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Ramshaven Herald

A.S. XLXVI September 2011

Precision is Such a Fine Point

Baronial site
Online group
Bryniau Tywynnog
Der Welfengau
Kingdom of Ealdormere
Upcoming Events

[Http://ealdormere.ca/ramshaven](http://ealdormere.ca/ramshaven)
[Http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SCA-Ramshaven](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SCA-Ramshaven)
[Http://www.treheim.ca/bryniau](http://www.treheim.ca/bryniau)
[Http://dw.sca.gamv.ca](http://dw.sca.gamv.ca)
[Www.ealdormere.ca](http://www.ealdormere.ca)
[Www.ealdormere.ca/listcalendar.php](http://www.ealdormere.ca/listcalendar.php)

Where'd the Summer Go?

It seems, at times, that the summer just isn't long enough. The spoils of War are scattered around the house. Projects hurriedly left behind in favour of precious vehicle or trailer space still clutter tables, floors, garages, basements. I deny speaking for everybody, but I will indulge this: though the summer quickly wanes, memories of excitement, debate, discussion, pageantry, and the homely home we have all made ourselves in our beloved Society remain fresh and warm. For myself and my family, going back to Pennsic was definitely the time-zone change we all needed.

Now, as we look forward to our upcoming Fall Crown and our collective preparations for it, I enjoin you to share some stories, whether your own or something bardic-flavoured! Meantime, I'll be spending time in a sanctum of books and materials preparing for my next series of adventures...



Improving Authenticity in Your 'Early Period' Fabrics

Countess Ryn Buchanan, Order of the Crucible

This article is an attempt to help those interested in improving the authenticity of their 'early period' costumes. There are many definitions of 'early period', but the one I will use for the purpose of this article is 600 to 1100 AD. I specialize in Saxon and Norman, but most of the things in this article can also apply to much of Northern Europe including the Norse culture.

The most authentic would be, of course, to weave your own fabric. However, most of us don't have the time, skill, or inclination to do that. If anyone is interested in pursuing this avenue, please feel free to contact me. We will, instead, concentrate on commercially available fabrics.

I think there are 4 major things to consider. They are fabric type, weave, colour, and sett.

Fabric Type

The main-stay fabrics of this age were wool and linen. Wool was the every-day fabric of most people. Linen processing is a more involved process. As a result linen is more expensive.

Silk was available, but only in very small quantities. Silk is recorded as costing 2 ounces of pure silver for each ounce of silk at one point. That's about \$15 per ounce in modern terms. Because of this cost, try to limit your silk use to small items such as veils, caps, and hats. Also, avoid the use of 'raw silk' or silk noil and dupioni silk. It really isn't anything like what was available in period.

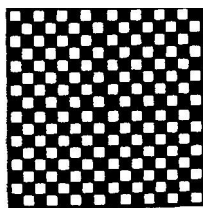
So, what if you're allergic to wool? Or can't stand the way linen crinkles, even if crinkles are period? Well, there are a great many good blends on the market today. Take a look at pure linen and wool, and then find a blend that looks the same. It's not as authentic as linen and wool, but it's better than shiny polyester.

Weave

What follows is a pictorial representation of the most common weaves within period. There are some specialty weaves available, but I doubt you would find them in a commercial bolt of fabric.

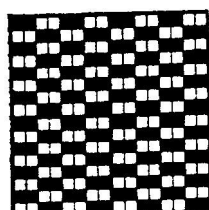
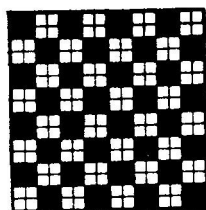
I wanted to say a couple of words about stripes and plaid. Be careful. There is evidence of different coloured thread in the weave but there are normally only a few at a time. This would make the stripe very narrow. I've not found any evidence for stripes in both directions, though most of the samples that have stripes are so small that if it were a large enough plaid, we just wouldn't have the other stripe. Caution should be exercised: don't make your tunic look like a car blanket.

The following pictures are taken from Lise Bender Jorgensen's North European Textiles until AD 1000.

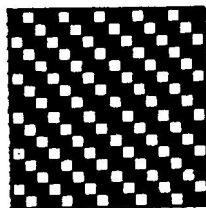
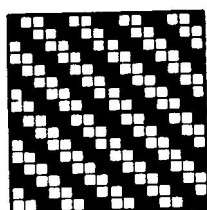


This weave is called tabby, or simple weave, and is the most basic, most commonly found weave. It is created by alternating the weft over and under the warp.

Each of the weaves that follows is considered to be a twill, even if it doesn't say so in the name.

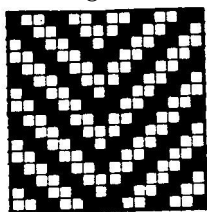


These are basket weave and half basket weave. These are created by passing the weft under 2 warp threads.

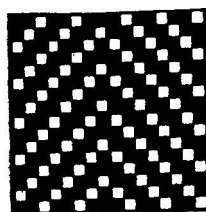


Another fairly simple weave that is often available commercially, is diagonal twill, both 2/2 and 1/2.

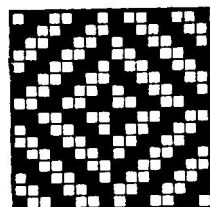
Other variants of warp and weft can create the following documentable weaves:



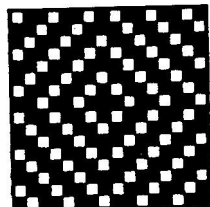
2/2 chevron twill



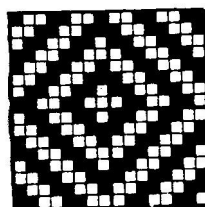
1/2 chevron twill



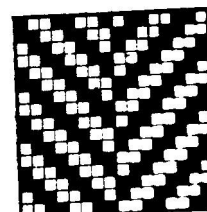
2/2 diamond twill



1/2 diamond twill



2/2 lozenge twill



2/2 herringbone

Colours

I don't do much in the way of dyeing, but the textile co-ordinator for 'Regia Anglorum', Hazel Uzzell, has written an excellent article on the subject. Matching colours is a highly subjective art. You can never really get a perfect match between a commercial dye and a natural dye. Having said that, using the colour chart below, you can be reasonably certain that you have a good approximation of what was available in period.

"Dye Equivalents"

Chronicle, Regia Anglorum quarterly magazine

Volume 11, Issue 4 (No 60) Winter 2000 – 01

Dye	Paterna	DMC
Murex	330*	7245
Indigo from murex	540	7319
Shellfish (non-specific)	300	7895
Kermes	840*	7544
Tansy	743/773	7727
Dyers Greenweed	712/773	7727/7680
Weld & Sorrel Root	641	7676
Weld & alum & urine	711	7784
Weld & alum & alkali	711*	7784
Weld	760	7473
Weld & iron	642/641/652	7573
Madder over Woad	723	7767
Exhausted Madder	885/863	7175/7875
Madder	861	7920
Madder & alum	D 211	7920
Madder & alkali	930	7184
Madder & iron	720	7446*
Madder & copper	871	7446
Madder & sorrel	882	7922
Madder & iron mordant	400*/920	7167/7199
Woad	D 391/392	7301
Woad	524	7692
Woad	561	No
good match		
Woad	530	7288
Woad over Weld	653	7772
Woad over Weld	691	7769

Madder over Woad	921	7209/7115
Lady's Bedstraw root & Alkalai & clubmoss	835	7951
Lady's Bedstraw root & Clubmoss	863	7214
Lichens		
Xanthoria Pariatina & potash (dark dried)	923	7193
Xanthoria Pariatina & Alkali (sun dried)	515	7301
Ochrolechia Tartarea (cork lit) & ammonia	D 211	7961
Parmelia Saxatilis Boil Dye	723/722	7766
Plastimatia Glauca (Glaucus leafy lichen)	727	7727
Seaweed		
Bladderwrack	452	7463
Clavophora Rupestris	604	7402

Sett

'Sett' is a measure of coarseness and fineness in fabric. It is a count of the number of threads in each direction. The higher the number, the finer the fabric is. The lengthwise threads are called the warp. The shorter direction, which weaves back and forth, is called the weft. When speaking about threads in a warp, they are often referred to as ends. The weft threads are called picks. Collectively they are referred to as thread per inch (or centimeter in most European books.) The least expensive way to measure sett is to cut a 1 inch by 1 inch hole in a piece of cardstock. Lie this square on the fabric, and count the number of threads. You can also invest in something called a linen tester, which has an one-inch hole, but also has a magnifying glass to aid in counting. They are about \$20 at weaving supply places.

Most of the tabbies found have had very fine weaves, in the neighbourhood of 25 to 50 ends per inch, with one as fine as 60 X 153 per inch. Twills are also fine being in the range of 20 to 50 ends per inch, and 18 to 45 picks per inch. (Jorgensen 29-33)

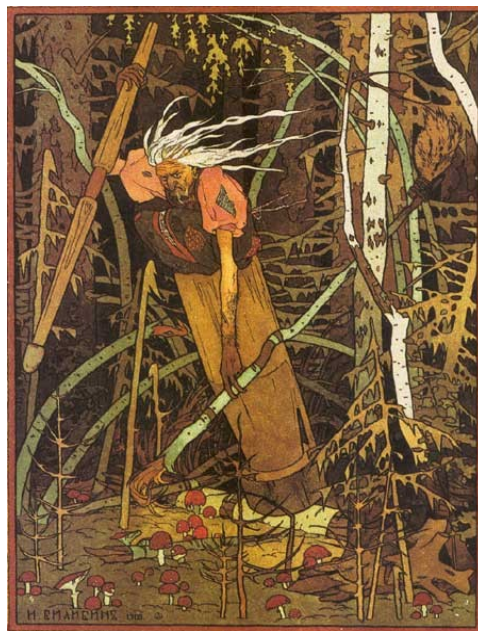
I would love to see everyone using authentic fabrics all the time, but if you are feeling overwhelmed don't worry. Take it one step at a time. Even doing just one will improve your authenticity.

Happy sewing!

Baba Yaga musing

I feel I have come such a long way from looking at Time-Life books and the miscellany of tales therein. Yet these generic, decidedly non-academic volumes somehow hold a place-setting value in my library. Hence, in a brief search on Baba Yaga, whose tales were re-told in various places through the 'Enchanted World' series, I came across various pieces of on-line scholarship. This is a fresh vein of investigation for me, so the pretty pictures such as those found here, <http://www.olderussia.net/baba.html>, for example, will surely move me into further studies in Slavic mythology, both on the web – 'wikipedia' has a compelling article with starting resources http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavic_mythology, and through tomes such as Grammaticus' 'Gesta Danorum'.

The greater excitement, though, is the inspiration to look again at the beginnings of my interests in the *medi aeva* in the first place!



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