

7.1.10 TEXTILE REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fragments of a yellowish-fawn textile were found in association with the leather shoes in Burial 43 (F83/C1228). The largest fragments were in the ankle region (373, 374), but a small area was also noted peeping out of the decayed toe area of the left shoe [*the shoe with the buckle*]. The textile is a heavily felted wool tabby (i.e. plain weave). The yarn is Z-spun in one direction and S-spun in the other and there are 10/Z x 8/S threads per square cm. Microscopy of the fibres (x100 and x400 magnification) shows that they are non-pigmented wool. The fibres are split and abraded and have rounded ends, indicating extensive wear. No dye was detected and, judging from the present colour, it seems likely that the textile was originally white. Some loose, coarse animal fibres were also found in association with the textile from the ankle area (373). These were short, lightly pigmented fibres, with intact roots and tips, and may represent light brown hair from the man's legs. This textile is a typical medium-weight clothing fabric of the late 14th to 16th centuries. In the 12th to 14th centuries most clothing fabrics were made in twill, but during the course of the 14th century there was a shift to tabby weaves, first of all in English urban textile centres (Walton 1991, Crowfoot *et al* 1992 p434) and then in places with less well developed textile industries, such as Scotland and Norway (Walton Rogers forthcoming).

The position of the textile suggests that it represents cloth socks or 'foot-hose'. Hose with feet were a common feature of men's dress in medieval north-west Europe. Several pairs have been found on bodies in the late Norse cemetery at Herjolfsnes, Greenland (Nørlund 1924), and there is another pair on the 14th-century man from Bocksten bog, Sweden (Nockert 1997, 104-107). There are also discarded single examples from late 14th century London (Crowfoot *et al* 1992, 185-9) and another of uncertain date from Papa Stour, Shetland (Walton Rogers forthcoming). The London ones are made from wool tabbies with Z x S spinning and are therefore technically the most like the Tarbat textile. Cloth hose was largely superseded by knitted stockings during the course of the 16th century, although there are some later examples in existence (Bennett in Walton Rogers forthcoming). The shoes in the Tarbat burial are of a style which was worn in London in the early 15th century and a similar date would be appropriate for the hose. The obvious wear on the textile indicates that they were probably the hose which the man wore in life.

References

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