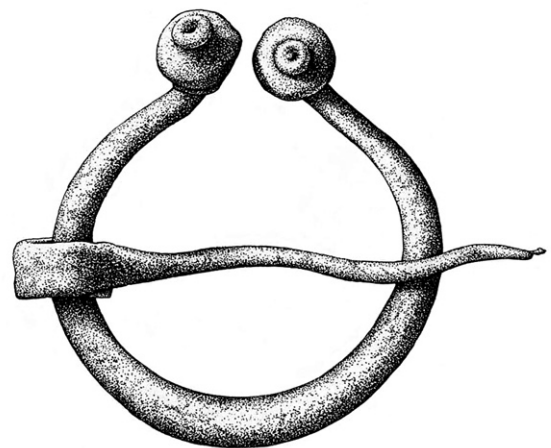
The *pennanular brooch* has a vast variety of forms, size and surface decoration. They are usually made of bronze or silver, very seldom in iron. Most of the models found on Gotland, do have forms that resemble those from most of the areas around the Baltic Sea coasts. The pennanular brooch as



Pennanular brooch from Kopparsvik, a cemetery just outside the town of Visby, Gotland. The brooch is made of bronze, well decorated and with a diameter of 7,5 cm.

jewellery is characteristic for a huge eastern area that stretches far into Russia. But it is very clear that in most areas, they developed their own form of the pennanular brooch. Some types found on Gotland seem by this to be exclusive to Gotland.

The pennanular brooch consists of the ring, normally ended with knobs in different forms; faceted, ball-formed, animal head, flattened or ruled up to form a tube that has been mounted over the loop. Pennanular brooches are either totally plane,



*Pennanular Brooch
Scale 2:1*



Pennanular brooches can be of very different forms and sizes, and vary from being extremely well decorated, to be very simple and small models without decorations. The bigger examples are supposed to have held the mantle together at the shoulder, the smaller ones, like this one, is sometimes found close to the knee. It is supposed to have been used to hold the mantle together and stopping it from blowing around.

or with ornamentation, and in such a case normally with punched decoration. Sometimes pennanular brooches are decorated in the typical Viking animal Style. Now and then, some really fancy example of pennanular brooches are found, made with niello silver plates and gold plated.

The biggest pennanular brooches, big as a flat of one's hand, have been used as shoulder brooches in men's mantles, alternating with big ringed pins. Smaller pennanular brooches are normally also seen as brooches for the mantle, while the smallest could have been used to keep a shirt together, or hold tight a light outer cloak at the throat. It is often found

The best evidence how belts were constructed and decorated comes from graves. The figure to the right shows a male grave at the famous Viking Age grave field at a place called Ihre in northern Gotland. The man has been carrying a leather belt, all the way around decorated with small rectangular bronze plates, as long as the belt is wide. The belt was hold together by a belt buckle of a rather common type. The belt has been divided into two parts, with a belt-divider holding it all together. From that belt-divider, his comb and his knife have been hanging.

two different sized pennanular brooches in men's graves, sometimes even three.

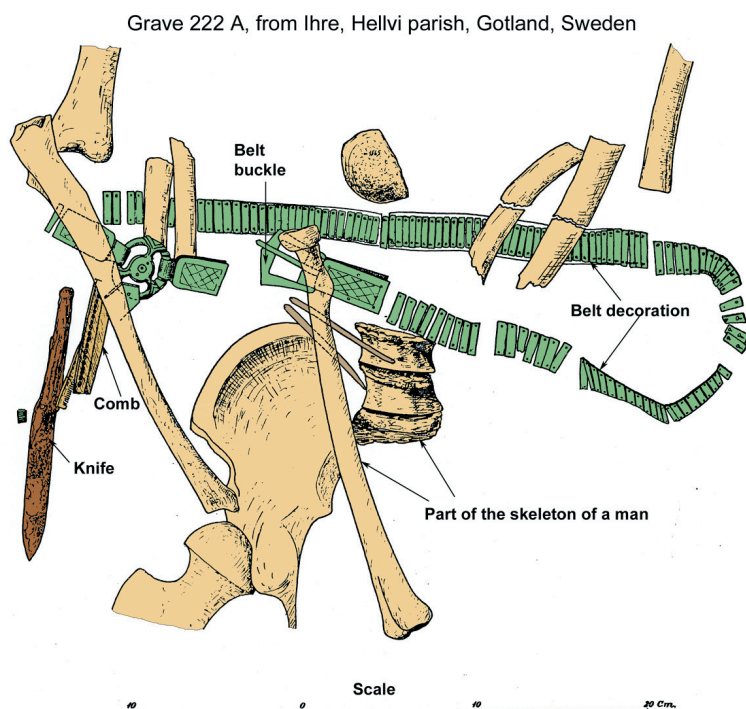
Now and then one find in graves that the pennanular brooch has been places close to the knee. It is uncertain if the brooch has been connected to the mantle, to stop it from blowing around, or if it has been a part of the arrangement of the sword's fastening to the body.

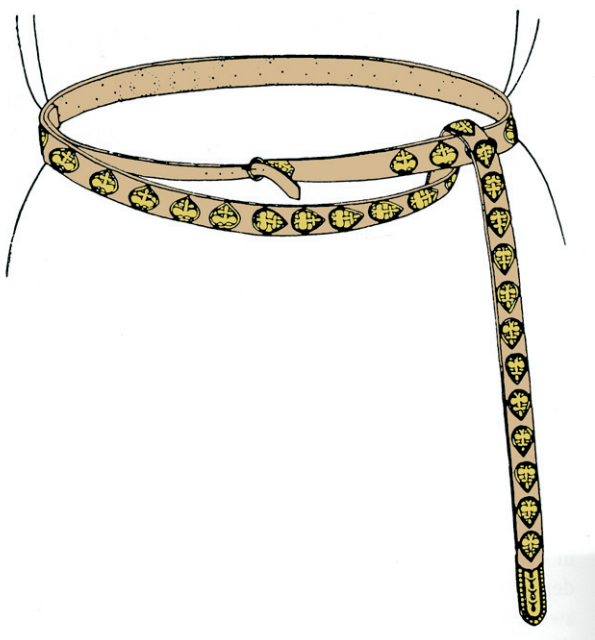
There has been a long debate about the question if the pennanular brooches have been worn with the opening up or down. The discussion comes from the opposite views from the fact, that the brooches found in inhumation graves are usually found with the opening downwards, but that the form of the brooch suggests the other way around.

Looking at the construction of the pennanular brooch, it can actually be worn either way. As it stands today, no serious discussion has been done about this question. Practical test will be the way to try out what seems to be the most convenient way of wearing it.

Metal mounted leather belt

What has been said about the local and international forms of the pennanular brooch can also be said about the *metal mounted belt* of men. The mountings and the forms of the *belt buckle* can be said to be international from Gotland and eastwards. These





Belts were very often decorated with different forms of small figures made of bronze or silver and the end of the belt was normally decorated with a strap-end

belts that must have been worn on top of a tunic or a coat (the trousers were held up with other belts or cords) can be seen as a kind of baldric or leash and performs a similar function to the equipment brooch worn by the women.

The simplest form of belt is a flat leather string with a belt buckle of simple style. But the belt can also many times be richly decorated with mountings of metal, mostly of bronze. The loose end of the belt very often has a strap end. The loose end of the belt has very seldom been directly attached to the belt, like in our days, or in the period before the Viking Age. Instead the end of the belt has been hanging loose and by that showing off the often well decorated strap end.

Belts of a Western and an Eastern European origin, as well as belt of an Oriental origin have also been found in Scandinavia.

The so-called Oriental belts sometimes could have several loose hanging straps and mountings and rings to attach objects to the belt.

The belts are often provided with *belt dividers*. The waist-belt is cut off at one or two places and the ends of the belt connected to a belt divider/joiner in the form of a ring. And to this ring, different small objects can be attached that were needed easily at hand, like a knife, a comb, a purse for fire steel or other small things.



Stray finds from Gotland. The top row is showing four different forms of belt buckle. Second row to the left a belt-divider showing a face of a man. This little figure has been found in many examples on Gotland; some of these figures seem to be wearing a cap. The two other objects in the second row are strap-ends of different forms. ATA.

Men carried their *combs* in specific cases with an attachment ring in the end of it, so they could be hanging from the belt. The women must have carried their combs in another way, maybe in a purse. A rather common way of decorating the waist belt was to attach on it a row of thin and rectangular *bronze plates*, as bars, close to each other.

With these bars, one has got a strong and flexible belt. This kind of waist belt has been used both on Gotland and in the Eastern Baltic area as well as in Finland, but not so frequently in the rest of the Viking world.

Oriental mountings, are those called, particularly found on Gotland, that have a clear connection to the Arabic world, whether or not the



Belt-divider made of bronze from a male grave at the Viking Age cemetery at Kopparsvik, outside Visby, Gotland. 9th-10th century. Photo D. Carlsson.



Belt decorations of different kinds are very common in Viking Age, most of all on Gotland and in the Eastern Baltic region. The kind of decorations showed on the figure to the left are often called Oriental belt decorations, whether or not they have come from the Orient or been locally made from imported ideas. They use to be shaped like small hearts, or shields, decorated in a niello style with inlays of silver.

have been imported from that area or made locally after Oriental models. They are made of bronze or silver, and are often shaped as hearts or shields, sometimes in the form of a fish.

That the *metal mounted belt* is not for the trousers is clearly indicated by a specific kind of belt that sometimes is found in male graves on Gotland. It is a kind of belt that has a number of small dangling leather strips covered by small, thin bronze wire. Every one of these hanging straps, maybe up to six to eight of them, are terminated by an elongated strap-end.

Even men could have glass beads, but normally not more than a handful of them.

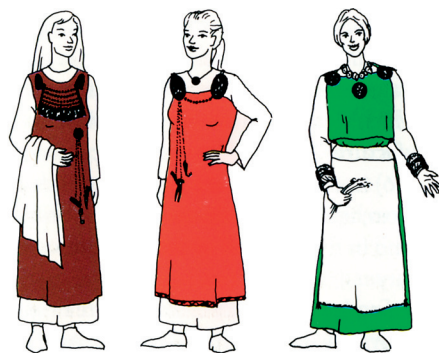
Women's dress

The women use to wear a wide, ankle length under-dress, sometimes made of linen. On top of that a shorter skirt, commonly referred to as an apron dress that reached up to the armpits, normally made of wool. The skirt has been hung over the shoulders by straps or loops, which are connected at the front by brooches. In other areas, women used dress pins to keep the skirt up. On top of this, the women wore an outer dress and a kind of shawl, sewn together under the chin.

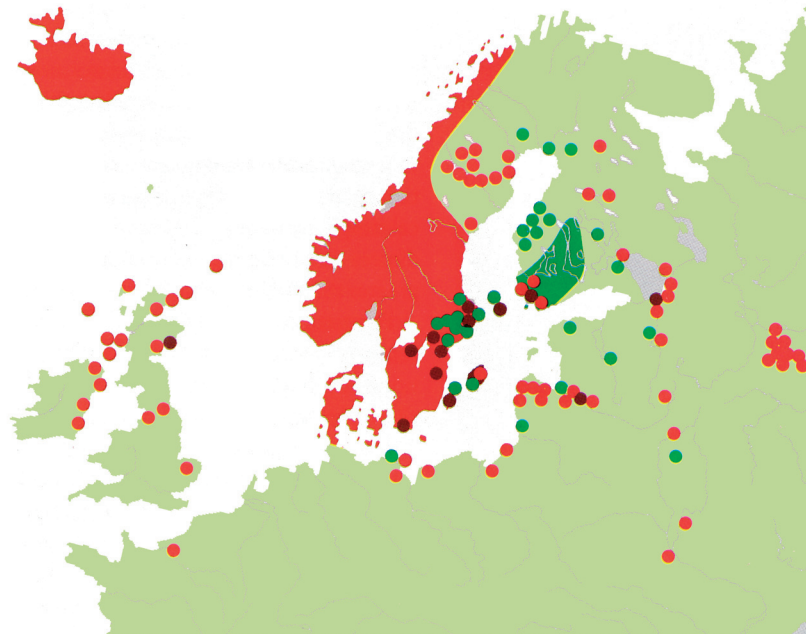
From graves in Birka, it has been concluded that women occasionally wore dresses with full-length arms, sometimes in connection with an apron. The women of course also used to cover their hands, head and feet, but this kind of material has very seldom been preserved. Shoes made of soft fur have though been preserved, for example from the very famous female boat grave at Oseberg in Norway.

In some cases it has been possible to determine that the women did not have their head covered with a cap, and the hair was held together in a knot. It might be that the dress pins found in graves might have something to do with a kind of head cover, but the question about the exact use of these dress pins is not known with any certainty.

Remains from footwear are not very common



- Gotland woman's dress with animal-head brooches
- Scandinavian woman's dress with oval brooches
- Finnish woman's dress with circular brooches
- ● Sporadic finds of all these types of brooches



The Viking woman's dress differed to some extent between different parts of Scandinavia, both when it comes to the dress itself and the jewellery. Specifically the jewellery differs clearly and one can talk of regional and local customs, what today might be called "folk dress". Specifically the Gotlandic women had a clearly different set of jewellery. Drawings from "From Viking to Crusader. The Scandinavians and Europe 800-1200. Council of Europe 1992.



in archaeological situation. When shoes or pieces of shoes are found, in most cases it is coming from the shoemaker's workshop in towns. Shoes were also found in the Oseberg Viking ship burial. To keep their hands warm, they used mittens. A piece of a mitten has been found in the town of Lund, southern Sweden, made in what is called *nålbindingsteknik* ("needle binding technique", which was an early form of knitting performed with a single needle.

The jewellery of the women's dress

To fasten the braces of the over dress/apron dress over the shoulder, the women wore matched pairs of the same kind of brooches (or in Eastern Baltic



Above. Oval brooch made of bronze. This kind of oval brooch is from the Eastern Baltic Area, mainly from Karelia, the area in the inner part of the Finnish Bay. Found at Fröjel Viking harbour on Gotland. Photo Roland Hejdström. Below, a disc brooch made of bronze with a gold-plated surface. From Kopparsvik cemetery outside Visby, Gotland. Photo D. Carlsson



Area, dress pins). Outside Gotland, this pair of brooches normally was what is called *oval brooches* (Scandinavia, Finland, Eastern Baltic area), or *disc brooches* (Finland) or *ring brooches* (Finland, eventually Eastern Baltic Area).

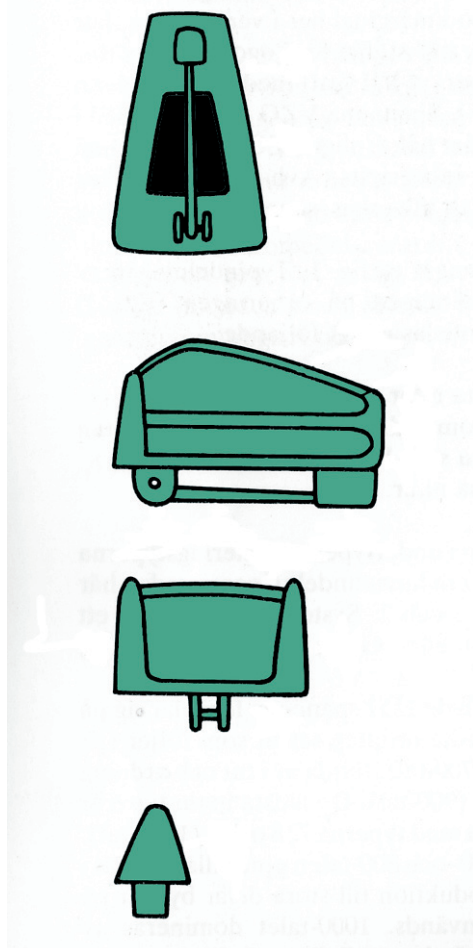
On the island of Gotland, they used *animal head brooches*. This kind of brooch was introduced on Gotland around AD 550, long before the Viking Age. At the beginning the brooch was rather small, but it developed over time to a bigger form and with specific animal style decoration (see figure for development). The women wore them until around AD 1100. This brooch is a good example of the Gotlandic tradition in jewellery making, and it also gives a hint that we have to look far back in history on Gotland to understand the Viking situation.

In all, the Gotlandic traditions when it comes to women and jewellery very clearly show that much of the jewellery worn by the Gotlandic women was exclusive to Gotland. No other women in the Viking

world used animal head brooches.

Animal head brooch

The name animal head brooches refer to the fact that the brooch has the stylized form of an animal head (swine, horse, bear or something similar), especially



Animal head brooches. Above two examples from the grave field at Kopparsvik, Visby, Sweden. Below these, a drawing showing how they were constructed. Early examples of animal head brooches, from the the of the Vendel period and the beginning of the Viking Age, are cast in one piece. Animal head brooches from the late Viking Age were normally cast in two pieces, the bottom and the top, and put together either by small bronze rivets or by soldering

if you look at them from above. Animal head brooches are always in bronze and are consisting of, like also the box brooch, a bowl-shaped front side and a flat bottom side, where the arrangement of the needle is fastened.

During Early Viking Age, the bottom and the top of the brooch is cast in one piece, though during late Viking Age, they were cast separately and connected to each other by rivets or sometimes by soldering. The front side of the brooch is decorated in animal style or by dots covering most of the surface, the latter being the youngest one. Some times they can be constructed with double shell, gold plated and have imposed silver plates decorated in niello style. Sometimes, even the bottom plate is decorated, and sometimes it is decorated with an inscription of runes.

The Gotlandic women normally wore these brooches in pairs, one beneath each shoulder. Their function was to hold the braces of the over dress/apron dress, in the same way as the women from the mainland of Sweden were using oval brooches. Sometimes, they only wore one animal head brooch at the throat. Specifically during the late Viking Age, the brooch equipment sometimes could consist of three animal head brooches.

The third animal head brooch in such a case replaced the normally used box brooch at the throat. The animal head brooches are unique to Gotland, and probably hint at a kind of folk dress of Gotland. These brooches never occur in male graves.

Box brooch

Attached to the outer garment or cloak/coat, the



Box brooches are the typical brooches for the Viking Age women from Gotland. The older brooches were made in one piece and single shell. In Late Viking Age, they used to be made of double shell, like the examples above. They were normally made of bronze, never in iron.



Sometimes box brooches were extremely well decorated and a precious piece of jewellery, like the example above from a female grave from 9th-10th century, excavated at the Viking Age harbour at Fröjel, Gotland. This one has double shell, with decorations in silver and gold. A masterpiece of Viking Age handicraft.

women wore a *box brooch*. This brooch on Gotland equals the *equal-armed brooch*, *disc*, *flat* or *Trefoil brooches* used on the mainland of Sweden, or the *ring brooch* in Finland and East Baltic area, or sometime other kinds of cloak brooches.

The box brooch is the predominant type of single brooch on Gotland. It is constructed in the form of a round, bowl-shaped front side with a flat bottom plate, where the arrangement for the needle is fastened.

Box brooches are, as animal head brooches, decorated in animal style or with dots. Box brooches, often made in double shells, are, in contrast to the animal head brooches, very often gold plated. Some remarkable nice examples have decoration plates fastened to it made of silver with golden plates ornated in niello style and with filigree ornated gilded plates. Even the bottom part of the brooch is often decorated, sometimes even with silver plates.

Equipment brooch

Another type of brooch very typical for Gotland in the Viking Age is the *equipment brooch*. During the Vendel period this style of brooch was also worn on the Swedish mainland. The brooch is used to carry small items, linked to the brooch by ribbons or bronze chains, like keys, needle-case, tweezers, knife etc. The last object is a very important tool for both men and women.

The equipment brooch comes in two main

forms, the equally round, and the asymmetrical with specific protrusion for the chains. The equipment brooch is specifically common on the island of Gotland, while on the mainland of Sweden; the equipment bands were fastened directly to the oval brooches (those differences probably has to do with local tradition in different regions).

This brooch then can be seen as a substitute for pockets or a purse and is fastened on the right side



Equipment brooch made of bronze. The pin to fasten the brooch is in the bottom of the round "tower like" piece of the brooch. To the right the plate with 5 holes from which chains has been hanging. In the end of the chains a woman could normally carry keys, needle house, scissor or other small daily objects. Photo D. Carlsson

of the dress, and the small tools were hanging so the hand easily reached it. Outside Gotland, the women used to hang the equipment band directly from one of the brooches holding the apron dress.

Breast decorations

Dress jewellery, whose only function is decoration, is on Gotland often of a domestic type. Even the international type of decorations that existed, were changed to take a more local form on Gotland. The most common type of breast decoration used to be strings of *beads* and *pendants* as well as *chains*. It can be noticed that multiple rows of objects were more common in the early Viking Age, until the middle of the 10th century. After that the number of rows of objects has diminished, being out of fashion.

A real magnificent set could, lets say in the middle of the 10th Century, consists of some 250 beads, mainly of glass in different colours, but also including some beads of gold and silver. The beads were strung in tight rows, hanging between two *bead-spacer*, in the form of two approximately 10 cm long metal splint with holes regularly spaced



Two pieces of so called fish-formed pendants from late Viking Age (11th century). Made of bronze and decorated with silver plates. These pendants were carried as a kind of necklace with numerous pieces strung together. In the late Viking Age, some of these, like the two on the picture, were transformed into a brooch. Stray find from Fröjel Viking harbour, Gotland. Photo D. Carlsson.

through which the string of beads were fastened.

The lowest part of these strings could be a number of so-called *fish-formed pendants*, a type of jewellery only existing on Gotland. During the so-called Vendel Period (550-800 AD) these were made of thin bronze plate with small cuttings in the thin end of the pendant. They were thread on to a string, by that making it all into a collier jewellery, hanging between the two brooches in the front part of the chest.

During Viking Age, they were cast in bronze with animal style decorations and with silver bars put on it. Towards the end of the Viking age, many of these fish formed pendants, were changed into brooches, by jointing them two and two and by providing it with a pin at the back of it.

Sometimes the women also carried heavy bronze *chains*, hanging from two, richly decorated plates, fastened on each side of the breast. These plates were usually made of bronze, but could also

sometimes be made of gold.

The use of several rows of objects was not as common in mainland Sweden, but more so in the East Baltic Area, where they had a tradition from the Early Iron Age. In late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages women wore very complicated and complex sets with chains in close rows and several layers, sometimes covering most of the body, even at times hanging all the way down to the knees.

Dress pins

The Gotlandic woman also used *dress pins*. These were relatively small, with rounded heads (in comparison to East Baltic dress pins where the head was in the form of huge three folded or cross formed plates), and are normally made of bronze, but sometimes also in silver.

Now and then, dress pins are made with a bronze head and an iron pin. The head of the pins are decorated and finished with a small loop. Outside Gotland, this kind of dress pins is not known to be used.

The exact function of these pins is unclear. In graves, they are usually found in pairs, high up



Different forms of Gotlandic dress pins, all made of bronze. ATA.

around the neck region. Sometimes the women have had both dress pins and a pair of animal head brooches, sometimes just dress pins and in other just the animal head brooches.

To understand the function of the dress pins, one can compare them with the East Baltic dress pins. These pins, with their specific form have big heads, and just below the head on the front side a small loop. Between these two loops, there are rows of chains, hanging from three sided plates, and these to some extent look like the ones from Gotland.

This kind of dress pins seems to have a double function, to hold together the clothes and to carry decorative jewellery. While in graves on Gotland there is usually a pair of dress pins in addition to the clothes holding animal head brooches, this shows that the Gotlandic dress pins do not serve for holding the dress together, as do those in the East Baltic region.

The small loops on the Gotlandic dress pins indicate that a thin thread has been fastened to the head of the dress pin. It might be that the string has carried a row of beads between the pairs of dress pins, and that this kind of decoration has been a locally specific jewellery style, to be compared to the function of the East Baltic dress pins arrangement.

As previously mentioned, in several inhumation graves, the position of the dress pins has been possible to determine, they are placed over the shoulders, with the point pointing down. To avoid the string of beads and the pins gliding out of their position when one is moving, this arrangement can have been fastened in this strange way, that the pins are attached to the clothes, and the string, that is not totally filled with beads, is turned around the pins points (see figure). There might of course be other



The exact function of the so-called dress pins used by Gotlandic women is not known with any certainty. In inhumation graves, they are normally found close to the neck, and with the head of the pin pointing downwards. One suggestion of their use is that it has to do with a kind of bead arrangement, in line with the drawing above. After L. Thunmark 1983.

solutions; some have suggested that the pins have been attached to a head cloth.

Pendants

All over the Viking world, different kinds of *pendants* have been used as solitaires (as opposite to the use of the fish-formed pendants that were carried in a row). These pendants have been hanging on the necklace, as in Scandinavia and Gotland, or at different places along a chain, like in East Baltic area and Finland.

These pendants must be seen as a kind of symbol for something. The *cross-formed pendants* that also could be carried by men give a clear signal of a Christian symbol. These cross pendants, as well as pendants made out of silver *coins* with a loop fastened to it, are international around the Baltic Sea.

These pendants on Gotland can be traced back to Vendel Period (c. 550-800 AD), when they were formed as small, undecorated pendants. There were many different forms of these small pendants, like *sieve- and spoon-pendants*. In the Viking Age, these pendants were many times gilded and decorated with silver-plating in the so-called niello style.



Pendant made out of a coin minted by King Ethelred of England around AD 1000. A stray find from the Viking Age harbour at Fröjel, Gotland. Photo D. Carlsson

Also the *tongue-shaped pendants* are in its Viking Age form often decorated with silver plate and other surface decorations.

The youngest, from the end of the Viking Age, are strongly curved. All these three forms of pendants probably have a specific meaning and only women from Gotland used them.

One type of large pendants, never found in Viking Age graves, but in hoards, are the *golden bracteates* (they are always only stamped on one side). They are emanating from earlier times, both on Gotland and the mainland of Sweden, but it is only on Gotland that this type of pendants survived into the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages. These bracteates have, as in earlier times, a relief pattern on the front side, complemented with stamp ornamentation or flirring ornamentation.



A copy of the biggest rock crystal ball ever found. It is 4,5 cm in diameter. The crystal ball is completely round and fitted into a silver decoration. It was a part of a Viking silver hoard found close to the Viking Age harbour at Fröjel, Gotland, and some years ago. Photo D. Carlsson.

A specific type of pendants from the late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages are these cut rock crystal lenses or rock crystal balls, set in a frame of filigree or stamp ornamentation of silver. These lenses seem to be specific for Gotland. Last years excavations of the Viking Age harbour at Fröjel on the west coast of Gotland, has given us evidence that there is much in favour of these lenses being made on Gotland. Besides being a part of a pendant, these lenses have been suggested of being magnifying glasses, an idea that fits in well with the high quality of the lenses. They might have been used in fine handicraft work.

Other kinds of pendants besides those mentioned are uncommon. The type of small special pendants that is common in Birka and other mainland Swedish bead strands, like for instance oriental finger-rings remade into pendants, are very seldom found on Gotland.

Finger-rings and arm-rings

Ring jewellery, meaning by that *finger-rings*, *arm-rings*, *toe-rings* and *neck-rings*, are not very common on Gotland. As a rule, it can be said that the stiff neck-rings/Tork, has not been a fashion in the Viking Age, neither on Gotland nor on the mainland of Sweden. On the other hand, they are fairly common in the East Baltic Region and even further eastward, made both in bronze and silver.



Arm-rings from the silver hoard found in 1999 at Spillings, northern Gotland. The hoard weighted some 75 kilos, and consisted of among other things 14 200 Arabic coins, and more then 400 well-decorated arm-rings of silver. Photo D. Carlsson.

In this connection, it is rather astonishing that in many silver hoards on Gotland, there are numerous examples of stiff arm-rings, of a heavy construction and of silver.

It seems more like these silver arm-rings were imported for their silver content and not to serve as a piece of jewellery. In some Viking hoards, like the enormous hoard from Spillings on northern Gotland (some 75 kilos of pure silver), there were more then 400 of these silver arm-rings. They have never been found in a female grave.

Finger-rings have been used very seldom, both on Gotland and the mainland, and they have almost never been found in more than single examples. In the East Baltic region in contrast, the women wore numerous finger-rings, several on each hand, and they were used both by men and women.

Arm-rings have been more common then finger-rings, and are of many different types. Some are rather simple, while others are more developed with a high degree of ornamentation of a typical Gotlandic style. Arm jewellery, as well as other forms of jewellery is almost always made of bronze, at least as seen in the funeral practise. Sometimes this kind of jewellery made of silver is found in hoards.

Arm jewellery seems, looking at graves, to be female jewellery, and so it is also on the mainland.

Again, there is a distinct difference looking eastward. In the East Baltic Region, many men are buried with a so-called *warriors ring* around the left arm. This kind of arm-rings has a very specific form and is easily detected. They have never been found on Gotland or on the Swedish mainland.

Children's dress

Concerning the dress of children, not much can be said. Children are very seldom depicted on drawings for the time being, and when children graves are investigated, one get the impression that they don't carry their "normal dress", while they sometimes have got gown up grave gifts, like weapons and brooches, that hardly could have been part of their daily life.

A fascinating example is a grave of a young boy at the Viking Age cemetery at Ihre in the parish of Hellvi. Here a small boy has got with him a grown up man's sword, and a dog and a horse.

Conclusion

The Gotlandic dress during Viking Age is, when it comes to the clothes, mainly of the same kind that can be found in the surrounding Baltic countries. It can be clearly seen that the women's traditional jewellery is to a very large degree of local origin, far more so then the men's jewellery. The latter is far more of a common type for most part of the Viking world, especially in comparison eastwards.

It can clearly be seen that in the Viking Age, as well as long before that, Gotland is more closely connected to the Eastern Baltic area then with the rest of Sweden and the western part of the Viking world. Many items of jewellery and other objects on Gotland have no connections to mainland Sweden, something that is clearly demonstrated in most forms of artefacts.

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