

# The Skjoldehamn find in the light of new knowledge.

A discussion of the burial, the ethnic affiliation of the outfit,  
and the person's gender and social status.



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English Translation by Carol Lynn © 2011

On the front page: The Skjoldehamn costume drawn by Berit Løvlid (left) and a Lule Sami costume exhibited on Norsk Folkemuseum from Tysfjord in Nordland in Norway (NFSA.3235) collected by the museum in 1953 (right). Photo: Dan Halvard Løvlid.

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# 1 Introduction

In this article I will discuss Gutorm Gjessing's assertions about the Skjoldehamn find regarding the burial, the ethnic affiliation, and the gender of the buried person. The basis for discussion is Gjessing's article "Skjoldehamndrakten. En senmiddelaldersk nordnorsk mansdrakt" ("The Skjoldehamn Outfit. A late medieval northern Norwegian male costume") (Gjessing 1938a) and the information I uncovered about the find in connection with my thesis in archaeology "New Thoughts on the Skjoldehamn Find" (Løvlid 2009), and by my own studies of the Sami costume traditions. For more detailed information about the history of the find and the research on it, I refer to the two above-mentioned texts. Regarding Section 3.2, the comparison with Sami costumes, it is assumed that the reader has read my descriptions (in the thesis) of the present-day costume parts. This is to avoid too much unnecessary repetition.

In the second chapter I will discuss Gjessing's conclusions about the burial, and I will discuss the new dating presented in my master's thesis. In the third chapter, I will first discuss the anthropological and genetic studies that have been made since Gjessing's article was published. I will then discuss Gjessing's arguments against a Sami origin, and compare the Skjoldehamn suit with the Sami costume traditions known from the post-Reformation era. In the final chapter, I will address the gender issue, particularly in relation to a possible connection with Sami origins, but I will also discuss the anthropological and genetic gender studies. In addition, I will discuss Gjessing's claims regarding the buried person's social status.

## 2 The grave

Discussions about the grave play an important role in Gjessing's article. First, Gjessing compared the Skjoldehamn find to other bog discoveries in Northern Europe. He concluded that the person was put out on the marsh as a punishment for evil deeds (Gjessing 1938a:71). From what I can see, this conclusion was necessary because of the date and ethnic label Gjessing put on the find. Since he considered the buried person to be a Norwegian man from the late Middle Ages, there had to be a reason that the person did not have a Christian burial. Now that new dates have shown that the find is much older, most probably from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the transition between Viking and Medieval times, Gjessing's conclusion has to be discussed (Løvlid 2009:152). The new dates open the possibility that it may involve quite normal Norse pagan burial customs, but it could also be Sami. In Section 3.2.3, I show that the ethnic assignment Gjessing used was done on a weak and incorrect basis. I believe, therefore, that we must allow that the find could be Sami, and, if that is the case, a burial outside a cemetery would not be abnormal. I have not looked into how this grave fits the specifics of Sami or Norse burial customs, and this should be examined in conjunction with a thorough discussion of the find's ethnicity.

Gjessing also had a strange explanation for how the body may have ended up in the marsh. He believed that it was likely that the body was laid out on the marsh and that the birch rods found with it prevented it from sinking down (Gjessing 1938a:30). The birch bark may have been put there to protect the body against snow and water. "Then the marsh grew up over him" (Gjessing 1937a:3). When one thinks about how long this would take, and sets that against how well the outfit is preserved, such an explanation seems highly unlikely. Gjessing provide two reasons for this claim. The first is that it was found with birch rods, but, in my view, this is not a convincing argument. The other appears in the archaeological report Gjessing wrote in 1937. Here it says that bark flakes were found at their original sites, 87 cm from the surface <sup>1</sup>(Gjessing 1937a:2). From about the 26 to 38 cm depth there was "a layer of light, black peat that apparently was totally untouched," which must have grown up after the funeral. Below this was a lighter layer of very loose peat, "in which they were unable to ascertain any disturbance" (Gjessing 1937a:3). The person was laid in this layer. The question then becomes how

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<sup>1</sup> In the article, the distance is 67 cm.

confident he was of the latter conclusion. Here, I think the well-preserved clothes speak for themselves. The most likely explanation, in my view, is that it was an entombment where the find was left almost hermetically sealed.

The last thing I want to address is Gjessing's emphasis on the reasons that the person was found in a marsh. I've been to Skjoldehamn, and Andøya in general, and very large areas of the island are marshland. The island also has many mountainous areas, so there is little space left for other types of landscape. With this in mind it is far from strange that they buried someone in a marsh, the opposite would have been rather strange for a person from Andøya. There is, from my perspective, no reason to draw parallels to the traditional bog burials that have been found in Denmark and Germany.

### **3 Sami?**

Since ethnicity is such a key question in connection with the Skjoldehamn find, I feel it necessary to include a summary of my thoughts on the issue. The main focus will be on the Skjoldehamn outfit's connection with Sami costume traditions, since this is what I have worked with the most.

#### **3.1 Anthropological studies and DNA analysis.**

First, I will address the anthropological and DNA studies that have been made on the skeleton. A more detailed explanation can be found in my thesis (Løvlid 2009:20) and I will only give a summary here. Based on the small and fragile bones, both Per Holck and Berit Sellevold believed that they could not be from a typical Norse male skeleton, and that they probably came from a Norse woman or a Sami man. Sellevold did not exclude the possibility that it was a Sami woman (Holck 1988; Sellevold 1987). The DNA studies of the skeleton from 1999 were published in the book "Att dated textilier" ("To Date Textiles"). The investigations were carried out by Maria Arvidsson and Anders Götherstrom at the Archaeological Research Laboratory at Stockholm University. At that time, they concluded that the skeleton was missing the Sami specific genetic marker, and that the chance that it was Sami was 20 - 30%. I contacted Götherstrom and asked what he thought about the research that had been done ten years ago. He wrote back that much in genetic science has changed since then, and that the data they had access to was not good enough to draw the conclusions, with respect to gender and ethnicity, with the certainty that they did in 1999. They did not know then, among other things, exactly how DNA breaks down, and that is something we know today (pers. corres.). As Hansen and Olsen point out in their book "Sami History prior to 1750," one should, however, be very careful how one puts on an ethnic label based on anatomy and DNA, since ethnicity is a social construction and not a biological one (Hansen and Olsen 2004:42 ff, see also Jones 1997). I will therefore ignore these conclusions and instead look at elements that can be an expression of social construction, in this case, the outfit and the other objects. The grave may also have expressed ethnicity, but there is no further discussion about this beyond what is discussed in Chapter 2.

## **3.2 Comparison with Sami costume traditions**

In the rest of this chapter I will use the results of my research to compare the Skjoldehamn outfit with traditional Sami fashion. At first glance, this may seem like a pointless project because the first credible sources for Sami dress appear in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 600 years after the Skjoldehamn outfit was made. Before that, the sources are few and very sparse, and not valuable for a comparison. However, I will still do the comparison because there are clear and obvious similarities between the Skjoldehamn outfit and Sami outfits from post-Reformation times. A good illustration of this can be found in the two juxtaposed images on the front page that show the Skjoldehamn outfit and a Lule Sami outfit from Tysfjord in Nordland. In my opinion, it is necessary to study the relationship in spite of the major problems with sources, and then later on discuss how this information can be used in an ethnicity discussion. I'd like to say that my comparison is more like a sketch to consider for further study where other researchers will have to go deeper and do more empirical work than I've been able to do. Therefore, there are many holes to be filled in and loose threads that need to be followed before it will be possible to get a clear picture of the relationships that exist.

I want to compare the Skjoldehamn outfit and Sami dress standards in two areas: the cut and décor. It is not possible to examine any more detailed categories, such as stitching and fabric quality, through the literature. Also, I have my doubts as to whether these categories could ever be used in a comparison with the Sami, even when a more empirical approach to the topic is taken. This is primarily due to the long time span involved. I think that categories such as cut and décor are much more consistent than the stitching and fabric quality.

### **3.2.1 The Sami culture areas**

Before I begin the discussion, I will start by describing the different areas of Sami culture, as this is important in several places in the discussion. I will mainly use two terms to distinguish the different traditions: the "North Sami area" and the "Lule and more southern Sami areas". Lapland consists of several cultural areas in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, each with different languages, dialects and dress practices. I will mainly keep to Norway and Sweden because it is geographically most relevant for the Skjoldehamn outfit, and because the costume fashions from further east are not as well published.

The Enari Sami, the Eastern Sami, and other Sami areas east of these will therefore not be included here. The North Sami area stretches from the Varanger Fjord to Ofot Fjord (see Figure 1.) Inland, it also cuts into northern Sweden and northern Finland. The Lule Sami, Pite Sami, Ume Sami and the South Sami areas follow in a row and are all located in both Norway and Sweden. I have merged these areas into a single term because their costume has many similarities. Where it is necessary to distinguish them, I will do so.



**Figure 1 Map showing the different Sami cultural areas.**

- 1. Sørsamisk (*South Sami*)**
- 2. Umesamisk (*Ume Sami*)**
- 3. Pitesamisk (*Pite Sami*)**
- 4. Lulesamisk (*Lule Sami*)**
- 5. Nordsamisk (*Northern Sami*)**
- 6. Enaresamisk (*Enari Sami*)**
- 7. Østsamisk eller Skoltesamisk (*Eastern Sami or Skolte Sami*).**

**The map is from "The Norwegian national costume lexicon: all Norwegian national costumes and Sami folk costumes, Volume 3", Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen (eds), p. 200**

### **3.2.2 Sources**

The comparison I want to do is primarily based on the literature that is available about Sami dress traditions. I have not had the opportunity to conduct any extensive empirical studies of the surviving relics. On my own, I have been studying some of the objects in the Sami collection at the Norwegian Folk Museum, and these will be referred to as "NFSA" (Norsk Folkemuseums samlinger) (Norwegian Folk Museum's collections) followed by its museum number.

The earliest sources for the Sami costume tradition are the works of Olaus Magnus, Johannes Schefferus, Hans Hansen Lilienskiold and Knud Leem. Olaus Magnus could have been a unique source for Sami dress custom, in the sense that his work on the Nordic people, "Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus" ("History of the Nordic People"), was released back in 1555. The text has only very sparse details of Sami clothing, but there are many illustrations that would have been very valuable for such a purpose. Unfortunately, they are too caricatured and inaccurate to be useful. Over 100 years later, in 1673, the work "Lapponia" by Johannes Schefferus came out. Schefferus was a professor of rhetoric and politics at the University of Uppsala. Magnus De La Gardie, the Swedish chancellor, commissioned him to provide a detailed description of the Sami and their environment. Schefferus never visited Lapland itself, so "Lapponia" is based on a number of manuscripts from the priests who worked there. Using these sources, he tried to get rid of many of the wrong ideas and myths that existed about the Sami people at that time (UIB 2001a). In "Lapponia" he has a special chapter on their clothing practices, and this, together with the illustrations, constitute an important and credible source. In 1701, the work "Speculum boreale" ("The Mirror of the North") came out, which concerned life and living conditions in Finnmark (the northernmost county of Norway). The author was Hans Hansen Lilienskiold who was the County Governor of Finnmark. A brief description of Sami dress standards was given here but, equally important, are the illustrations because he was probably involved with their making (Nedrebø 1999a). In 1767, Knud Leem published the work "Beskrivelse over Finmarkens Lapper, deres Tungemaal, Levemaade og forrige afgudsdyrkelse" ("Description of the Finnmark Laps: their Languages, Ways of Living, and their heathen worship"). This is a thorough ethnological study of the Sami in Finnmark, richly illustrated with 100 engravings. Leem came as a missionary to Finnmark in 1725 and, during his work as a parish priest in Talvik and Alta, he collected a large amount of ethnological material, based on his own field studies (UIB 2001b). The work was the most comprehensive and detailed study of the Sami people that had been performed.

Schefferus, Lilienskiold and Leem are the ethnological sources from before 1800 that I will be using. Other sources are the graves under the floor in Jukkasjärvi Church in the North Sami area in Sweden. Six of the buried individuals are identified as Sami, and they are buried in Sami clothing. The graves have been dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and were described by Eva Bergman in a report to the Riksantikvaren (The Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Sweden) in 1949 (ATA, DNR and 1353/1949

Porsbo 1988:13). The outfits are the oldest typical Sami costumes obtained from archaeological surveys.<sup>2</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there is a sharp increase in source material for Sami dress customs. Now people also started to collect Sami costumes, not only describe them. Two of the oldest costumes preserved in museums are a Norwegian man's kirtle and woman's kirtle from the North Sami area exhibited at the National Museum in Copenhagen (collected in 1839). Rolf Gilberg and Marianne Rasmussen describe them in detail (Rasmussen and Gilberg 1994). Other preserved garments from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are occasionally described in the literature, but there is no common work that deals with these. For 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sources, I used a variety of ethnographic and historical costume studies, mostly based in the Swedish Sami area.<sup>3</sup> Some address the entire Sami area, such as the studies done by Gustav von Düben and Ernst Manker, but most concentrate on limited cultural areas, such as those published by Ossian Elgström, Sigrid Drake, Anny Haugen, Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg and Susanna Jannok Porsbo.

### **3.2.3 Gjessing 's arguments against a Sami origin**

#### **3.2.3.1 Cloth socks**

First, I will go through the points Gjessing believes are evidence against a Sami origin (Gjessing 1938a:54-55). The most important point is the cloth socks. He believes that there are no parallels to them in the Sami costume tradition. The Sami, insofar as one can follow them in the literature, always use dried grasses in their shoes instead of textile socks. He makes an important point here, and it would be totally wrong to say anything other than that a dried grass lining has made textile socks unnecessary

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<sup>2</sup> Although the graves of the late Viking and early medieval times from Härjedalen and Ångermanland in Sweden are interpreted as Sami, the outfits have not been proven to be different from contemporary Norse costumes. Their cut is largely uncertain (Zachrisson 1999).

<sup>3</sup> The reason that more Swedish than Norwegian sources have been used is that there is far more Swedish literature on the subject than Norwegian. Although it would have been desirable to use more Norwegian literature, the native culture areas do not follow the current national boundaries. Thus, many of the Swedish Sami costume traditions can also be transferred to the Norwegian area.

and unusual in the Sami costume tradition. However, there are exceptions. Düben mentions that the Sami in the Lapp areas of northern Sweden bought fur or horsehair socks from Swedes and Norwegians (Düben 1977:151). More interesting is the use of wool socks. Of the six buried Sami in Jukkasjärvi church, four of them wore knitted socks.<sup>4</sup> One of the other women had pieces of linen cloth wrapped around her feet (ATA, DNR 1353/1949). However, it is important to point out that, unlike the person in the Skjoldehamn find, none of these bodies were wearing shoes. Susanna Jannok Porsbo claims that the Sami used knitted socks, *skuopha*, only without shoes (Porsbo 1988:55). These were purchased by the local population. Which sources she uses here are unknown, but, based on the text, it seems she relied on oral sources and probate records that go back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it is unknown if the Sami used socks in another way in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or further back.

### 3.2.3.2 The Sami collar

The next point Gjessing takes up is the Sami collar. Based on old illustrations, Gjessing believed that the Sami women's kirtle lost its collar in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and that both the women's and the men's kirtle had a collar before this. Gjessing believed the collarless Skjoldehamn kirtle could, therefore, not be Sami. I believe that the pictures are so sparse and inconsistent that such a conclusion is far too firm. Illustrations from the time before the collar is said to have disappeared are limited to the pictures from Olaus Magnus, Johannes Schefferus and Hans Hansen Lilienskiold. Looking at Olaus Magnus's images from the middle of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Sami collar cannot be seen, but his pictures are not reliable enough that one can draw any conclusions from this (Magnus 1976). In the Schefferus pictures, published in 1673, both men and women have the Sami collar (where such identification is possible), (Schefferus:1956). In the Lilienskiold illustrations, published in 1701, the picture is more complicated. Here you can find both men and women with a collar, but also men and (possibly) women with no collar. A man and a boy with fish and fishing rod can be seen with a collarless kirtle in one of the pictures (Lilienskiold and Solberg 1942:205). In two of the pictures the women seem to have a kirtle without a collar (ibid. p. 137 and Nedrebø:1999b). It seems as if many of the people on the other images are also collarless, but they are so unclear that this cannot be determined with any certainty. Perhaps the information from Fjellner, the South Sami priest, that the Sami kirtle lacked a collar in former times,

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<sup>4</sup> All of these also had on knitted mittens. The woman with linen cloth around her feet in the grave R.7 also had such mittens.

may be a part of the truth. The information is given in the Dübens text, but it's not clear whether Fjellner meant all Sami kirtles or kirtles just in his region (Düben 1977:156). Since rector J. Qvigstad viewed Fjellner as not very reliable, Gjessing believed that his statements were not very credible (Gjessing 1938a:54). The sources differ in other words, in both directions, both for and against Gjessing's collar theory, and I consider, therefore, that his conclusion is too firm. The sources are too sparse to make such a conclusion possible.

### **3.2.3.3 Distribution of the gores on the kirtle**

Gjessing believed the even distribution of the gores on the kirtle spoke against a Sami origin. He believed that Sami kirtles always had their gores concentrated in the back. This is not true. It is true that the North Sami kirtles often have this trait, which has been transferred from the fur overcoat to the textile kirtle. However, looking at old Sami costumes from both the north and the south, the picture is more differentiated. The male kirtle from grave A.6. in Jukkasjärvi church had one front piece and one back piece, while the women's kirtle in grave R.7. had two front pieces and one back piece. Both kirtles had gores at the sides, and none in the back piece (ATA, DNR 1353/1949). If we go forward to the North Sami kirtles from Norway in the National Museum in Copenhagen, collected in 1839, they have a similar cut. Both the men's and women's kirtles have one front piece and one back piece. In each side, a piece is inserted that goes all the way up to the sleeves and there are two gores on each side of it that do not reach quite as high up (Gilberg and Rasmussen 1994:201). None of the kirtles have gores in the back piece. Similar kirtles from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with such a simple cut have been described by Porsbo (Porsbo 1988:35 ff). Kirtles without the typical fur overcoat cut are today still found in the Lule and more southern Sami areas. The difference between Sami costumes with this cut and the Skjoldehamn kirtle are primarily that they have shoulder seams with gussets, side gores that go all the way up into the sleeves and that they are missing the middle gores in the front and back. However, there are kirtles without shoulder gussets, and kirtles with side gores that go no further up than the waist (Porsbo 2004:93). Although I have not found evidence for mid- and front- gores, or a cut without shoulder seams, on such outfits, they greatly resemble the cut of the Skjoldehamn kirtle. This parallel was also drawn by Porsbo (ibid.). As we also know, the cut of the Skjoldehamn kirtle has clear parallels in Norse medieval costume. There is every reason to believe that the Sami were inspired by the Norse design, something Porsbo also believes. The Sami have always been dependent on buying fabric for their

clothes from the Norse and Scandinavian populations, because they did not produce textiles for clothing themselves (ibid.). Therefore, an influence regarding the cut would also be natural. Thus, one might see two lines of development for Sami kirtle design, one based on the Sami fur overcoat and one with roots in the Norse kirtle cut. The first seems to have its geographical location in North Sami area, while the latter seems to be placed in the Lule and more southern Sami areas. The Skjoldehamn outfit could be an early example of the latter line of development.

#### 3.2.3.4 Hood

According to Gjessing, the Skjoldehamn hood differs from the *njalfatta*, the Sami hooded cape. While I agree with him in this, there are also some similarities. First, I would like to clear up the concepts of *njalfáhitta* and *luhkká*. In northern Norway and Finland, the cape with no hood is called a *njalfáhitta*, whereas with a hood it is called *luhkká*. In northern Sweden both types are called *luhkká*, but the cape with a hood has also been called *njálme fáhitta* (Porsbo 1988:64 - 66). Hooded capes are made of broadcloth and wadmal. The cut appears to have varied somewhat. The style that comes closest to the hood has a rectangular piece on each side and is rounded at the top. Almost square gores are inserted in the front and back (Haugen 1987:22). However; on this hooded cape there is a smooth transition between the back gore and the curved top seam, and the face opening is crescent shaped (when folded). The front gore top is flat and forms the bottom of the face opening. The hooded capes found in current Sami costumes are, in general, longer than the ones seen in the older pictures. From Schefferus, it is clear that they also have a split in the front (Schefferus:1956: insert between p. 176 and 177, 240 and 276), and that both men and women could wear it. The split and the pattern of the hood reminds me of the hooded cape called *køyse* in the Norwegian folk costume tradition, which is considered to be developed from medieval Norse hoods (Noss Noss 1972:16 and 1993:78). Whether Sami hood types show the same development should be studied further. Gjessing believed that they did not. His main argument is that there are examples of Sami hoods in leather, which also have parallels to other Arctic hoods. It may therefore be a result of a common Arctic tradition (Gjessing 1940:60 - 61). At the same time he sees it as unlikely that the Sami should have begun to use hoods as late as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, considering how harsh the climate is and has been. I am skeptical of this when hoods attached to an upper body garment seem to be common in the Arctic, according to the descriptions in the Gudmund Hatt book (Hatt 1914). Gjessing's sources for the arctic hoods with shoulder capes are ethnographic studies done on the Chukchi and Koryaks. These peoples live in Eastern Russia close to the Bering Sea,

very far from Sápmi (the Sami area), and more sources have, in my opinion, to be produced before one can speak of a common Arctic hood type.

### 3.2.3.5 Use of the inner shirt

Gjessing's next argument is that the Sami do not use an inner shirt, or at least they did not in the past. I do not agree with this argument. First is his use of the term “skjorte” (shirt) (to describe the inner garment from Skjolddehamn), is his own invention. It can just as easily be called an inner kirtle. In the Sami dress tradition, the use of both undershirts and underkirtles of wool, can be found. First, it must be noted that two layers of upper body garments are common when it comes to clothes made of fur. The *beaska* is an overcoat made of reindeer skin with the hair turned to the outside and worn as the outermost layer. The *dorka*, or inner coat, is made of reindeer or sheep skin, but here the fur is worn towards the body. There could be many combinations of fur overcoats, inner coats and wool kirtles. The kirtle could be used alone in good weather, or several of them could be layered on top of each other when it was colder. (Düben 1977:156 and 164). It could also be used over the inner coat (Blind 1999:87 and Elgström:1922:282), alone under an overcoat (Manker 1947:174), or in other combinations.

The use of a woolen shirt does not seem to have been common, but it has occurred. Düben mentions that the forest Lapps and part of the mountain Lapps wear a wadmal shirt, called a *skirto*, in the summer, and this is mentioned from the Lule Sami area by Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg (Düben 1977:155; Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:23). This has the same cut as the kirtle and is worn with the ends hanging loose on the body (not tucked down in the breeches). Sigrid Drake mentions that men could use a wadmal shirt that reached the middle of the thighs. This was worn either hanging free or stuffed into the pants (Drake 1979:165). Over this was worn a longer wadmal kirtle (it hung down to his knees when hanging freely). The wadmal kirtle was worn alone in the summer. Elgström wrote that a wool or cotton shirt, called a *baidde*, could be worn under the fur overcoat in Karesuando (Elgström:1922:280). Porsbo stated that in Malå they wore a long shirt called *skielken/skielten* (Porsbo 1999:51). None of these sources, however, gives a clear indication of the cut of these shirts. It is a completely open question as to whether these shirts are more recent loans from Scandinavian dress traditions or whether they represent a separate Sami tradition that could go a long way back. No immediate parallels to the Skjolddehamn shirt can be detected in this material.

What is clear is that several kirtles could be used on top of each other (as mentioned above). In relation to the Skjoldeham shirt with its patches and wear holes, it is interesting to note that the inner kirtle could be old and worn. (1988:36 Porsbo and Drake 1979:168). Drake mentions that such a kirtle was shorter and narrower than other kirtles and that it was made from an old kirtle. The kirtle had a small collar and was called *like-kapte*, unlike the outer kirtle, which was called a *peingolts kapte* or an *ulkots kerde*. Porsbo also mentions an inner kirtle used in Arvidsjaur, called a *sisgábte*, that had a V-cut neck opening (Porsbo 1999:44).

Thus, there is evidence that the Sami used both woolen shirts and inner-kirtles under their outer kirtles, but it is difficult to point out any similarities between these and the Skjoldehamn shirt when I lack information on both the cut and any decorative elements. Based on the information from Drake, the Skjoldehamn shirt certainly shares similarities with the inner kirtles by having a collar, being shorter, and by being old and worn. No Sami upper body garment I've come across has the special neck opening with a chest flap that the Skjoldehamn shirt has. However, there are similarities between the shirt decoration and the Sami use of decoration, and this is discussed in Section 3.2.4.2.

### **3.2.3.6 Ankle bands**

Gjessing's next point is that the ankle bands in the Skjoldeham find do not correspond to the Sami shoe bands, but he never gives any good reasons for this. Perhaps it is because they are tablet woven. In my opinion, there are very good arguments that not only are they similar to Sami shoe bands but that they also had a function similar to Sami shoe bands. Sami woven shoe bands, *vuotta*, consist of three parts. The attachment tie, the *garca*, is of leather or braided with wool yarn. This band attaches to the loop(s) of the shoes. The middle part of the band (also called *vuotta*) could be woven on a rigid heddle loom or braided (Porsbo 1988:68). The extension band, *bárgges*, which is braided of wool yarn, attaches the band to the ankle at the top. Even here a similarity to the ankle bands from Skjoldehamn can be seen as these are also divided into three parts: a woven section with two braided extension pieces at each end. The Sami attachment and extension cords occur with many different variations. They are often different from each other (as the Skjoldehamn bands are) by being differently braided, or made from different colors and materials. All the extension bands I've seen are equipped with a tassel, *diehppi*, at the end. The attachment band may also have tassel, but usually it has only one knot at the end. The

attachment band is usually a lot shorter than the extension band. In the literature, the length and width of the bands vary. The woven portion normally measures from 1.5 m - 2.25 m, while the width varies from 1.2 to 6 cm. The length of the attachment band is given as between 8 to 30 cm and the extension band runs 60 to approx. 225 cm (Fors and Enoksen 1991:67; Elgstrøm 1922:311; Hetta 1999:83; Sildnes 1986:17). Düben specifies a woven section 0.9 to 1.2 m long (Düben 1977:152).



Figure 2 Sami shoe band from Alta in Norway (NFSA.1609), collected in 1925 to Norsk Folkemuseum. The end furthest up, called *garca*, is fastened to a leather loop on the shoe while the woven middle part (*vuotta*) and the end furthest down, called *bárgges*, are wound around the ankle. The tassel on the *bárges* is called *diehppi*. The picture is from the Norwegian Folk Museum photo database available at <http://www.digitaltmuseum.no>.

Both the surviving length of the woven part of the ankle bands, and their width, is therefore within the variation found with Sami shoe bands. The round braid at the end, which could be compared with the attachment bands, is slightly longer than these, while the flat braided end is within the length of the Sami extension band. However, I'm not sure that the literature I have available captures all regional and historical variations, because these seem to be large.

In general I would say that the greatest length and width seems to be found primarily in the North Sami area, where, for example, in Kautokeino and Karasjok, the shoe bands go far up the leg (Haugen 2006:276 ff). After a shoe band is attached to the shoe, it is wrapped around the ankle. The wrapping is always clockwise on the right leg and anticlockwise on the left leg as this provides a more secure attachment (Porsbo 1988:69). Porsbo says that the breeches are put over the shafts of the shoes and the band is then wrapped around them, before everyday work. If one had *gálssohat* (*bellinger*, reindeer skin leggings) over the breeches, the breeches could be put into the shoes and the fabric edge of the leggings could be outside of the shoe shaft (Gjessing 1940:12).

The woven part of Sami shoe band with a pick-up pattern has a similar set up as the bands from Skjoldehamn and consists of three fields: two outer fields and a center field. While the outer field is in normal tabby, the same as the ankle bands, the center field consists of the pick-up pattern. The pick-up pattern creates various geometric shapes, like the tablet weaving pattern of the ankle bands, but it is still not comparable (because of the different techniques). The outer fields on Sami shoe bands can be done in many different ways, where one can also see a similar transverse stripe effect as on the ankle bands, though I have not found examples of asymmetry in this effect. Sami shoe bands are woven in many colors. Color usage is based on regional and family traditions and is also different between men and women.

There are differences in shoe bands from the North Sami area and in those from the more southern Sami areas. The North Sami shoe bands are known for the richness of their patterns made with the pick-up technique, while the bands of the Lule and more southern Sami areas are generally of a simpler type. The use of woven bands is generally greater in the North Sami area (Laquist 1947). While the North Sami primarily use woven shoe bands, the Lule and South Sami mainly use braided shoe bands (Haugen 2006:234 ff). The weaving of bands on rigid heddle looms is an old tradition with the

Sami, which Schefferus documents as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. He also described shoes that were wrapped with straps, but he did not mention if these were woven or not. (Schefferus 1956:235). Knud Leem, from what I understand, was the first person to mention rigid heddle woven shoe bands in his book published in 1767 (Leem 1956:371).

### 3.2.4 Similarities Gjessing found or did not find

Based on discussion above, I would say that Gjessing was too hasty in dismissing a Sami origin for the find. His strongest argument is probably the cloth socks, but in my opinion, one cannot use a single object to determine the Skjoldehamn outfit's ethnic affiliation. I believe that one must look at the totality, and then weigh the arguments for or against one or other ethnicity against each other. Based on Gjessing's arguments, it is likely that he only compared the Skjoldehamn outfit with North Sami costumes, which is evident in the discussion of the cut of the kirtle. I also think this because of the similarities with the Sami costume traditions that he doesn't point out in his article, in particular the V-neckline of the kirtle in combination with decorative collar and the chest flap, and the belt with whipped ends. Both these elements have similarities in the Lule and more southern Sami areas. I will now discuss the similarities that he himself found, and those he didn't find.

#### 3.2.4.1 Kirtle

As we have seen, the cut of the kirtle is similar to both the Sami kirtle cut and the Norse upper body garment cut. Still, if I have to point out the most obvious link between the cut of the Skjoldehamn kirtle and the cut of Sami kirtles, I would say that it is the V-cut neck opening. Today, it is the hallmark of the Lule and more southern Sami kirtles. The North Sami kirtles usually only have a split that is closed with a hook near the throat (Porsbo 2004:94). In the more southern Sami areas, the V-cut, called *ohtse* or *åhtså*<sup>5</sup>, is decorated with an underlying breast cloth, which I will come back to (see Figure 3). The depth of the V-cut ranges from a short version similar to that of the Skjoldehamn kirtle, to a deep cut that goes below the chest. It is often lined with broadcloth strips in different colors, called *budstahkh* (by the South Sami) and *gietmatta* (Lule Sami), which are determined by region, family

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<sup>5</sup> Respectively South Sami and Lule Sami designations. See Dunfjell 1999:54 and Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:30.

traditions, gender, and age considerations (Dunfjell 1999:56; Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:30 and 34-35). Today it is common to use two or more colors, but previously it could consist of only one (as on the Skjoldehamn kirtle), at least in the Lule Sami area (Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:30). Also, Lule Sami leather kirtles and fur overcoats have a V-cut lined with colored broadcloth strips. (Ibid. 19 ff.) Edging a neck opening with colored broadcloth strips is very common throughout the Sami areas. It has a long tradition and can be found on the 18<sup>th</sup> Century kirtles from Jukkasjärvi Church (grave A.6. and R.7.) and on the kirtles in the National Museum in Copenhagen, collected in 1839 (ATA, DNR 1353/1949; Gilberg and Rasmussen 1994:202 ff).



**Figure 3**

**Close up photo of the kirtle on the front page, a part of a Lule Sami costume exhibited at the Norsk Folkemuseum from Tysfjord in Nordland in Norway (NFSA.3235) collected by the museum in 1953. The V-cut neck opening (åhtså) is decorated with colored strips of woolen fabric (gietmatta). Photo: Dan Halvard Løvlid**



**Figure 4 (above) Sleeve decoration on a Lule Sami kirtle from Tysfjord (in Nordland in Norway). Image from "The Norwegian national costume lexicon: all Norwegian national costumes and Sami folk costumes, Volume 3", Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen (eds), p. 244**



**Figure 5 (right) Lule Sami *lissto*, more precisely *svålltjålissto* (*lissto* on a leather kirtle). *Lissto* is a decorative band sewn on the hemline of the kirtle. It is woven in tabby on a rigid heddle loom. Picture from Aira, E. 2000: Ave, batter yes vuodagga: band från lulesamiskt area, p. 56**

Schefferus, Lilienskiold and Leem describe the use of colored broadcloth strips on Sami upper body garments (Schefferus 1956:237 and 294; Lilienskiold and Solberg 1942:136; Leem 72 ff.) The use of woven bands sewn on the outfit is limited today to decoration along the hem of the kirtle (on both leather and textile kirtles). These bands, called *lissto/laskah* (see Figure 5), are rigid heddle woven in tabby and the pattern often consists of longitudinal stripes in multiple colors, somewhat different, however, than the kirtle and breeches bands from Skjoldehamn (Aira 2000:51 ff; Torkelsson 2007:36 ff). Striped trim on the bottom edge of the kirtle sleeves is very common throughout the Sami areas, but the stripes are made from broadcloth strips and not from striped woven bands as on the Skjoldehamn kirtle.

The effect is still very similar, and I would particularly like to highlight the stripes in the Lule Sami outfit (shown in Figure 4) as a particularly interesting comparison object with its combination of narrow and wide stripes used according to specific rules (Mikkelsen 2006:242). The use of *lissto/laskah* may be a remnant of a more extensive use of rigid heddle-woven bands on clothing. In the description of the burial R.7. from Jukkasjärvi church, the sleeve was described like this: "Arm 45 cm. En ärmsöm. Nedtill med 2.3 cm vävt band" ("Sleeve 45 cm. One sleeve seam. At the bottom with a 2.3 cm woven band.") (ATA, DNR 1353/1949). Relative to the rest of the descriptions, it absolutely seems as if it means a (rigid heddle) woven band here, since the hem decorations in fabrics are described another way (lined with green wadmal, blue cloth strip, etc.)

I do not know of any use of braids or embroidery along the Lule and more southern Sami V-necklines as is found on the Skjoldehamn kirtle. However, I have found couching in both the Lule and North Sami areas. In the Lule Sami area, couching done in contrasting colors, called *dieddemsávve*, is used on broadcloth strips (*gietmatta*) along the neck (also on broadcloth strips on the sleeve) (Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:30). In the North Sami area, couching can be found today on kirtles from Lyngen (Antonsen, Isaksen and Taarnesvik 1997:22). It is apparently an old tradition, because it also is present in two dressed dolls from the 18<sup>th</sup> century found in the Bergen Museum. The costumed dolls were probably made by the Norwegian Jørgen Christensen Garnås, who, in addition to the Sami costumes, also made dolls wearing Norwegian folk costumes (Noss 1977:168). The dolls portray a Sami man and woman, both from Tromsø parish. Both the man and woman have two-color couching on each side of the chest split (see Figure 6). The use of couching can also be seen along the chest split on two kirtles at the National Museum in Copenhagen. They are lined with broadcloth in various colors with blue and red couching applied (Gilberg and Rasmussen 1994:202 ff). It is worth noting that the women's kirtle has a V-cut neck opening even though it is North Sami.

On the basis of what appears in the literature, the rich use of sewn-on braids for decoration (as is found on both the Skjoldehamn kirtle and breeches) has no parallel in Sami dress standards. The only examples of braids used as edge trimming are as a facing at the bottom of kirtles. South Sami kirtles use a round braid called *ulpieh*, while in the Lule Sami area it is called *puddestak* (Dunfjell 1999:56; Drake 1979:169).



**Figure 6. Photo: Dan Halvard Løvlid**

**Couching along the neck opening on a kirtle on a doll from the 18th century. The doll portrays a Sami man from Tromsø parish.**

### 3.2.4.2 Shirt front flap and collar

The combination of the ornate chest flap and collar, along with the V-cut neck opening, on the Skjoldehamn outfit brings an immediate association with the Lule and more southern Sami costume tradition. However, here it is not an under shirt that is visible in the V-neck but a breast cloth or a silver collar. I have not found any examples of shirts with breast flaps like the Skjoldehamn shirt in the Sami costume tradition. Square chest flaps of this type, with buttons, however, are well known in Norwegian fisherman shirts right up to modern times (Trætterberg 1999:132). Although the breast flap and collar of Skjoldehamn shirt makes it similar to post-Reformation Norwegian fisherman shirts, there are also things that differentiate them. Gores on the side are one thing. Another thing is that the collar and chest flap on the fisherman shirts seem to have had only a practical, not a decorative, function as seen on the Skjoldehamn shirt. Fisherman shirts were also exclusively outerwear, not inner garments such as the Skjoldehamn shirt (ibid). Now it is not unlikely that the Skjoldehamn shirt also served as an outer garment in times of mild weather; the heavy wear suggests this. The combination of the kirtle's V-neck, chest flap and collar, however, gives the impression that these garments are designed to fit together. Such a feature is not known from the fisherman's outfits, but, as written above, it has parallels in the Lule and more southern Sami costume traditions.

Lule and more southern Sami breast cloths, *slihppa/boengeskuvmie*, are more or less rectangular pieces of cloth or leather that are under the kirtle's chest split. They are fastened behind the neck and sometimes also around the waist and can be made both with and without a collar. In addition to protecting the breast against the cold, they also served as a pocket where one could keep small personal belongings. Throughout the Sami area, breast cloths have been used by both sexes, but they have been more visible in the Lule and more southern Sami dress customs because of the deep V-cut in the upper body garments. Therefore, they are also more richly decorated here, with broadcloth decorations, leather strips applied in the seams, and embroidery with pewter thread and wool yarn (Manker 1947:165; Düben 1977:157). There are, according to Maja Dunfjell, two types of decoration on the South Sami breast cloths, *boengeskuvmie* (Dunfjell 1999:56). *Bielie givlie* are crescent-shaped motifs composed of several narrow strips of different color combinations of red, green, blue and yellow. From what I have seen, this decoration is usually centered at the top of the neck of the breast cloth, while the rest of the cloth is undecorated beneath. *Leahta* is a pattern that consists of squares in two contrasting colors, red and

green, red and blue or red and black. In addition, it has cross-shaped embroidery. For this type, there is also a version with wide horizontal stripes (about 3 cm) in two colors without any ornamentation. It is this variation that, in my opinion, most closely resembles the breast flap and collar on the Skjoldehamn kirtle. The Norwegian Folk Museum has several of this variety and also one with three different colored stripes (NFSA.2093). One breast cloth has transverse stripes on the collar as on the Skjoldehamn shirt (NFSA.2083), albeit with different colors than used for the horizontal stripes on the chest (see Figure 7). NFSA.1477 has similar transverse stripes in the same color as the horizontal stripes further down, but the collar is not a stand-up one. The oldest example I have found is NFSA.0292c from Røros, collected in 1889. It has horizontal stripes in two varied colors, red and green, but the collar does not have transverse stripes. It is instead decorated with longitudinal metal embroidery. From what I understand, this type of breast cloth, with horizontal stripes, is no longer in use.



Figure 7 South Sami breast flap, *boengeskuvmie*, from

Hyllingen at Røros in Norway (NFSA.2083), collected in 1934 to the Norsk Folkemuseum. The breast flap is of a type called *leahta*, with horizontal stripes in two colors. The breast flap was worn under the kirtle, and the stripes on the breast and on the standing collar adorned the V- shaped neck opening.

The picture is from the Norwegian Folk Museum photo database available on <http://www.digitaltmuseum.no>.

Another type of Sami chest garment that can also be reminiscent of the Skjoldehamn shirt neck opening is the silver collar, *silba halsie* or *silb kraka* (1947:166 Manker and Düben 1977:159). Like the

breast cloth, it is a rectangular piece of fabric attached to the chest. Unlike the breast cloth it has a center split in the front adorned with hooks and eyes in silver. It differs also from a breast cloth by being a garment used on special occasions, by being exclusively a woman's garment, by always having a stand up collar, and by the fact that it can also be worn outside the kirtle (1953:87 Laquist, and 92). The oldest evidence of this collar is from the priest Samuel Rheen, and is from 1671. The following year, the priest John Tornaesus described the same garment (Laquist 1953:87-88). The descriptions apply equally to the Lule and North Sami areas. Later it went completely out of use in the North Sami area, while it remained in the Lule and more southern Sami areas (Laquist 1953:92 and Fjellström 1962:18). However, it also went out of use here at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century before again being adopted in recent years (Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:73). As for the breast cloth, there is a special kind of silver collar that I believe has similarities to the chest flap on the Skjoldehamn shirt. Unfortunately, I only found one example of this type of silver collar, NFSA.0234 (see Figure 8). It is described as "collar to a kirtle" and was purchased by the University's Ethnographic Museum in Oslo in 1878. The merchant Anders G. Nordvi bought it in Karasjok in Finnmark. The collar is made from greenish blue wool with yellow broadcloth as decoration in the seams and with a predominantly blue collar with pewter thread embroidery and a fur edge. The similarity to the chest flap on the Skjoldehamn shirt can be found in the two fabric strips that are sewn on each side of the middle split. The strips have stripes of light brownish-red, light brown, white, dark brown, light greenish blue, light green and yellow, which are laid horizontally. The stripes repeat in the same sequence on both strips, but the maker did not bother to match the stripes so they would be the same on both sides. The fabric is tabby weave with single ply Z-spun yarn in the warp and single ply S-spun yarn in the weft. Along the edge of the split there are only a few metal loops, but it is clear that at one time there must have been several more of these. This collar is missing the overwhelming amount of silver ornaments that have been found on most other surviving silver collars. The striped material also makes this silver collar stand out. Other silver collars I've seen often have a strip of fabric sewn along the split, but this strip is usually a solid color. Based on what I wrote above, it is also strange that it is from the North Sami area from a time when silver collars should have gone out of use there. Perhaps there is a tradition here that is not captured by the literature. That it is from the North Sami area may explain why it differs so much from the silver collars from more southern areas. Since there is only one example of this type of collar, it puts it in a somewhat different light as a source for comparison compared to the surviving South Sami breast cloths. It is not known whether it represented a tradition or if it was the creative product of a single tailor.

Therefore, a more thorough empirical review of the silver collar material is needed to see if similar items can be found.



**Figure 8 *Sølvkrage* (directly transcribed "silver collar") from Karasjok in Finmark in Norway (NFSA.0234), collected in 1878 (It is owned by the Norsk Folkemuseum today). The striped fabric in tabby on both sides of the breast split separates this "silver collar" from other "silver collars." Photo: Dan Halvard Løvlid**

From the above statements, it can be seen that a chest decoration in the form of an underlying garment appears to be primarily a feature of the Lule and more southern Sami costume tradition. However, the design element of an accompanying garment under an outer kirtle/fur overcoat with a decorative collar that sticks up out from the neckline seems to be found in both the north and south. Naturally enough, such a collar is most visible when the outer garment did not have a collar, that is, on most women's kirtles. Leem describes this in 1767 (Leem 1956:85). Here, the collar belongs to the inner fur coat, *dorka* (called a *tork* by Leem), in sheepskin. Even though it is not mentioned what this collar was made of or how it was decorated for the women concerned, it is tempting to believe that it could be of similar material and decorated in a similar way as the men's inner fur coat. Here, the collar of kersey or broadcloth was decorated with colored wool yarn (Leem 1956:72). It amounted to an extra decorative element to the fur outer coat and woolen kirtle in the same way as the Skjoldehamn shirt collar did for the Skjoldehamn kirtle. I have not found any example of an inner fur coat without a collar, so this phenomenon must have existed as long as the inner fur coat was worn.

On the chest flap of the Skjoldehamn shirt a silver bead/button fastened the flap in one corner. In the Sami costume tradition, there are also examples of silver buttons/balls to affix both the inner and outer fur coat. This button was sewn on one side of the chest split and attached to a leather band/leather loop on the opposite side (Blind 1999:87; Porsbo 1988:32-33). Porsbo calls the button/ball *njiddjeboallu* and writes that it was used on woman's fur outer coats in Karesuando, Jukkasjärvi and Gällivare. Based on her drawings I interpret the balls as a type of small hanging button of the type that is also used for silver collars, although Phebe Fjellström claims silver buttons did not have a practical function for the Sami (Fjellström 1962:30).

Leem also describes the use of silver buttons on the fur inner coat. These silver buttons, adorned with hanging leaves in silver, were affixed on the right side of the neck opening, while on the left side there were narrow "*slidser*" (slits). Based on his drawing, where one can see three silver buttons and three "*slidser*" (Leem 1956:Tab 9), it is clear that he means these are buttonholes for the silver buttons, but he also writes that silver buttons were more usually found on women's fur outer coats than on men's coats. There must, therefore, have been another type of button, possibly the wooden button mentioned by Solveig Blind (Blind 1999:87). In all probability, the buttons in the Leem text are of the same type as Porsbo and Fjellström describe, where hanging silver leaves are a common component.

Round buttons of silver, or other metal, attached to a loop have also been used on textile kirtles for both women and men (Porsbo 1988:41-42). Such fur outer coat and kirtle buttons differ from the Skjoldehamn button by being spherical, hollow, and without holes in the middle. The similarity to the Skjoldehamn button is not in appearance but in function. In conjunction with the Sami silver buttons, I will add a detail that Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg mention in connection with the Lule Sami dress tradition. They write that the silver jewelry on the silver collars was sewn on with sinew thread (Aira, Tuolja and Sandberg 1995:75). The woolen loop going through the silver bead on the Skjoldehamn shirt is sewn on with sinew thread. The literature does not say if the buttons on the Sami outer coats and kirtles were sewn on with sinew thread.

### 3.2.4.3 Breeches

#### 3.2.4.3.1 Cut

Unfortunately the design of the Skjoldehamn breeches is too uncertain for any comprehensive comparison with the design of Sami breeches. What is clear is that at least three areas of detail match that found in the Sami breeches: the rectangular rear extension piece, the waist band casing with a drawstring, and the split at the bottom of each pants leg. I found an extension piece on all three of the cloth breeches I studied. All are of the same type of breeches called “breechcloth breeches”, where the legs are a continuous tube of fabric and an extension in the form of gussets has been added to the center front and back up against the waist to give them a better shape (see Hatt 1914:152). On the breeches from Grunnfjorden in Tysfjord (NFSA.3202), collected in 1953, the extension piece is made from one piece of fabric, while on the other two samples each extension piece consists of two pieces sewn together. On the breeches from South Varanger (NFSA.0363) collected in 1907, the seam runs between the pieces vertically in the center of the back, while in the breeches of unknown origin, collected in 1906 (NFSA.4067), the seam is somewhat asymmetrically placed. Here, the left part contains the majority of the extension piece, while the right part is only a small section joined on and running out to the right side seam. The oldest breeches for which I know a detailed cut are the breeches at the National Museum in Copenhagen, collected in 1839. Here the extension piece is in two parts, but the seam runs diagonally (Gilberg and Rasmussen 1994:206). On the Skjoldehamn breeches only one small part of the extension piece is preserved, so it is difficult to say how this would look if it were complete. However, there are indications that it was composed of several parts, as something that could be a joint has been observed up on the drawstring casing.

The waistband casing with a drawstring, as on the Skjoldehamn breeches, is a very common feature of the Sami breeches (Porsbo 1988:46). On all three breeches that I have seen (mentioned above) a drawstring casing was made the same way as on the Skjoldehamn breeches, by the fabric being folded to the outside of the breeches and fastened there with overcast stitches. On both NFSA.3202 and NFSA.4067 the overcast stitch runs over another thread, i.e. as a couching. The drawstring casing on the breeches at the National Museum in Copenhagen is made in the same way, but what stitch was used to make it is not given (Gilberg and Rasmussen 1994:201). The drawstring, *fiehtarbáddi* or *falde*, may be

of wool or leather (Porsbo 1988:46 and Drake 1979:173). The three textile breeches I examined all feature drawstrings braided with wool yarn. NFSA.4067 has a simple three-strand braided band in gray wool yarn while the other two have drawstrings with wool yarn in different colors. NFSA.0363 features a drawstring of white and dark gray, while NFSA.3202 has drawstrings of light and dark bluish-grey. On the textile breeches from grave A. 6 in Jukkasjärvi Church, it is mentioned that the drawstring is “en flätad sena” ("braided sinew") (ATA, DNR 1353/1949).

Splits at the bottom of the legs of the breeches are common in Sami breeches made from both textile and leather, so they can be pulled outside the shoe shaft (Porsbo 1988:46). Nevertheless, only one of the three breeches I have studied has slits. (NFSA.3202).

### **3.2.4.3.2 Decor**

While the decoration of the Skjoldehamn breeches is rich, I have not found the same tendency on Sami textile breeches. On the three breeches I have investigated, the decoration is limited to simple stitches to prevent raveling on the bottom of legs, and only two of the breeches have them (NFSA.3202 and NFSA.0363). The stitches are done in a contrasting color, respectively, green and purple. On NFSA.3202 a couching in green yarn is used on the waistband casing seam. Stitches with both a decorative and a practical function are also found on the older textile breeches. The crotch gore on the breeches at the National Museum in Copenhagen is sewn with two seams in green single ply wool on the face side. The drawstring casing has been sewn with brown single ply stitches. On two of the breeches I examined, the bottom raw edge of the legs was secured with stitching in a contrasting color, here with yellowish-green two-ply yarn (Gilberg and Rasmussen 1994:201). Therefore, with the exception of the drawstring, the Sami textile breeches I have examined bear no resemblance to the Skjoldehamn breeches when it comes to their decorative elements. A broader empirical review of the Sami breeches material will be able to determine whether these breeches are representative, or if there are breeches that are more similar.

In the case of Sami winter breeches of leather or fur, *gámasgálssohat*, the situation is quite different. There is far more decoration on their legs than can be seen in the textile breeches. On the

lower portion of these breeches a decorated broadcloth or wadmal fabric with a split, *njálbmi*, has been sewn on. It is placed outside the shoe shaft before the shoe band wraps the breeches to the ankle. Porsbo has a drawing of it in her book (Porsbo 1988:48). It can be decorated with colored broadcloth that forms a decorative strip or other geometric formations. I have not found more detailed descriptions of this decoration to be able to tell, for example, whether it may have included some type of embroidery. Whether the striped decoration of broadcloth may have replaced the striped decoration in the form of a rigid heddle woven band as found on the Skjoldehamn breeches, (such as might have happened at the Sami kirtle sleeve cuff, see discussion in Section 3.2.4.1) is a question that must be studied further.

#### **3.2.4.4 Belt**

The Skjoldehamn belt is quite special with its two knots and whipped ends. Therefore, it is interesting that there are very similar Sami belts. Sami belts are either rigid heddle woven, braided or cut out of leather or broadcloth. It is the rigid heddle woven and braided belts I'll focus on here, since they are most similar to the Skjoldehamn belt. Braided belts are now rare, and there are scant descriptions of them in the literature. I have found three examples of braided belts in Sami collections, all made with leather or sinew. The first (NM.0192650) is from Östansjö in Arvidsjaur Sweden, collected in 1933. It is flat braided with a herringbone pattern, where every other "herringbone" is white and brown. At one end, a white braided loop has been sewn on. At the other end, the flat braid becomes a round braid and it splits first into two, and then four branches. Beads and broadcloth tassels in several colors are attached in each of these four ends. The second belt is also from Arvidsjaur in Sweden (kept today at Hembygdsgården in Arvidsjaur) and collected in 1925. Based on the pictures I have of this belt, it seems that a part of the belt has a braid similar to the Skjoldehamn belt (W-formations), while the other part is braided in V-formations. As with the belt from Östansjö, it also has a loop at one end and four branches at the other (three have been preserved) with beads and broadcloth tassels. Both of these belts represent a belt tradition in Arvidsjaur that is now gone, and was described by Porsbo (Porsbo 1999:45). The last belt (NFSA.2430) I myself examined at the Norwegian Folk Museum. It is from Lifjell in Hemnes in Nordland and was collected in 1939. It has two types of braids; about the middle of the belt it goes from a wide braid into a narrow braid. At one end there is a loop as on the previously described belts, and on the other end there is a metal ring in which a split leather piece with two metal rings at the ends is also attached. Braided belts of sinew are also mentioned by Gustaf von Düben and Ernst Manker (Düben

1977:158; Manker 1947:165). The belts referred to above share similarities with the Skjoldehamn belt in that they are braided and that they have branches with tassels. However, both the material and the decorative details differ, but there are Sami belts with a much greater resemblance.

Finger braided woolen belts are mentioned by Fors and Enoksen (Fors and Enoksen 1991:55) and by Lene Antonsen (Antonsen 1995). The latter refers to sources that describe belts of over 3 ells (1.88 m) with loops and knots on both hips and large tassels at the ends on both sides. Antonsen compare these belts to the *gähtjambáddi*, , that Porsbo mentions in her book (Porsbo 1988:69). The *gähtjambáddi* is also called *suorak* because of its many branched ends with tassels. It is worth noting that Fors, Enoksen and Antonsens' descriptions are the only sources I've found that describe braided belts in the North Sami area. The outfits they describe are from the Sea Sami, which differ in some features from the rest of the Northern Sami costume tradition, and the above-mentioned belt may have been one such feature. From Swedish Lapland, Manker asserts that braided wool yarn belts are a more southern Sami phenomenon (Manker 1947:165). In today's South Sami dress customs a braided belt (*gietsdimmes-voedtege*) with whipped ends (*giesege*) and tassels (*duahpah*) has survived, but in both the tying and other details the Skjoldehamn belt has more in common with the more northern Sami belts than it does with the South Sami examples. (Torkelsson 2007:33). Braided belts of wool yarn were also used in Arvidsjaur in Sweden, but they did not have ends with tassels (Porsbo 1999:45).

The belts that today most resemble the Skjoldehamn belt are found in the Lule Sami outfits. Sigrid Drake mentioned a Lule Sami belt called a *kappat* or *laik-avve* braided of yarn in many colors (Drake 1979:175). Today's belts, or waistbands, (*bádde*), however, are only rigid heddle woven, but they have the characteristic whipped ends (*tsavekbátte*) with tassels (*diehpe*) that the Skjoldehamn belt has (Aira 2000:13-14). There are many different varieties of these, but the two-ended band, *guovtegetsak*, resembles it the most. The whipping can be done in many ways, but is divided into color fields in specific patterns such as in the Skjoldehamn belt. As with the latter belts, it is usually the middle whipped end that differs from the outer whipped ends. Unlike the ends of the Skjoldehamn belt, each end of the Lule Sami belts is divided into two before being whipped. It is whipped in a figure eight formation and the end is therefore not completely round (ibid:19).



Figure 9 (left) The Lule Sami belt *guovtegetsak* with its whipped ends (*tsavekbátte*) and tassels (*diehpe*).

Figure 10 (right) Close up photo of a variant of the *tsavekbátte*. The whipped end in the middle is clearly different than those on the sides. The images are from Aira, E. 2000: *Ave, bátte ja vuodagga: band från lulesamiskt area*, p. 14 and 40

On the Lule Sami belts today, it is common that a part of the belt hangs in one or two loops, but the loops are not tied and have no practical function as on the Skjolddehamn belt. Instead, the belt is attached with a buckle or with cords and a strap. In more southern Sami areas on the other hand, the belt can be tied in the same manner as on the Skjolddehamn belt (Porsbo 1999:37 ff). This is also done on the old Lule Sami outfit shown on the front page. Something that should be studied further is how far back the different kinds of belts I have mentioned above can be traced. Both Schefferus, Lilienskiold and Leem write that the Sami belts were of leather (Leem also mentions broadcloth), but the question is whether their descriptions cover the entire Sami belt tradition at that time (Schefferus 1956:233 and 237; Lilienskiold and Solberg 1942:136; Leem 1956:82 and 87). Both Lilienskiold and Leem wrote only about the Sami people in Finnmark, where I have not found any tradition of braided belts.

#### **3.2.4.5 Shoes**

When it comes to the Skjolddehamn shoes and their possible connection with the Sami shoes I refer to the discussion in my thesis (Løvliid 2009:173). Quickly summarized, there are features of the soles (only those are preserved), which make them more reminiscent of Sami shoes than Norse shoes. This applies to their form (a two-part symmetric sole) and seams (running stitches with sinew that go all the way through the pieces). However, there is so much uncertainty around the construction of the footwear that it is difficult to give any detailed comparison.

#### **3.2.4.6 Other objects**

I have not found any parallels to the *ankle wraps* in the Sami post-Reformation material. The ankle wraps were probably wrapped around the part of the ankle that the sock did not cover well, and they must therefore be seen in connection with these. See the discussion in Section 3.2.3.1. Otherwise, there are examples of the use of more primitive foot wrapping cloths in a Sami context. The woman in grave R.7. in Jukkasjärvi church had her feet wrapped in linen (ATA, DNR 1353/1949) in 1949).

There is no evidence that the Sami ever wove 2/2 twill fabrics even though one assumes that the weaving of the Sami blankets called *grener* (in tabby) is a tradition that goes back to pre-Norse times. (Hoffman 1964:73; Nesheim 1955:52). If the Skjolddehamn find is Sami, the *blanket* in all probability

was acquired from the Norse population. The same goes for the rest of the fabrics in the find and the tablet woven bands.

The *bands that were tied around the blanket* are such a simple type that they, by themselves, can say nothing about ethnicity. When it comes to function, I do not know Sami burial practice in depth enough so that I can say anything about whether such bands were ever used the same way to tie the winding-sheet. The whipped cord pairs, where at least one pair has been laid into a knot in the band, though, is interesting. The whipped cord pairs are two individual cords with the ends connected in two places with silver rings. This way of connecting the cord pairs has its parallels to a type of end on some Lule Sami belts, for example NFSA.1758. The belt is from Tysfjord in Nordland and was collected in 1931. Instead of silver rings, tassels were used to link them.

### 3.2.5 Conclusions

I will not make a conclusion about ethnicity based on the comparison above. Nevertheless, I will say that Skjoldehamn outfit has many interesting similarities with the Sami costume known from post-Reformation times. In my opinion, Gjessing was too quick to reject a Sami origin, which I believe had two causes. First, I think he put too much emphasis on using individual objects from the find as ethnic markers, where the cloth socks in particular stand out. In my view, the ethnicity of the outfit should be assessed based on the overall picture it provides. Second, I think his comparison is influenced by the fact that his knowledge of Sami costume practice was limited to North Sami costumes. I have, in the above discussion, shown that the Skjoldehamn outfit is more similar to the Lule and more southern Sami outfits. That he generally had limited knowledge about Sami dress custom he admits himself in a letter from December 1938 to Agnes Geijer, "Edge decoration with sewn-on cords, however, I have not seen in Sami garments, but I also have to admit that my knowledge of Sami garments is extremely limited" (Gjessing 1938b:2).

I started the discussion by going through Gjessing's arguments against a Sami origin. In my opinion, many of his arguments are the result of his inadequate knowledge of the Sami costume tradition, and his conclusion that it must be a Norwegian costume is therefore invalid. His strongest arguments are the cloth socks and the tablet woven ankle bands, but they alone cannot rule out a Sami origin. While tablet woven ankle bands, at first glance, seem like a good argument against it being a Sami costume, it is my opinion that there are equally good arguments that the ankle bands may have belonged to a Sami costume. This is because the bands share similarities with Sami shoe bands in structure, and probably also in function. If the Skjoldehamn find is Sami, it may mean that the bands were purchased from the Norse population and adapted to a Sami application. Perhaps tablet woven bands like these replaced leather bands that had served as the current shoe bands, before they started to weave shoe bands themselves. Leather bands with such a function exist at least on the Sami leather breeches, *sisttehat* (Hetta 1999:84).

After Gjessing's arguments against a Sami origin, I went on to discuss the connections that he saw and connections he did not see. While Gjessing believed that the Sami kirtle (*gakte/gábde/gapta*) was very different from the Skjoldehamn kirtle, I think it is very similar, both in cut and decoration. The cut shows great similarities especially to the Lule and more southern Sami outfits, but also to the old North Sami costumes. In the case of the kirtle's V-neckline and decoration this is a design feature that is now particularly associated with the Lule and more southern Sami outfits, where the neckline is also decorated with a breast cloth (*slihpá/boengeskuvmie*) and, in earlier times, by silver collars (*silbbaave*). Some old South Sami breast cloths (and a silver collar) also have decoration that is similar to the striped fabric on the chest flap and collar of the Skjoldehamn shirt. While the decorative function is very similar, the connection between the shirt decoration and these costume elements is an area that must be studied further. The shirt cut is otherwise about the same as the one from the Norwegian fisherman shirts, known from Norwegian folk costume tradition, and that is partially unknown in Sami fashion. The use of woven bands along the hem of the sleeves and breeches cannot be found in today's Sami tradition, but the similarity in effect between these and the colored broadcloth strips that are in the same places on the Sami costumes is interesting. It could mean that the woven bands were replaced by broadcloth strips at some point during Sami costume history. The kirtle decoration of rigid heddle woven striped bands on the bottom edge of today's Sami outfits (*lissto/laskah*) may be the last remnants of such a tradition. When it comes to the use of other decorations on the Skjoldehamn kirtle and the outfit in

general, there are parallels in the Sami costume material. Use of couching is not uncommon, but attaching braids seems to be somewhat less common. There should be a further study in which these traditions are investigated thoroughly, and it should also look at the embroidery techniques used on Sami suits compared with those used on the Skjoldehamn outfit. The Skjoldehamn breeches share similarities with Sami cloth breeches, but unfortunately the main cut of the breeches is so unclear that this cannot be compared. The decorative elements of Sami textile breeches seem to be far more sparse than on the Skjoldehamn breeches, but Sami leather breeches are, in turn, often richly decorated. The clearest relationship between the Skjoldehamn outfit and Sami costume is the belt, which is, in detail, similar to today's belt from the Lule and more southern Sami costumes. Therefore, it is remarkable that this fact is not mentioned in Gjessing's article. Both braided belts and belts with whipped ends and tassels are well documented in the Sami tradition, but the combination of braiding and whipping the ends is more unusual (at least in contemporary dress customs). The ends and the way they are whipped, in combination with the method of tying the belt, is so similar that it can not be a coincidence. A correlation exists also between the Skjoldehamn shoes made with sinew and Sami shoes, but this relationship is far less clear.

All in all, I think a Sami origin for the Skjoldehamn outfit should not be dismissed out of hand, and that there are very many similarities to Sami dress fashion that cannot be random. These similarities should be studied more closely than I have been able to do through literature, and I hope that I will have the opportunity to work on this. It is interesting that the similarities between the Skjoldehamn outfit and Sami costume seem to be greatest in the Lule and more southern Sami outfits. Today, Skjoldehamn is in what is described as the North Sami area. With its location facing the sea, it is also a Sea Sami area, where fishing has played a significant role in the basis of the economy, both for the Sami and for Norwegians. It is natural that such a Sea Sami culture differs somewhat from the Mountain Sami culture, including their costume traditions. Elements in the Sea Sami costume seems to bear more resemblance to the Lule and more southern Sami costume traditions, such as braided belts with tassels, than it does to the North Sami. How the boundaries of the various Sami cultural areas looked in the Late Viking Age, when the person buried at Skjoldehamn lived, I cannot say. Maybe there were more areas than today, maybe there were fewer. What is possible to say is that, if the buried person did belong to a Sami culture, he/she was probably from the Sea Sami culture, which probably differed from the inland culture then, as it does now.

## 4 Gender and social status

Gjessing was sure that the person was male, probably because Nordic women did not wear breeches in the Middle Ages. Therefore, he never discusses this question. Since he ruled out a Sami origin, he does not discuss if the outfit could have belonged to a Sami woman or Sami man. I agree with Gjessing that the person was probably a man if it were Norse, but using the breeches as a final argument for gender is, in my view, not a conclusion we can draw. Known archaeological finds and historical sources have shown a mix of gender roles and attributes, but other factors may have resulted in a woman being buried in a garment we consider today as a typical Norse male trait. If the person was Sami, the question is even less clear. There are no objects in the find that clearly can be linked to either a man or a woman, according to Sami costume tradition, where women could also wear breeches. In all the Sami regions, women's kirtles are longer than men's kirtles, but between regions kirtle length varies widely. In general, the North Sami kirtles are now shorter than the Lule and more southern Sami kirtles, for both men and women (Manker 1947:161). Compared with the Sami outfits of today, the Skjoldehamn kirtle would be a women's kirtle because it reaches down to between the knee and calf, but we know that male kirtles could stretch below the knees in the past (Drake 1979:169; Schefferus 1956:232). Leem writes that male and female kirtles of his time were so much alike that a man sometimes could go in his "wife's clothes", which he himself had seen (Leem 1956:88). If the Skjoldehamn kirtle is Sami, I believe, therefore, that one cannot determine gender based on its length.

The lack of a collar on the kirtle is now synonymous with a woman's kirtle. However, there are things that suggest that even some men's kirtles had no collar in the past (see Lilienskiold and Solberg 1942:205 and the discussion in Section 3.2.3.2), and it is difficult to say when the collar came into the Sami costume tradition. One must also keep in mind that the Skjoldehamn kirtle is 600 to 700 years older than the first good ethnological and archaeological sources about Sami outfits, so many changes in the Sami kirtle may have occurred, including the attributes that we today identify with either one or the other gender.

The anthropological studies have not been able to bring more certainty to the question. Holck concluded, as I have mentioned, that it was not a typical Norse male skeleton, and that it most likely was a Sami man (Holck 1988:115).

Sellevoid concluded that it might also be a Sami woman (Sellevoid 1987). That Holck did not also include a Sami woman as an option must be because he sees the outfit as one that characterized a man. As we have seen, there are no objects in the Skjoldehamn find that clearly can be linked to either one or the other gender in accordance with the Sami costume tradition, but Holck was probably not aware of this. In 1999, DNA analysis performed on the bones showed that they contained no Y-chromosomes, which all men have (Nockert and Possnert 2002:59). As previously explained, Anders Götherstrom (who was part of the investigations) believes today that a lot in genetic science has changed since 1999, and that the data they had access to then was not good enough to draw the conclusions they did with such certainty in respect to gender and ethnicity. The fact that they did not find Y-chromosomes could be caused by their method not being good enough to identify them in the small amount of DNA that was preserved (pers. medd.). The issue of gender is therefore unanswered for now, and probably new DNA testing is the only way to provide clarity in this.

Towards the end of the article, Gjessing concluded that the buried person must have been poor (Gjessing 1938a:71). While his explanation of the unique burial is the result of both his dating and his ethnic determination, this conclusion is the result of his dating alone. A sure sign of the shirt being from the Late Middle Ages was its stand-up collar, while traits of other parts of the outfit were from the High Medieval period and were outdated in the person's time. Therefore, the person must have been poor. As we have new dates-pointing to a late Viking-era origin, this conclusion must fall. Since Gjessing's article was published, there has also been further evidence that upper body garments could have a stand-up collar long before the late Middle Ages, as one of the upper body garments (BRM 31 / 2) from Guddal in Sogn og Fjordane had such a collar. This garment is dated to 1035 - 1165 AD (Vedeler 2007:84-86). With the new dates, there is nothing that indicates that this had been a poor person. The shirt was, however, heavily worn, but this would not have been visible under the kirtle. I do not agree with Gjessing's claim that the kirtle was the result of bad craftsmanship (Gjessing 1938a:20). My master's thesis showed that the asymmetrical composition of kirtle did not give the impression of a significantly

skewed garment (Løvlid 2009:161). The outfit, generally, with its rich decoration and the use of silver, does not fit the image of a poor man. Therefore, it is no longer evidence supporting Gjessing's claim.

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