

Viking Inspired Fillet



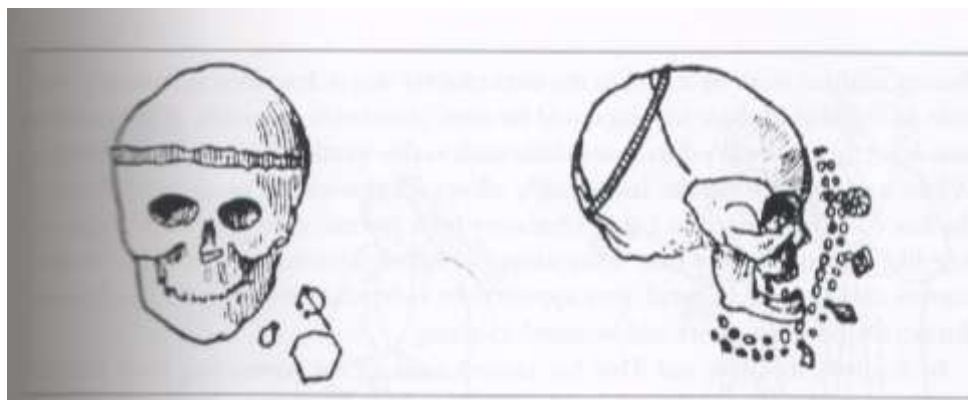
Image of the Viking inspired fillet

Project: I chose to do a Viking inspired Fillet

The purpose of this item was a basic headdress worn by Viking women. The Fillet was a fabric band worn around the head, much like a coronet. This might be worn alone, or with a scarf or veil pinned to it. The fillet was often of metal-brocade tablet-woven silk¹. The fillet was a form of decoration. "Similar bands have also been found in eight graves which do not contain oval broaches, but



not all headgear involving braided bands need have been the same; sometimes the



band goes right around the head,

Figure 1 - Braided bands worn as headgear from Birka graves Bj 707 and 946. Geiger 1938, Arbman 1944

sometimes it might simply have edged the top of the headdress, and sometimes it seems to have been worn atop the back of the head."² (as seen in figure 1)



Figure 2 - Figure of a woman from the side of the Oseberg cart.

The Birka grave find does reinforce the idea that women wore some type decorative headdress. The image of the headdress can possibly be seen in the “figure of a woman from the side of the Oseberg cart. She appears to be wearing a skirt, shirt and a long bead necklace, with hair swept back and tied in a bun; she appears to be wearing a fillet around her hairline”³ (as seen in Figure 2). The fillets were used for decoration as well as for style. Fillets could be

embroidered or plain (as seen in Figure 3 and 4) and depending on the style would have been stiffened to maintain their shape (as seen in figure 5). In reviewing

information from various websites, I believe that producers of fillets would have stiffened them with either a starch product or other stiffening agent.⁴

However, I chose to use buckram as a base for my fillet. The buckram is a

stronger product that will maintain the shape of my fillet.

Figure 3



"The Visitation," c. 1310, German, attributed to Master Heinrich of Constance

Figure 4



Figure 5



For my fillet, I used the Viking dragon design pictured in figure 6. The design comes from an Eleventh-century arm ring from Gotland, Sweden.⁵ I used this image to draw the pattern for the fillet. I drew it onto a tan piece of linen fabric. I used a blue washable sewing marker to transfer the image onto the fabric. “Most traditional Scandinavian (Viking) embroidery was done using a) stielstich or stem-stitch; b) osenstich or mesh stitch; c) schlingenstich or twined wire work.”⁶



Figure 6 - Viking arm ring, Gotland, Sweden

Vikings were a seafaring group and are known for both pillaging and being traders. Understanding this we can conclude that information and products were, stolen, traded, or purchased. With this knowledge, we can make the logical conclusion that skills as well as technology would have also been brought back to the home area. Vikings, on many occasions would travel through the areas that had a large number of Anglo-Saxon people, and since “the chief techniques employed in Anglo–Saxon pieces were split-stitch, stem or outline stitch, and couching”⁷ we can conclude that the Vikings could have brought these stitches back to the area. I used the stem stitch for the entire embroidery. I chose to do this because the inspiration piece is an image of a wire rope arm ring and I felt the stem stitch gave the embroidered image the appearance of wire. In period embroidery, embroiderers would have used wool, silk, gold or silver threads. “Materials used include wool floss on wool fabric, silk floss on silk fabric and gold thread on an unknown and now decayed background.”⁸ I used DMC pearl cotton thread because of the cost, availability, and overall texture. I was looking for a “rope or wire” texture and the pearl cotton gives that overall feeling.

The picture to the right (figure 7) shows the finished embroidery prior to sewing it onto the buckram base. I added the white puff a smoke to fill in the space between the two dragon heads. I chose to use a buckram circlet base to give the fillet stability. Figure 8 shows the



Figure 7 - Embroidery prior to placing on buckram circlet

progress of hand sewing the embroidery onto the buckram base. Figure 9 shows the



Figure 8 - sewing the embroidery onto the buckram base

back portion of the fillet. I have to say that this is probably the part that I am most proud of. I was able to get the edge of the image to butt up against each other. Figure 10 shows the final fillet.



Figure 9 - Back of the fillet

Figure 10 - finished



Notes

- 1) Priest-Dorman, Carolyn. (Mistress Thora Sharptooth, OL), A Quick and Dirty Look at Viking Women's Garb in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Accessed 4/1/2013
- 2) Ewing, Thor. *Viking Clothing*. (pg. 55) Tempus Publishing (2006, 2007)
- 3) Ewing, Thor. *Viking Clothing*. (pg. 46) Tempus Publishing (2006, 2007)
- 4) Eme's Compendium -- Waxed linen --- <http://www.gluckliche-eme.com/decoratedfillet.htm>
- 5) Smith, A.G. *Viking Designs*. Pg. 20
- 6) Priest-Dorman, Carolyn. *Anglo-Saxon and Viking Works of the Needle: Some Artistic Currents in Cross-Cultural Exchange*. (pg. 5 – Decorative (Embroidery Stitches) Copyright © 1992
- 7) Priest-Dorman, Carolyn. *Anglo-Saxon and Viking Works of the Needle: Some Artistic Currents in Cross-Cultural Exchange*. (pg. 4 – Decorative (Embroidery Stitches) Copyright © 1992.
- 8) Priest-Dorman, Carolyn. *Viking Embroidery Stitches and Motifs*. (pg. 4) Copyright © 1993. 1994. 1997.

Bibliography

Eme's Compendium -- Waxed linen --- <http://www.gluckliche-eme.com/decoratedfillet.htm>

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