

Herjolfsnes Technique for a Kirtle

After looking at the Herjolfsnes finds for so long, I finally decided to try to make one. Some deviations were made based on personal preferences and environmental factors. The wool fabric came from my stash; it had been a gift from my Laurel when I became her Apprentice. The thread is always in my stash for sewing garments, and the yarns had been in my stash long enough that I couldn't remember why I had them (probably cause the colors were pretty).

The pattern was based on Herjolfsnes 38 and 41 which have a similar 12-piece body, but I eliminated the front gore, it seams pleasantly full as is. Unfortunately, the site where I had saved the info, I can no longer pull up. All construction seams followed commonly used techniques on the garments from Herjolfsnes; 1) being sewn from the front side, with an invisible stitch, 2) a single line of prick stitching sewed down the seams, (two lines of stitching was an options, but disregarded due to time constraints), 3) the rest of the seam allowance was whipped with a filler thread down the lengths. In the beginning of the process two strands were used, but after experimentation it was reduced to one strand.

The hem, cuffs and neckline (with button hole side of the front opening) was sewn with a tablet woven edge. The tablet woven edges used two threads per tablet and the weft goes through the fabric in a spiral, not back and forth. The original garments used two tablets, and two filler threads on the inside. I used two tablets on the cuffs and used four tablets on the hem and neck/button hole side, as I thought the additional width looked better. I worked the hem first, and added the filler threads there, but they didn't add much to secure the hem from fraying, or any fullness/weight, so I didn't add them to the other edges, which allowed me to more easily and neatly weave in and hide the ends.

The information is per the Medieval Garments Reconstructed: Norse Clothing Patterns, by Lilli Fransen, Anna Nørgard, Else Østergard. I was able to flip through a copy of it at an event, but I don't own a copy of it myself. The pages that had the most helpful info (and took pictures

to reference back to) are; page 28 (invisible stitching from the front), 30 (filler thread), 32 (tablet woven edge), 36 (table with types of techniques on which garments).

There are a few major differences between this kirtle and an Herjolfsnes replica:

- 1) A fitted silhouette, rather than a loose garment, which required a front closure. Matching fabric buttons were used, and the tablet weaving on the neck continued down for a comprehensive look.
- 2) Due to our warmer climate, I used a much lighter wool than what would have been used.
- 3) I was reluctant to rely solely on the tablet woven edge to keep the fabric from fraying so I tried to tuck the cut edges under twice and use the table weft to keep it in place. But ultimately, I had to go back over and tack some edges down, though it was probably overkill.

Herjolfsnes 41:

