

## *Sleeve bands for a Viking tunic.*

The bands were worked as a gift from the Worshipful Company of Broiderers for Prince Alfar.

The design is taken from the embroidered band on the front of a cloak found at Mammen, Denmark, one of the few textile finds from this period.



A reconstruction of the cloak exists in the \* museum. The original piece was embroidered in wool floss onto a silk twill band, which was applied to the cloak. This was common practice, with examples found on ground fabrics of silk or wool. In my adaptation for tunic bands, the strips are worked in wool floss on a ground fabric of tabby woven red wool, to be applied to the sleeves of a tunic.

The original piece has faded to a series of browns, but it is clear that several different colours were employed. Some of the colours have been surmised through chemical analysis of the wool floss. I have followed the colours adopted by the museum reconstruction, as these seem appropriate and show up well on the red cloth.

Colour quote

The piece is executed in stem stitch and chain stitch, the most common stitches used at the time.



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The design is taken from the embroidered band on the front of a cloak found at Mammen, Denmark, one of the few textile finds from this period. The remains of the band can be seen in figures \* and \*.

A reconstruction of the cloak exists in the \* museum and Thora Sharptooth gives an outline version of the design in her article on Viking Embroidery. I used a combination of her interpretation together with the images from the original textile and the museum reproduction to arrive at my adaptation of the design for use as sleeve bands.

The original piece was embroidered in wool floss onto a silk twill band, which was applied to the edge of the cloak. This use of applied bands was common practice, with examples found on ground fabrics of silk or wool. In my adaptation for the project, the strips are worked in wool floss on a ground fabric of tabby woven wool, to be applied to the sleeves of a tunic.

The original piece has faded to a series of browns, but it is clear that several different colours were employed. Some of the colours have been surmised through chemical analysis of the wool floss. Colours used by the Vikings

*Colors include woad blue, madder red, lichen purple, and an unidentified yellow, as well as walnut shell brown, and walnut+iron black... Vikings used alum (clubmoss), iron salts (copperas), and possibly copper sulfate (achieved by dyeing in a copper pot) as well as the various combinations you can get by overdyeing with one or more colors.*

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I have followed the colours adopted by the museum reconstruction, as these seem appropriate and show up well on the deep red wool ground. Red was a favourite colour amongst the Vikings and although this is deeper than the more common crimson, it is a lovely rich colour that I had on hand in my scrap box. The embroidery wools used are a mix of Appleton and Flower wools, both 2 ply, in a range of ochre and rust shades, plus a deep blue and off white.

*The western-influenced style might have been learned from the Anglo-Saxons. It was most often composed of fiber-on-fiber stitchery and involved stitches that are known in the modern world, such as stemstitch, couching, chain stitch, and raised herringbone stitch.*

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The piece is executed in stem stitch and chain stitch, common stitches in use at the time.

### **Perspective**

Overall I am well pleased with the piece. It was a chance to try a new style of embroidery and work in a very different colour range to my usual 16<sup>th</sup> Century German milieu. I am very happy with the overall effect and the choice of colours and stitches. I learned that wool responds very differently to silk and cotton and required a looser tension, as the wool is much springier and contracts (along with the ground fabric). I worked the piece loose rather than in a frame, for ease of transport, and This resulted in a slight puckering, but wool responds well to steam and a final pressing resulted in a very even piece.