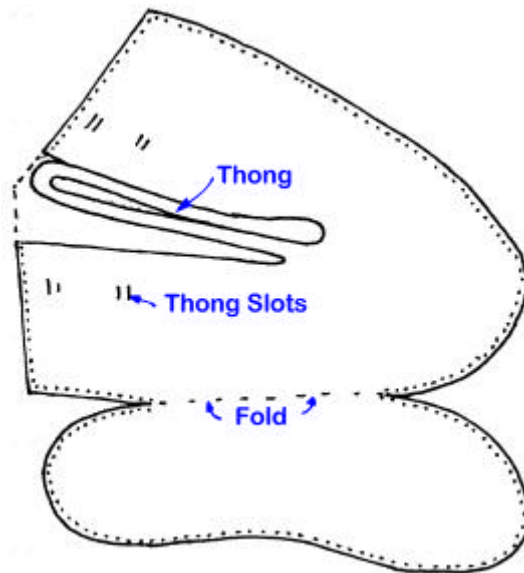


# Documentation on the Re-creation of a pair of Medieval Hide Shoes

This pair of shoes is a rendition of a pair of hide shoes found in a bog in Weldelspang Mose on the Jutland peninsula. The shoe could date from about the 9th to the 12th century but dating was not possible due to the information given. The author of the book gives the impression that the original excavators did not record enough information about the find. Similar designs from surrounding areas fit into this general time period. The shoes have a relatively high top with a unique pattern that gives the impression of having a separate sole. The shoes were indented by a line of tight stitching around the edges of the upper. This both decorates as well as strengthens the upper. In particular note the way the lacing that goes around the ankle is a natural extension of the upper at the instep (not shown in 'pattern' in figure 86 of photocopy at the end of this document).

The pattern of I used to make these shoes is primarily the same as the design in figure 86 (see figure below for my general pattern). The shoes were made in classical 'turn-shoe' style being stitched together flesh side out and reversed when done. The ankle thong was cut from excess leather from the rough cutting out of the upper. I decorated the top of the upper with a tightly drawn strand of contrasting thread for looks and strength. I also made a couple of changes. First, I rounded the toe more to my liking. Many variations in toe and heel shape can be seen throughout the period. Second, I simplified the pattern by making it a one-piece design cutting down the amount of stitching and cutting required. Making the shoe upper one piece also increases its' strength and weather tightness.



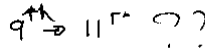
**Figure 1 Basic Shoe Pattern**

Since a pair of shoes is worthless unless it can be comfortably worn I made two more changes to help my poor 'modern' feet. I added a sole to protect my feet against rough surfaces and the weather cold and damp). The sole was glued directly onto the bottom of the shoe without further modification of the upper. By gluing a sole on the shoe the life of the shoe will be increased from several SCA use months to a few years since the sole can be readily replaced unlike the replacement of the upper which is remaking the shoe. Examples of soled shoes of similar design have been found in the same bog. The other change to the design is the addition of heel reinforcement. Due to the way I walk, without heel reinforcement, I would soon 'walk-out' the back of the shoe (note the pink highlighted sentence in the photocopy. Could the original owner have had the same problem?). On to the subject of the leather. The shoes were constructed of a three to four ounce cowhide that has been chemically tanned. From the greenish side hue I would gather it was chrome tanning (most of the leather you buy will be chemically tanned). Period cowhide (the most likely type of hide being used) would most probably have been vegetable tanned. The color, black, was a commonly used color period sources point to the use of red, purple, gold, yellow, green, blue, turquoise, brown, and white as well. Again the dyes used in modern commercial leather are usually non-period. The leather was worked from a paper pattern using a course knife, a fine knife, a hammer, and a hole punch. The shoe was sewn together using cotton thread, artificial sinew, and two needles.

# Documentation on the Re-creation of a pair of Medieval Hide Shoes

## REFERENCES:

- 1) Margrethe Hald, Primitive Shoes. Nat'l Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen 1972.
- 2) Miss A.C. Metcalf and R.B. Longmore, Leather Artifacts from Vindolanda, Manchester University 1972-73. An article from a museum publication on English medieval shoes.
- 3) John H. Thornton, Excavated Shoes to 1600, Northampton College of Technology, 1972-73. An article from a museum publication on English medieval shoes.
- 4) June M. Swann, Shoe Fashions to 1600, Northampton Museum 1972-73. An article from a museum publication on English medieval shoes.



The two shoes from Lottorf Mose, Fig. 82 and Fig. 83, were never a pair, but they have many features in common. They enclosed the foot entirely and extended nearly to the ankle.

L. M., no number, but with the statement that the shoe was handed to the museum by Dr Dabelstein in 1928. The Roman figure III has been added on the label by the author.

#### *Wedelspang Mose, Haddeby S., Schleswig*

Hide shoe with partly detached base, a form retaining the "one-piece principle", even though clearly influenced by the type with separate sole and upper, Figs. 84-86.

The shoe, which is made for the right foot, has a decorative, fluted upper edge, produced by stitching, now lost, carried out with a very tightly pulled thread. The seams along the base are turned inwards, and the stitches were originally invisible on the right side. The shoe must thus have been turned inside out after the join had been made. ~~It is made of a very thick material, and it looks as though the shoe was not large enough for the foot that wore it.~~ In addition to the heel seam there is a side seam placed on the inner side of the foot, below the ankle. A piece of the original thong about 40 cm long remains. It passes behind and immediately above the heel, through cut slits. The material is very thick, possibly double. The base measures about 22 cm in length by 7½ in width; the distance between the notches for the heel and the toe is about 14 cm.

(L. M.'s archives 28/1903. No. K. S. 11308).

Bericht. 1907, p. 52.

#### *Wedelspang Mose, Haddeby S., Schleswig*

Hide shoe, Figs. 87-89, with partly detached base of a pattern similar to that described immediately above. The two shoes are however not entirely identical in detail. The present specimen has no heel seam, and the base is cut to a point both at the heel and at the toe, a feature familiar from certain soled shoes, e.g. Fig. 94. Furthermore, the proportions of this hide shoe are most peculiar in that while the length of the base is about 20 cm the width of the sole at its widest is only 5 cm, a feature counterbalanced by extending the upper a little way under the edge of the foot.

Unfortunately the shoe, which is for the left foot, is not in a complete state of preservation. A piece under the outer side of the ankle is missing, and the original lace, which passed through slits cut in the upper, is lost.

(L. M. Cat. 1904, K. S. 11468 b).

Bericht. 1907, p. 52.

#### *Lottorf Mose, Haddeby S., Schleswig*

Two shoes, once a pair, in a very fragmentary state, Figs. 90, 91. A, for the right foot, is the better preserved, and exhibits features of considerable interest for comparison with the two shoes discussed below (Figs. 84-89, 11308 and K. S. 11468 b). In spite of the damage it can be seen that the base and upper form a single whole, and that the asymmetrical pattern is ingeniously planned. The little flap under the heel is narrow and pointed, which indicates an influence on the type with a separate sole and pointed notch at the heel (cf. No. 13876, Fig. 97).

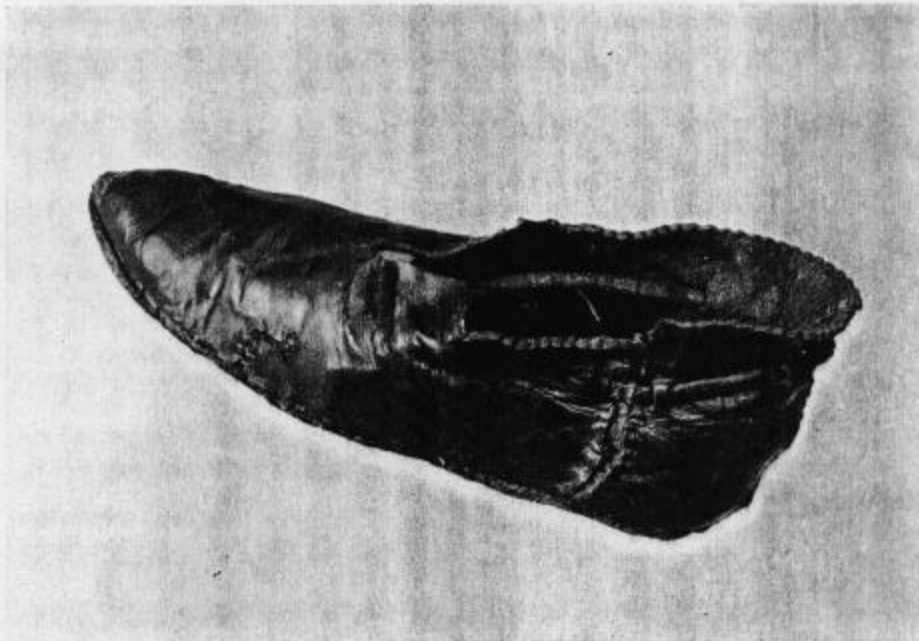


Fig. 84. Shoe with side seam and heel-seam. Special shape, with suggestion of an attached sole. Wedelspang, marked K. S. 11308. L. M. S.

Unfortunately, part of the vamp of the shoe in Fig. 90 has perished, but the part of the turned-under edge that has survived gives the impression that the shoe must have been fairly pointed at the toe likewise. The thin fluted line of the edge of the vamp has been produced by a tightly drawn thread now missing. The thread is likewise missing in the vertical seam which closes the shoe on the inner side nearly at the ankle, and the holes left by the stitches show that these were fairly long.

B. Remains of a left-foot shoe corresponding to A. A small piece of the point of the base at the heel has survived, but its connection with the upper is now very slender.

Both shoes have been left untreated and are quite stiff.

L. M., no number, but with the statement that the shoes were received from Dr Dabelstein in 1928 (marked I a-b by the author).

*Wedelspang Mose, Haddeby S., Schleswig*

Soled shoe, left foot, Figs. 92, 93. As shown on the diagram, Fig. 94, the upper displays indentations at the front and back corresponding to the tapering of the sole at the heel and toe. The edges of the seam along the edge of the foot are turned in. Remnants of a lace or thong that passed through six slits still remain; the ends appear to have been knotted above the

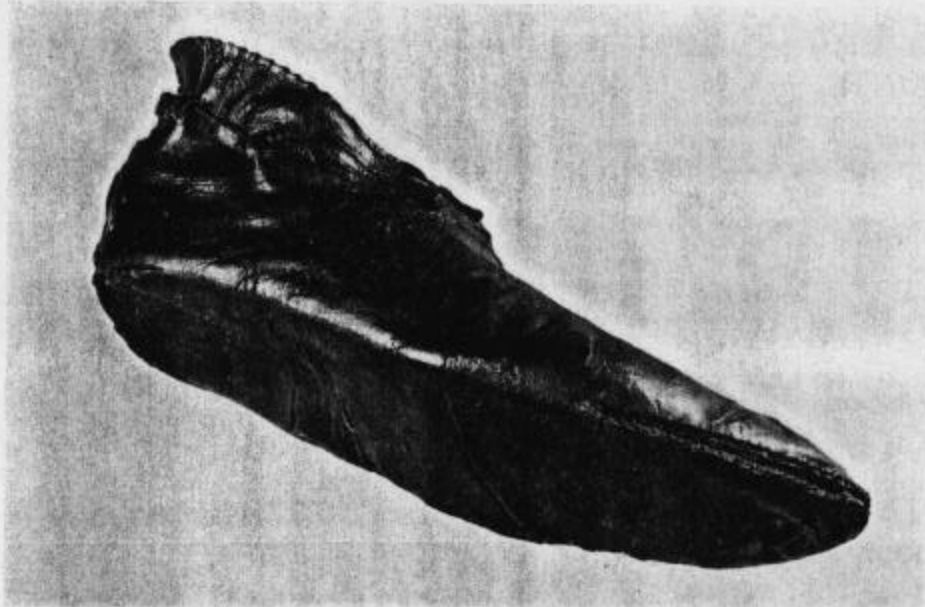


Fig. 85. Side view, showing the natural connection of the base with the upper, of shoe marked K. S. 11308, Fig. 84.

instep. The shoe is fairly high, up to 10 cm at the back, and must have enclosed the ankle. There are scratches on the upper, the most noticeable beginning at about the middle of the vamp, making a curve, and ending at the edge of the sole on the outer side. The upper is a whole, gathered by means of a seam on the inner side of the foot. The leg of the shoe has a delicate, slightly wavy contour line, produced by a tightly drawn thread, now missing. The stitching was presumably intended not merely to strengthen, but also to "neaten" the edge. The length of the sole is 27 cm, and its width up to 10½ cm.

(L. M. Cat. No. K. S. 12278 a).



Fig. 86. Diagram of shoe marked K. S. 11308, Figs. 84, 85.