

# Textile Remains from Diverhøj

by LISE BENDER JØRGENSEN

Two textile fragments were found in Diverhøj, preserved in the corrosion of a bronze axe in the burial from the intermediate phase (Early Bronze Age period II), as described by P. Asingh.

They measure 3.8×2 and 2.2×1 cm, and are felted together and caked with mud, but near the edges the structure is recognizable as textile. The weave is not determinable, but the yarn exhibits both S- and Z-spin; the count is approximately 4/5 threads per cm. The fibre is wool.

These features suggest that the Diverhøj textiles belong to the most common cloth type of the Danish Early Bronze Age: wool tabby with S-spun warp and Z-spun weft, and a count of 3–6 threads in both systems. This cloth type has been found in 51 other Scandinavian graves from period II, whereas other spin combinations such as S/S, Z/Z, S/Z, S or with plied yarn in one or both systems appear in 32 graves (Bender Jørgensen 1986, p. 17/290). In Period III, this picture has changed in that S/Z spin is now only found in 23 graves, against 29 graves with other types of spin. From Period I there is only a single Scandinavian grave with textile remains, a tabby with S/S-spun yarn.

Outside Scandinavia only a small number of Early Bronze Age textiles have been recorded. They comprise both woollens and linens, the former mainly in Northern Europe, the latter in Central Europe and in Britain. The wool fabrics of North Germany are generally S/Z tabby, whereas those of Central Europe are made of S/S spun yarn, those of Britain of Z/Z-spun (Bender Jørgensen forthcoming).

The oldest example of wool cloth in North Europe was found with a flint dagger of Lomborg's type I (Late Neolithic Phase A) at Wiepenkathen, Kr. Stade in Lower Saxony (von Stokar 1939, p. 103); the yarn is S-spun. Earlier European textile remains have all proved to be made of vegetable fibres, and the yarns are Z-spun, or plied Sz, i.e. from a basis of Z-spun yarn (Ben- niken, Ebbesen & Bender Jørgensen 1986, p. 204–05).

In both Scandinavia and on the European continent

the wool fabrics of the Early Bronze Age show a preference for S-spin, either in one system (the warp) or both, contrary to the fabrics of vegetable fibres, both from the Stone Age and the Bronze Age, which employ Z-spin as the basic principle. This feature suggests that the two main types of fibres each had a separate technology, probably with different tools for the preparation of the fibres, for spinning, and maybe also for weaving.

The Diverhøj textile remains fit well into the Scandinavian and North European textile tradition of the Bronze Age, being samples of wool cloth with S-spun yarn in one system.

What sort of garment do the two small textile scraps derive from? They were found on the axe, which was situated close to and partly under the remains of a bark box, and supposedly close to the head and shoulder of the deceased.

The well-preserved Danish log coffins where complete Early Bronze Age costumes have been found indicate that several types of garments clothed the head and shoulders of the males: the cloak, which often covered most of the corpse; the gown, which was worn around the body and supposed to be fastened over one shoulder with a strap; and sometimes a blanket (Boye 1896, Broholm & Hald 1940). The Diverhøj textile remains may derive from any of these, although cloak or blanket must be considered the most likely.

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