Embroidered Panel – Lady Eleanor Hall

Cockatrice

November, A.S. 54

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Cockatrice Calendar AS 54 (2019-2020)

	Submission Deadline	Publication Date
Summer Edition	1st January 2020	1st February 2019
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Contact Us

Editor: Lady Gwen verch David
Email: editor@cockatrice.lochac.sca.org
Website: cockatrice.lochac.sca.org
Facebook: facebook.com/cockatriceoflochac

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From the Outgoing Editor

Greetings all,

This edition marks the end of my term as Cockatrice Editor, and I am delighted to say that it is a particularly diverse one. The authors in this issue range from those in their first year in the Society to those who have been part of our community for decades; the content ranges from poetry to recipe redactions to personal stories; and the topics covered range from Norse fishing to French poetry to Persian illumination to Japanese armour. I also had a wonderful response to my request for photos of works in progress, which you will see throughout the issue. Thank you to all of these wonderful contributors; you've made this edition something I can be very proud of.

The last two years of editing Cockatrice has been an education and a joy. As someone charged with celebrating and sharing the works of the artisans of Lochac, I've been exposed to the incredible range and depth of Arts & Sciences work in our kingdom, and every edition has inspired me.

If there is one lesson from this experience that I will carry with me from now on, it is that everyone has fascinating stories to tell. Often, when I've spoken to people about Cockatrice, they've commented that they would have nothing to contribute - but after asking them what they've been working on, I usually find myself learning about amazing projects and research. I hope not to lose the habit of asking that question, and I encourage you all to ask it as well.

My thanks go to Lord Bjorn Saemundarson, who is replacing me as editor. You might recognise his name from his contributions to the last three editions, or from his blog or podcast, where he shares his research and reconstruction of all things Norse. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Lady Madilayn le Mercer, who also applied for the role. Both were wonderful candidates, and I have no doubt that I am leaving Cockatrice in the best of hands.

Thank you all for making my time in this role a pleasure, as readers, contributors, or both. I hope you enjoy the edition, and I look forward to seeing what Cockatrice becomes.

Yours in Service,
Gwen verch David

From the Incoming Editor

Greetings,

Firstly, I just want to thank Lady Gwen verch David for her efforts during her tenure as Cockatrice editor. Her passion and dedication have seen Cockatrice reach new heights of quality and engagement. If you get a chance to thank her, do it!

Hoping to carry this good work forward, I've put together a small list of my goals as the incoming editor and things that I'm excited to share with you.

High on this list is to continue to foster and encourage submissions from the populace. If you're passionate about it and want to share it, I want to hear about it.

I intend to create a digital, searchable, blog-based version of each issue of Cockatrice going forward, starting with the next issue. This will be in addition to the regular PDF version, which will still be made available as it is now.

I'm excited about the Hordweard. The challenge, based around learning about life for a craftsperson from the Dark Ages, is designed to take a full year to complete, as it should encourage the participants to push beyond their current knowledge and skill levels to create something truly noteworthy.

My plan is to have a recurring feature in each issue of Cockatrice, detailing the progress of one or more of the artisans involved in the Hordweard. This will be followed by a bonus issue after Spring War 2020 detailing the progress and accomplishments of all of those taking place.

Another recurring segment of Cockatrice will be a featured article from an artisan or researcher from outside of Lochac. This will be in addition to the articles submitted from within Lochac, and won't be replacing any locally produced content.

Beyond this, I plan to host an A&S competition at Festival (more information to come in future issues), as well as travelling to various events with camera equipment to help everyone share their work.

So please, send in what you're working on. The A&S community in Lochac thrives on the work of people like you.

Yours in Service,
Bjorn Saemundarson

Kingdom Arts and Sciences Competition Results: Spring Crown

Beginners
Golden Bell - Nathan Randall ('Norse culture')

Intermediate
Golden Bell - Lady Dagny Sveinsdottir ('Norse culture')
Silver Bell - Lord Elwald Knudson ('Norse culture')

Experienced
Golden Bell - Lady Gwen verch David ('cheap and cheerful')
Silver Bell - Master William Blackwood ('wooden')

Upcoming Competition Themes

Twelfth Night Competition Season

- A container
- Stitched
- Eastern Europe

Autumn Crown Competition Season

- For the home
- Light
- The Silk Road

For further information about Lochac's Kingdom Arts & Sciences competitions, see http://artsandsciences.lochac.sca.org/competitions/

Embroidered coif – Mistress Fionnabhair inghean ui Mheadhra

The Sleeves of a Samurai

Shinjo Takame

(With thanks to Heather McGreal)

Like European medieval armour, Japanese medieval armour also includes garments made of padded cloth for underneath metal or leather sections. One of these sections is the *kote*, or sleeve. The *kote* is where the arm plates and mail (kusari) are mounted as well as the iconic square spaulders (sode) and were usually quite decorative, made of patterned silk. While the armour on the kote is quite pretty, it is hardly protective and certainly not list legal. So my motivation for making kote is not just to recreate authentic Japanese armour, but something with which to hide my more functional non-Japanese armour.

There are a number of variations in the design in the *kote* over Japanese history. Later *kote* only covered the arm and hand, they were attached to the breastplate (*do*), but earlier *kote* also covered the shoulder and chest and had to be donned before the breastplate. This bag-like sleeve is what gives it its name, the *fukuro-gote*[1], or 'bag sleeve'.

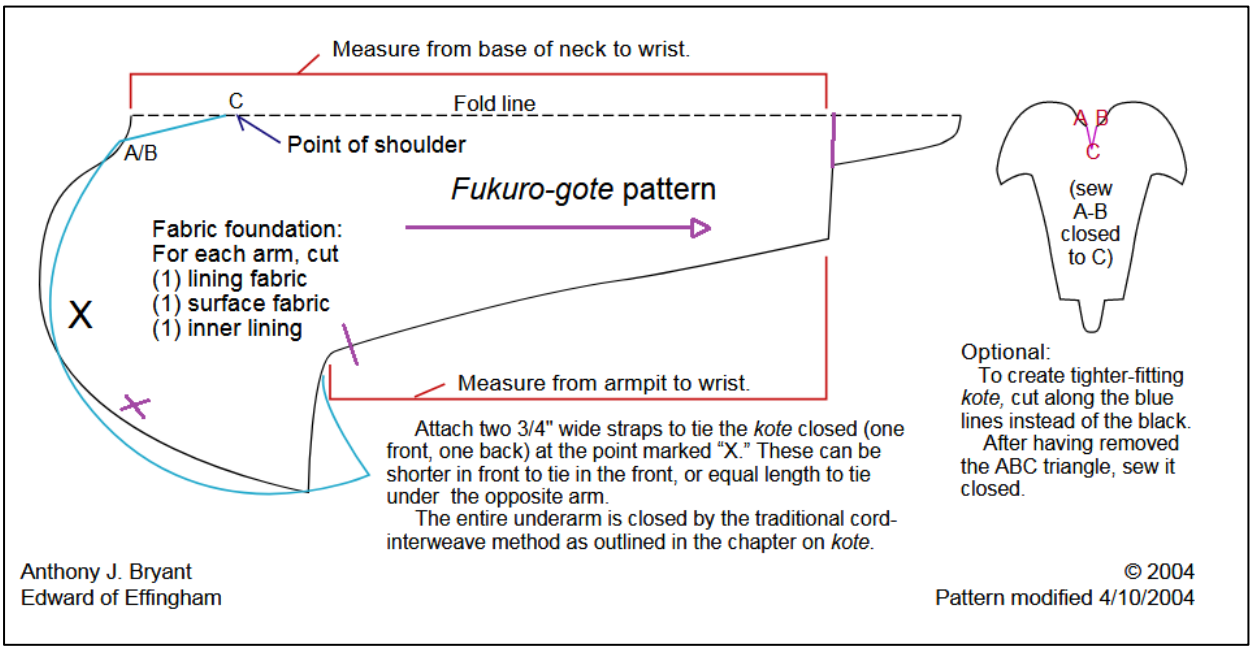
The *fukuro-gote* covers the entire arm, going up to the shoulder and then going down to the middle of the chest and back and then fastening with a strap that goes under the opposite arm to connect both halves. The underside of the sleeve is fully open, kept closed with lacing going up the entire arm to below the armpit. The sleeve also has a flap that partially covers the hand, this is covered by a glove and handplate.

The *fukuro-gote* is actually very similar to the Japanese archery sleeve, the *yugote,* and I have to admit I have used mine as an archery sleeve.

[1] Due to the nature of Japanese grammar, both *kote* and *gote* are used when referring to the sleeve.

Looking at the design

Many Japanese garments can be broken down into simple geometric shapes. It does not contour to the body as western clothing does, which means if you have your measurements and proportions correct it can be very easy to draft your own pattern. The *kote* is slightly more complex as it combines several shapes. The sleeve part is made up of two triangles but the opening which goes over the chest is part of a circle. With the help of a friend I was able to do some interesting measurements in order to come up with my own pattern.



And it was here that we discovered something very, very clever about the design: the way it uses the grain of fabric.

First a little context: grain refers to the direction of the threads in which fabric is woven on a loom. The long vertical threads, which form the strongest part of the fabric, are called the warp and are always parallel to the selvage. The horizontal threads which are woven perpendicular to the warp are called the weft. With the weft and the warp you get a third factor, the bias which goes diagonally across all fabric and is where all fabric will stretch.

With the *fukuro-gote*, what this means if it is cut right is that the bias of the fabric is where the most movement of the arm is, under the arm and in the shoulder. The bias also means that it stretches around the torso, making a tighter fit and stretch around the bust. This is how the *fukuro-gote* would have been cut in medieval times, to take full advantage of the bias stretch, and it is most ingenious.

Creating the *fukuro-gote*

To make the *fukuro-gote* to use in combat, I made a number of modifications, most of them for safety and comfort. Firstly I added more padding, giving two layers of cotton quilt batting to form the interior. This is more padding than the average samurai would have had; period *fukuro-gote* would have had only a layer or two of extra fabric as padding. The fabric I chose was cotton drill, which is both sturdy and cheap, and I decided to quilt it as I had done my gambeson to give added strength and durability. I have also incorporated steel eyelets for lacing rather than the period looped cord and edged it all in bias binding.

I also made changes to the design itself, opting to have an underarm seam rather than having the sleeve completely open ion one side, only lacing to the elbow. I discovered this to be a mistake as it was then impossible to access the armour on my arms if it happened to be dislodged, so I unpicked the seam to the arm pit and replaced it with laces. I also opted to have two cords to attach it to the underside of the opposite arm, as I noticed that due to my bust size it kept slipping off my shoulder. The opening also had a drawstring that I could tighten under my arm to get the fit even better.

Lastly, unlike period *fukuro-gote*, mine does not incorporate permanently mounted armour, nor will it ever. This is mainly practical as I not only want to use it for archery as a *yugote*, but I would like to be able to wash it once in a while.

All in all I am quite satisfied with my *fukuro-gote*. I like the design so much I cannot think why its use was all but discontinued from the 12th century. Perhaps something to do with the fact that the later ones you do not need to take your breastplate off in order to remove it. One surprise bonus of it was how the sleeve padded those areas where my armour would rub against my skin, which was nice. And even though I am a long way away from having my set of samurai armour, it is nice now to have parts that will be included in the final look.

Knife by Master Grim of Thornby

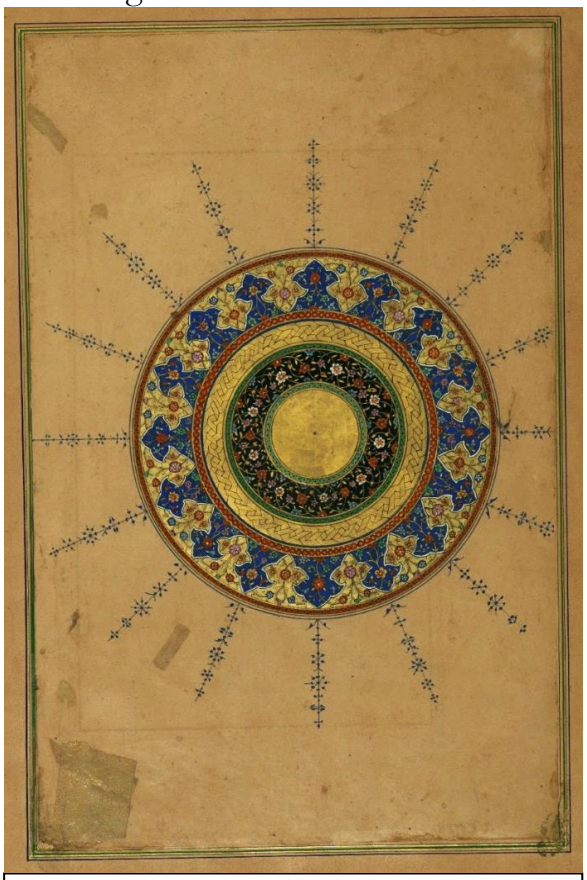
Persian Illumination

Lady Symonne de la Croix

The foundation of the art of illumination was laid before the advent of Islam in Turkish history. The first examples appeared with the transfer of figures and motifs the Uygur Turks had on wall paintings to book adornments. The background of the adornment was blue, white, gold gilt, purple, and light and dark green colours were also used in the illuminations. The main motifs were simple trees and spiral branches adorned with leaves.

During the time of the Seljuk Turks (13th & 14th centuries), the art moved from Central Asia to Asia Minor. Geometric designs were dominant during this period. Also established in this period was the tradition of palace adornment workshops, which continued during the Ottoman period. Perfect works of illumination were produced in adornment workshops set up during the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, in particular. The influence of Persian illumination artists was also seen during the period of Sultan Bayezid II (reigned 1481-1512).

After the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, the second strongest time for Ottoman art was the 16th century. Classical Turkish illumination began to appear during this period. Important advances were seen in art during the reign of Sultan Selim I. Going beyond book adornment, it began to be used extensively in weaving and ceramics. The art experienced its richest period during the age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (reigned 1520-1566). This was considered the Golden Age for Ottoman illumination.



Khamsa (quintet) of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi (725 AH/1325 CE) Walters MS. W.624, Five Poems.

Rich workmanship was seen in royal edicts and insignias as well as book covers, titles, heads of Qur'anic chapters and end pages: gold was used abundantly. Navy blue dominated illumination. Otraman artist Shah Kulu of Baghdad produced a new school with his 'Sazyolu' (reed) style which spread to other art branches and survived for many centuries.

The best Ottoman illumination was heavily concentrated in Istanbul. Hundreds of imperial artistic societies, called Ahl'u Hiraf

(the 'Community of the Talented'), were administered under the royal family's patronage at the Topkapi Palace.

The adornment workshops (naqqashhanas) functioned as an academy. The masters who oversaw them were called 'bash naqqash' (head artist). Male illumination artists are called 'mudhahhib' and female illumination artists are called 'mudhahhiba', while a work adorned with illumination is referred to as a 'mudhahhab'.[2]

Order of Work

1. Design is transferred (desen silkeme) to 'laid paper' (muraqqa) - a special paperboard of 3-4 'engrained' (dyed) handmade paper layers that have been glued together in a specific technique, then sized (surface treated). Watercolour paper can be used dyed with natural pigment (i.e. tea, coffee, walnut shells). Paper is then smoothed by burnishing, then a size (e.g. egg white) is used. Then paper is burnished again when dry.

2. Design is then inked so as not to be lost whilst painting. I used handmade walnut ink with a dip pen.

3. Shell gold is used to paint vine and leaves etc, which is then burnished. Alternatively artists' quality gouache, mica products like Finetec, or gold ink can be used.

4. 'Ornamental' lines are inked in black around gold work. I used Iron Gall ink but modern waterproof equivalents can be used.

5. Paint base colours for flowers.
6. Paint background colours - usually dark blue, green, burgundy or red. Sometimes white

7. Flowers are then toned in a 'degrade style', usually with three tones from each colour painted, working from lightest to darkest by decreasing the shape of flower with each paint line. Use pure colour as highlight.

8. Paint around outline of design following the basic shape.

9. Needlepoint designs (tighs) on outer edge. Fine sharp design lines extending outwards completed the design.

[2] Sema Onat, *Islamic Art of Illumination*.

Decorated biscuits with officers' heraldry, made for an officers appreciation dinner in Dragons Bay.

(Inspired by decorated biscuits created by Master Drake Morgan, as shown in the previous edition.)

– Mistress Sláine inghean Uí Ruadháin

On Thumb Rings for Asiatic Recurve Bows

THL Luan an Fael

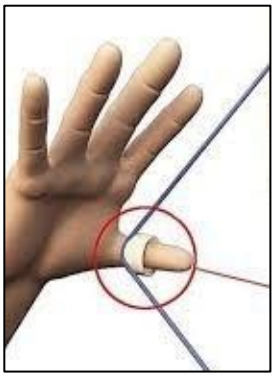
This is an article on the use of thumb rings, in particular the use of thumb rings with an Asiatic recurve bow. I'm not going to go into great detail, as there are a lot of books out there that cover this topic with a great deal of expertise and detail. http://thumbringarcher.org/ is a resource I recommend for anyone with more than a passing interest in this topic. Instead, this article is rather a brief introduction to them and some lessons learned from my own journey with this style.

What Are Thumb Rings?

Wikipedia helpfully describes them as:

> "A thumb ring is a piece of equipment designed to protect the thumb during archery. This is a ring of leather, stone, horn, wood, bone, antler, ivory, metal, ceramics, plastic, or glass which fits over the end of the thumb, coming to rest at the outer edge of the outer joint. Typically a flat area extends from the ring to protect the pad of the thumb from the bowstring; this may be supplemented by a leather extension."[3]

There are two main types of thumb ring; for ease I will call them the lip type and the groove type.



The lip type includes the Turkish and Chinese rings and has the string resting on the lip of the thumb ring against the thumb (see right).

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thumb_ring

The groove type has a groove or a channel where the string rests so as not to make contact with the flesh of the thumb at all. These rings include some of the most ancient thumb rings as well as a range of South East Asian rings and many of the leather thumb rings made today. (It is worth noting here that whilst frequently referenced in period manuals and literature, no extant period leather thumb rings have survived that this author is aware of.)

Within these types there is a huge variation, including some so ornately bejewelled as to be mostly useless as an actual archers ring. These were often symbols of status and wealth, and in both Chinese and Ottoman courts were given and worn as much-prized gifts among the nobility.

Who Used Them?

Thumb rings date back to the Neolithic period and have been used throughout Asia and Eastern Europe. Some of the earliest surviving thumb rings come from China, where one was found in the tomb of Fu Hao, the powerful consort of the fourth king of the Shang dynasty (1250 B.C.). They were famously used by the Mongols and the Ottoman Turks as well as in most of the areas these peoples conquered.

My Journey

I began using a thumb ring seriously in 2016 after nearly thirty years of mastering the Hungarian Draw style of archery. My interest had shifted towards the Turkish style of bow and it seemed only right to use a release appropriate to my tools.

Choosing a Thumb Ring

I experimented with a variety of thumb ring styles and continue to do so, seeking the right combination of technique and tool to suit my personal preferences and the bows I am using.

It is important to understand each style of thumb ring (and there are many) has its own unique draw and release and some are better suited than others to a particular equipment set or style of archery. Only trial and error will teach you what the right one is for you.

A simple leather thumbring found on Aliexpress or similar sites for less than $5 will suffice to begin the journey. These are usually 'groove type' thumb rings where there is a groove or indent on the ring where the bowstring sits. This style is easier to

learn with, and whilst it has its own limitations is easier on the hands than other types of ring for beginners. From here an archer can do a little research and decide what ring they want to settle on, and then obtaining one is either a matter of constructing your own or purchasing one from a supplier.

If you do decide you want to make your own, or take a look at the different types then I recommend Vahe Zartarian's online resource https://www.co-creation.net/labo/archerie_doc/asian_archery_manual.pdf as a most excellent place to begin.

It is important when ordering your thumbring to make sure you get one that fits. Most retailers will have a sizing chart you can use and please do so, proper fir is important for your comfort and safety. Bone and horn rings can be resized with a little work and a piece of sandpaper so ordering slightly too small is not an issue. Metal or stone rings are harder to adjust and often a slightly larger ring with a leather insert is the way to go.

Learning to Use a Thumb Ring

When you do first begin to learn the thumb ring, expect to miss – a lot!

If you have been using the traditional European/English archery method (2-3 fingers, arrow on the left of the bow) then thumb ring archery will frustrate, annoy, challenge and thrill you in equal measures. It took me a good thousand arrows before I could reliably hit anything more than the ground (and even then, I relied heavily on gravity).

Unlearning old habits is almost as much part of the journey as learning the new. The basics such as footwork, breathing and focus remain the same, but your draw, release, aim, and anchor point all change with the new style and can even change quite a bit from bow to bow.

From this point onwards, practice, research and more practice are your pathway to success. If you can find a master or an experienced thumb ring archer, then expert feedback can really help to speed your journey. Videoing your shooting and watching your own mistakes is another good technique to master if somewhat confronting at first. Remember you are a beginner in this style and don't judge yourself too harshly.

There is no shortage of resources or advice available online and in fact this can lead to information overload. My best advice here is to find a manual and stick to it: if you find it is not working for you after 10,000 arrows or so, then go and try something else, but expect learning a new skill like using the thumbring to take a lot of practice to get right.

A note here for those interested in Japanese archery: modern Kyudo is a martial art dating back to the Meiji era (19th Century) which sadly bought about the sharp decline of the traditional Kyujutsu. If using Kyudo in the context of the SCA it is important to remember it is not a period technique and there are very few extant documents showing us how traditional Japanese archery was practiced. You can find some information, and with diligence you can work out how to replicate traditional Japanese technique and I greatly encourage anyone with the determination and desire to go down this fascinating path.

Lessons Learned

It's a lot of fun learning a new skill. If you are one of your group's more reliable archers it can be a lot of fun for everyone else as well as you struggle to hit the target, let alone the gold. Don't stop entering in competitions, just don't expect to do as well as you are used to for a few months – personally I dropped thirty points off my previous royal round scores for the first two years whilst I was learning.

Don't overthink: thumbring archery is very instinctual, and it's much better to build a solid reflexive release action than to focus on getting every little aspect right. There's all the time in the world to fine tune your action once you get the basics going right for you.

The important things to get right are your anchor point and release – focus on getting these two working and reliable as a first priority. This can mean dropping down to a lower poundage bow until your technique is sorted. This is not a step backwards, it is a necessary step to let you focus on your form and not battling a heavy bow at the same time.
Some people will say that thumb ring archery is not suited to high poundage bows. This is utter rubbish, a fact borne out by the massive draw weight of some of the period bows that have been found in parts of the Middle East and Asia. Some Chinese bows were known to have draw weights of over 130lb and one bow was reported as being almost 240lb in draw weight! [4] However, your thumb will take some time to train, so start small and work your way up.

As you read and learn you will hear a lot about the importance of the Khatra – I'm not going to go into it here as it is worthy of an article all on its own. Just be aware lots of people will tell you about it, everyone says you need to get it right, but to begin with my advice is: ignore it! You can fine tune the nice-to-haves one you have mastered the basics.

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[4] Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 179-180.
Peter Dekker, *A Practical Guide To Manchu Military Archery*
Journal of Chinese Martial Studies, Winter 2012. Issue 6. Three-In-One Press, Hong Kong. 2012

Conclusions

If you shoot an Asiatic style bow you really should give thumb draw a go. It's fun, it's traditional, and it can be learned without any major costs for new equipment or specialist kit.[5]

Thumb draw looks authentic and lets you get the most out of your archery re-enactment by striving to use the kit in way its original practitioners did.

It is a challenge, it can be confusing. and occasionally you will struggle for form or to decide on what you want to do from the plethora of choices you will encounter. Choose something you like the look of, or feel of, and go for it!

Floor cloth in the style of the encaustic tiles from Winchester Cathedral: a work in progress – Mistress Anne de Tournai

[5] New bows, quivers, arrows and costume notwithstanding - learning new stuff can come with the desire to buy prettier new stuff as you go along.

Sestina, after Arnaut Daniel

(Written for William Marshal, AS LIV)

Master Dafydd of the Glens

Now walks by dark the hungry wolf.
And I, born outside the Purple,
In a drear, misfortunate month
In tides of grey I seek my vixen.
Lack pinches me of gold and silver.
I wander down Provence's breadth

And Lord and Lady wrapped in purple
Grant me coppers without silver.
I sit with servants, and hear the wolf
Scouring the nightshade forest's breadth;
Smell the red-white hunting vixen.
February's the harshest month.

Sorrow to joy but a nail's breadth,
Yet I, a prowling sad-eyed wolf
Longed for love and a dark-eyed vixen
Fainting there from month to month
Among the gardens gold and purple
I sang and played, and dreamed of silver

And prospered there, but found no vixen:
No dark-eyed lover, month by month,
Never sweetened moon of silver
To clothe my nights in gold and purple,
Not in Toulouse, nor Guienne's breadth
To ease the drouth of fainting wolf.

At last came June, the sweetest month.
In flowers I forgot my vixen.
I sang and laughed in my heart's breadth.
I spun my words of gold and silver;
Banished from my heart's court the wolf;
Put on my robe of sweetened purple.

I found a lady, clothed in silver,
With open robe to its utmost breadth.
She smiled and gave a plum full purple.
Said she: come here, and be my wolf!
That was no misfortunate month.
In truth she proved a cunning vixen.

A wolf may court with gold and silver;
but hungry month shall find no vixen.
Only breadth of joy brings purple.

Background

Arnaut Daniel was a *trobador* during the reign of Henry II. He was called the Master of Love (by Petrarch, no less), but came of poor family in Perigord. When he met Bertran de Born (his more famous contemporary) he was a *joglar*, a performer rather than a composer. He met Bertran at the court of Richard Coeur de Lion (known locally as Richart Oc-et-Non – 'Richard Yes and No') and became famous there. His

works are intricate, hard to comprehend, and filled with strange rhyme schemes. One of his inventions was the sestina: a series of six verses of six lines each, with a concluding three-line envoi. Six key-words end each line, in a different order in each verse, and all six must be used in the envoi.

Arnaut's sestina was known as the *Song of Fingernail and Uncle,*[6] and his six key-words were all disyllables in Occitan which have no rhymes. In this homage I am writing in modern English rather than Arnaut's Occitan, but I have chosen six words in English with no known rhymes. These are: vixen, silver, purple, month, wolf, and breadth. The standard line in Occitan poetry contained eight syllables, and so I have also employed this; even though Arnaut expands the line length in his sestina.

The first troubadour was Eleanor of Aquitaine's grandfather Guilhesm IX. Many others were also aristocrats, socially far above the more humble joglars who performed their work. And many were women; notably the Countess of Dia. The poetry of the troubadours (as the French called them) is not at all like what the 20th century imagination conceived it to be. The Northern French had some very odd ideas about romantic love (it appears they had difficulty distinguishing between a girl and tract of land), but it wasn't like that in the more civilized South. Occitan poetry tends to be far more racy, bordering on X-rated, but fiercely intellectual and extraordinarily intricate. Like so much else in the South, the trobadors did not survive the Albigensian Crusade, of which the less said the better. Having destroyed the culture of Occitania, the Northern French decided to reinvent Courtly Love themselves and wilfully misconstrue it. (Then again, what else would we expect of a bunch of Normans?)

Arnaut was greatly admired by Ezra Pound, who borrowed a number of his ideas and themes for his Cantos. The extent to which Pound understood anything of what he read there is…contested.

[6] The original (with English translation) may be found at http://www.trobar.org/troubadours/arnaut_daniel/arnaut_daniel_09.php.
To find decent translations of this poetic oeuvre is very difficult. Long ago, Firiel of the Green Wood (mundanely known as the author Kerry Greenwood) made many translations of Bernat de Ventadorn, Bertran de Born, the Countess of Dia and others.

Photos of Italian Ceramics Painting

Baroness Madelaine de Bourgogne, OL, OP

In the beginning of October I went to Italy, to refine my ceramics painting skills and learn a few things about Renaissance ceramics in Italy. I attended a school where the students are required to choose an example by the Maestro and copy it. This pic is one of the four that I did during that week. Unfortunately the piece is typical of the interpretations of the Ren style which was common during the Arts & Crafts movement.

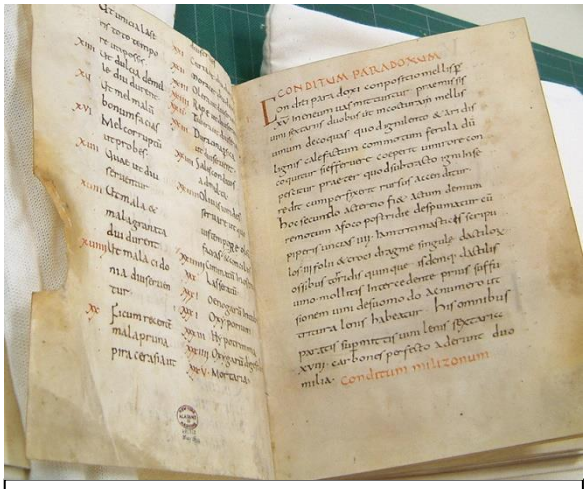
The place where I stayed was a Medieval town, Deruta, where pottery has been made since Etruscan times. The techniques and motifs used in Deruta are handed down from the potters of the Renaissance.

Redaction of 'In Ovis Apalis': Eggs from Apicius

Mistress Sláine inghean Ui Ruádhain

The Source: Apicius

There is much speculation as to the author or origins of Apicius. It is thought that the works originated in the late 4th or early 5th century in Rome as a collection of recipes. The earliest printed version is titled 'De re Coquinari' ('On the Subject of Cookery').



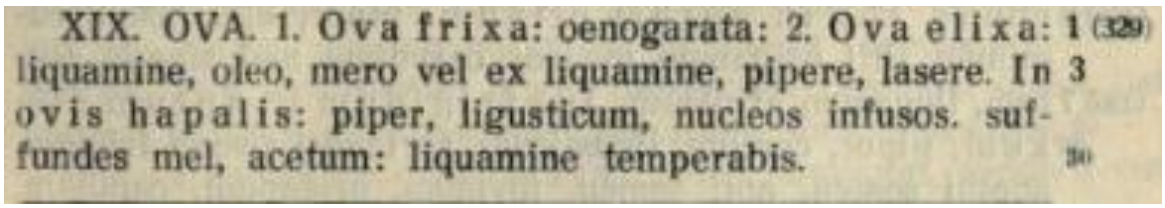
The Apicius manuscript of the monastery of Fluda in Germany

The text is organised into ten books:

1. *Epimeles* — The Careful Housekeeper
2. *Sarcoptes* — The Meat Mincer, Ground-beef
3. *Cepuros* — The Gardener, Vegetables
4. *Pandecter* — Many Ingredients
5. *Ospreon* — Pulse, Legumes
6. *Aeropetes* — Birds, Poultry
7. *Polyteles* — The Gourmet
8. *Tetrapus* — The Quadruped, Four-legged animals
9. *Thalassa* — The Sea, Sea-food
10. *Halieus* — The Fisherman

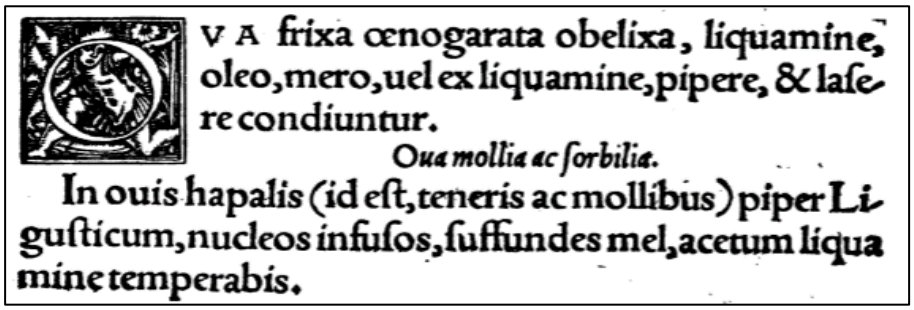
"In Ouis Apalis" is the last recipe in book Seven - Polyteles. Below are extracts from secondary sources.

Giarratano-Vollimer Edition



XIX. OVA. 1. Ova frixa: oenogarata: 2. Ova elixa: 1 (329)
liquamine, oleo, mero vel ex liquamine, pipere, lasere. In 3
ovis hapalis: piper, ligusticum, nucleos infusos. suf-
fundes mel, acetum: liquamine temperabis. 30

Basel Lyon – Torinus Edition


VA frixa œnogarata obelixa, liquamine, oleo, mero, uel ex liquamine, pipere, & laſere condiuntur.

Oua mollia ac ſorbilia.

In ouis hapalis (id eſt, teneris ac mollibus) piper Liguſticum, nucleos infuſos, ſuffundes mel, acetum liquamine temperabis.

Vehling Translation, p.180

[328] WITH POACHED EGGS *IN OVIS HAPALIS*
SERVE PEPPER, LOVAGE, SOAKED NUTS, HONEY, VINEGAR AND BROTH.

Grocock Grainger Translation, p.259 (G&G)

7.17.3 Sauce for soft boiled eggs: Pepper, lovage, soaked pine nuts; pour on honey, vinegar – flavour with liquamen.

The Eggs

Considering the Ancient Romans ate a wide variety of fowl we cannot assume that the egg is a chicken egg. However there is documentation that the Romans had domesticated chickens:

> "Book Fourteen, 11. Making hens produce large eggs...You will make hens produce large eggs if you crush Laconian pots, mix the powder with bran, moisten it with wine and give it to them or mix a saucer of crushed pot with two choinikes of bran and give as food. Some who want large eggs to be produced crumble up red earth and mix it with their food." ---Geoponika [Farm Work], a modern translation of the Roman and Byzantine Farming Handbook by Andrew Dalby (p. 288)

Cato, Varro, Columella, and Pliny also reference domesticated chickens in their manuscripts. Chickens only lay part of the year, usually in spring; in modern times we manipulate this with lighting and air-conditioning for year-round production. These texts also suggest that chickens did not lay in large quantities and could explain why they appear in the 'Luxury Dishes' section of Apicus.

There are references that show Ancient Romans kept ducks and other egg laying birds such as geese and quail; they certainly ate them as there are many fowl recipes

in Apicius. However there are not many references to the eggs of domesticated duck, geese or quail – the lack of availability of these eggs could also contribute to the recipe occurring in the gourmet section of the book.

The Vehling translation states 'poached egg' and the G&G translates to 'a sauce for soft boiled eggs'. I tend to lean toward the G&G translation as being the more accurate.

This recipe was originally researched for a feast. I elected to use chicken eggs as other varieties are expensive in large quantities. Chicken eggs are also a lot easier to boil in large quantities than they are to poach; however I chose to hard boil the eggs as I needed to prepare these in the morning of the feast and hardboiled eggs keep better.

The Nuts

The Vehling translation just states 'nuts' whereas the Grocock and Grainger translation specifies 'pine nuts' – the word in the Latin text *nucleos* translates as kernels (I think). It is interesting that G&G state that it is a pine nut considering their detailed explanation on pg 352 around the words used in Apicius that are used to describe specific nuts and nuts in general. They state that the word *nuces* is used for nuts generally, and then say that Latin does not seem to have a clear word just for nuts.

G&G list specific names that appear throughout Apicius, including *iulandes* (walnuts), *glandes* (acorns), *amygdale* (almonds), *pontica* (hazelnuts), *nucleos pineos/pineos* (pine nuts), yet the word *pineos* is not present in any form in this recipe. They speculate in regards to the word *nuces* that "it is quite possible that the cooks actually intended the term be ambiguous and dependant on what was available" (p. 353). Yet *nuces* is not the word used in the recipe.

The word *nucleos* appears on its own in several other recipes which they have translated as 'pine nut'. Vehling is quite consistent with his translation of this word as 'nuts' throughout his book – for example the Lucanian sausage in Vehling uses 'nuts', while G&G uses pine nuts. In the recipe above Lucanian sausage (*Botellum),* the Latin text is *'nucleis pineis',* which both versions translate as pine nuts. I am not a Latin scholar, or likely to be any time soon, but I love pine nuts and I think they go well with honey.

The Sauce

There is no indication as to what the pine nuts were to be soaked in. It is likely that they were soaked in water to help make the end result more of a sauce; a higher liquid content would create a smoother sauce, especially considering this was likely completed in a mortar and pestle like the ones which have been found in the ruins of Pompeii.[7]

Marble mortar (OA 1861 Mortier) and granite pestle (OA 1862 Pilon) from Pompeii.

I found reference to the ancient Romans making vinegar from wine, dates, figs, and other fruits. As I had apple cider vinegar left over from a previous feast I used this.

I really like the sweet/sour taste of vinegar and honey so I thought I would try soaking the nuts in the vinegar. In the first trial I soaked the nuts overnight. I really did not like the resulting flavour of the sauce – it had a very strong vinegar taste which completely overwhelmed all other flavours.

The next trial I covered just covered the nuts in vinegar and left it to soak for an hour. I was quite surprised at how much of the liquid disappeared in this short space of time.

From a purely aesthetic point of view I think fresh lovage was used, as the crisp green colour of the herb would have been more luxurious than dried lovage. Unfortunately I only had a large enough quantity of dried for the feast. (Later research suggested that the lovage seed was used rather than the leaves.)

[7] See https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R6/6%2009%2001%20p6.htm for further pictures and information.

For the trials at home I used Wescobee honey from bush trees because that what was in the cupboard. For the feast I used a cheap Coles brand. The cheap honey just tasted sweet and didn't add anything to the flavour, whilst the better-quality honey added quite a different depth to the flavour. I would use a better-quality honey if I were to do this again.

At this point all the ingredients – including Liquamen that I had made - were added to a food processor and blended. I used whole peppercorns so there were flecks of black through the sauce. When I blended the ingredients it made more of a paste than a sauce so I added water for a smoother consistency that maintained its shape when dolloped so it did not run down the side of the eggs for serving purposes. These were served with the first remove. It is possible that the nuts were soaked in water and the vinegar used to thin the sauce.

In my version of this recipe below I used an alternative to Liquamen suggested by Sally Grainger in *Cooking Apicius* (p. 29) of mixing an oyster-type fish sauce with reduced grape juice and some oregeno, as I no longer have the sauce I made for the feast and research since then suggests it was very far from accurate.

Final Redaction

- Medium to hard boiled eggs
- 3 tablespoons of honey
- 1 cup of pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons of oyster sauce & 1 of fish sauce
- 2 tablespoons of lovage
- 2 tablespoons of black pepper
- Fresh lovage

Blend the pine nuts and honey in a blender until almost smooth. I played with the spicing so I recommend not to add all the spices at once; add a bit at a time until you are happy with the flavour.

Growing flax for a Lochac Herb & Garden Guild display

(The flax is a Japanese cultivar used for linen production, not edible seeds)

– THL Phillip vom Kalenberg

Fishing in Viking Age Hedeby

Lord Bjorn Saemundarson

About Hedeby (or Haithabu)

The Viking trading town of Hedeby (Old Norse: Heiðabýr) flourished between the 8th and 11th century and was an important trading settlement at the southern end of the Jutland Peninsular between modern-day Denmark and Germany.

The settlement developed as a trading centre at the head of a narrow, navigable inlet known as the Schlei, which connects to the Baltic Sea. Hedeby was the second largest Nordic town during the Viking Age, after Uppåkra in present-day southern Sweden.

Hedeby was abandoned after its destruction in 1066 and was rediscovered in the late 19th century, with excavations commencing in 1900.

Fishing Methods

Only a relatively small amount of the estimated quantity of equipment used in fishing has been recovered. This is due to the fact that by its nature, fishing equipment is typically lost underwater, where it is embedded in the mushy sediment.

It's believed that fishing was usually carried out in dug-out canoes, of which two have been recovered, and by small boats, which appear to be in a number of small burrows in the find. Research into the type and size of these seemingly clinker built boats is not yet complete.

Coarse nets made of three-stranded bast cords – made with a special weaving technique – would not have been suitable for use underwater. However, to what extent they were used in special traps or rough fish traps – comparable to the "herring fences" erected in the Schlei at later times – would just be speculation.

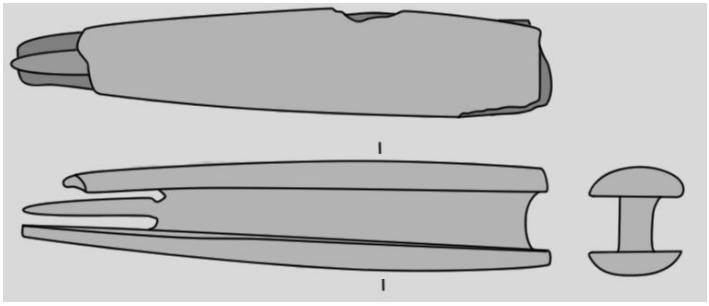
Spearfishing and angling was known to have been carried out to some extent.

The use of ice fishing was also very likely. After a period of frost, the Schlei offers good conditions for this. Nets can be pushed under the ice's surface (in a method

also traditionally practiced by the Inuit), and individuals could also fish through holes in the ice.

Nets

In addition to objects that can be used as floaters or sinkers for gillnets, there is a small net needle hinting at the presence of fine nets.



The Production of Nets

There doesn't seem to be a completely uniform or standardised size of method for creating nets. The range of finds varies from fine two-ply strings (diameter 4-5 mm), to three-, four- and six-ply ropes (diameter 6-70 mm) to a twine twisted together from twelve smaller fibre ropes (diameter 100 mm). There are numerous methods of knotting and spliced strands, including tarred knots, recorded.

Excavation layers have regularly shown results in all areas of scraps and ropes, for a total of 291 objects. Most of the objects were designated as oak bast (247), others as linden (38) and willow bast (3). In addition to this, cord and rope made of blades of grass, split branches and straw have also been recovered.

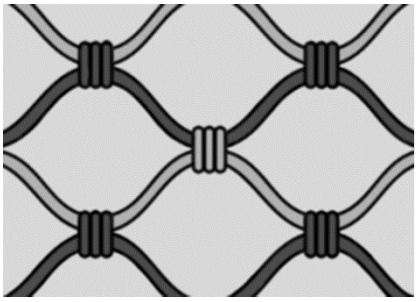
The tools and equipment required for local production are particularly scarce, with the netting needle being one of the only recovered examples. A flax beater was also recovered. It could be argued that the large amount of rope recovered is proof of local production, however the ships themselves would require a significant amount of rope to operate.

It has been speculated that the considerable demand could not have been covered without importation from surrounding areas. The large quantities of bark material required for production likely led to the destruction of all nearby resources. Moreover, the tedious manufacturing process – comparable in time to the spinning of wool and flax – would have required significant man-hours.

The process ranged from debarking the straight young wood, to separating the paper-thin fibres. The dried bast was then put together between the fingers or on the knuckle and rolled into a string – comparable to the thread during spinning. Strands of varying thickness had to be spun around each other in the subsequent roping, so that elastic and tear-resistant cordage was created.

One unique example of a coarse-meshed net was recovered, which was made of 3-ply bast string of about 6 mm in diameter. When the net was stretched, the holes were a largely uniform 9 cm; possibly an indication that a tool called a meschenholz (essentially a piece of dowel used for spacing the joins of a net) was used during production.

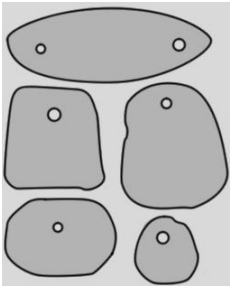
The feature of this net that got it a lot of notice was that it was created by placing two 3-ply strings at equal distances from each other, using one of the strands to wrap around the second string, and then returning and continuing in its original string. This method, referred to as the 'Haithabu technique', gave the material strength by bonding the strings together.



It's thought that the use of such nets for traditional net fishing can be excluded; instead, they were likely used for trapping nets, hunting, or transportation. If used in transportation, their purpose may have been used for storing goods and securing them for sea travel. This may be a cool alternative to having 20 6-board chests around the campsite or less period baskets, especially for storing bedding and soft kit at site.

Net Floats and Sinkers

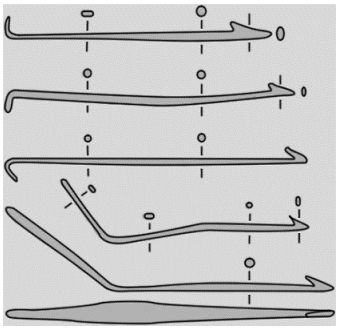
While the 'Haithabu technique' likely wasn't used for fishing, there is significant evidence that nets were used for fishing.



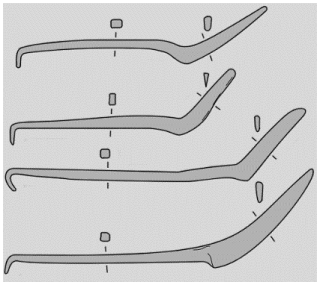
Sinkers made of soapstone and other heavy materials have been found in significant numbers at Hedeby (right). One really notable object is a sinker made with a stone held by birch bark in a hoop of split rod (see below).

Floats seemed to primarily be made from rolled birch bark. It is believed that these rolled floats spanned the length of the top of the fishing net, holding it upright in the water, while the sinkers held the bottom of the net to the harbour floor.

Spears



Spearing of fish wasn't uncommon; prongs of fish spears or forks prove this. It has been speculated that, in addition to the pronged spears, spears may have been made from sharpened branches. The spear prongs that we do have were predominantly salvaged from the harbour.

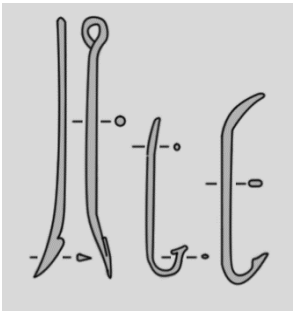


Also found were specially shaped iron prongs, with a sharpness in the bow-shaped area. They are referred to as Aalstecher (English: eel spear). It's believed that two such arms were mounted on a pole – with this device, eels were skewered while hibernating in the mud during winter.

While not specifically from Hedeby, the below well-preserved 3-pronged fishing spear from 6th Century Norway provides a good visual of how the prongs would have been mounted to a spear.

Angling

Angling was carried out in Viking Age Hedeby, as many finds of hooks in the style used for angling suggest. It's believed that fishermen would paddle out into the harbor in small canoes and drop lines over the side.



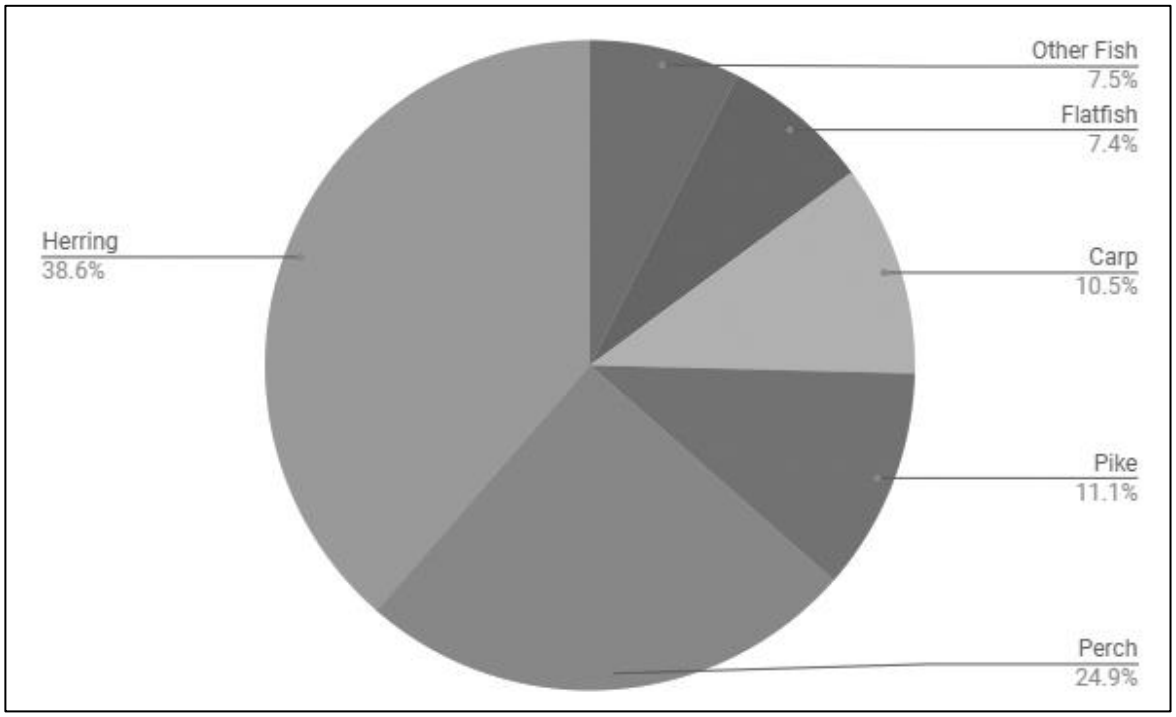
The hooks themselves would be recognisable to a modern fisherman – their function of a loop in one end to feed a line through, and a pointed section to feed bait on and to hook the fish has not changed much in the last 1000 years.

Distribution of Fish

Below are the most notable fish species proven to have existed in large numbers, in the harbour at Hedeby. From a living history perspective, it would be fantastic to try and base a menu around these species, using their distribution (pie chart below) as a loose guide for how much of each species to incorporate.

Saltwater Fish	Freshwater Fish	Migratory Fish
Herring	Perch	Whitefish
Flatfish (Flounder)	Pike	Trout
Garfish	Carp (Common Roach)	Eel
Cod	Zander (Pike-Perch)	

As these fish were available, we have a better idea of what is likely to have been consumed. If using the list to plan a menu, consider factoring in seasonal differences – for instance, eels were more likely to have been consumed in the winter when they were easier to catch.

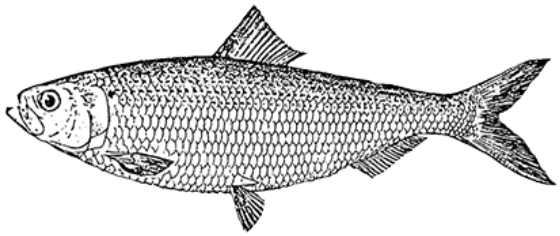


While the above data gives us a good starting point for interpretation, it's very difficult to get an idea of what was actually being consumed as food in period. Although fish skeletons have been found in massive quantities (as would be expected for a harbour so rich with life), the quantities cannot be directly translated to knowledge of how much of each species was being consumed. In order to do this,

you'd need to differentiate between natural deaths and fish that had been harvested. This is a difficult thing to do in layers of sediment in an underwater harbour.

The sediment itself is extremely difficult to work with. Even if every fish skeleton in the harbour was to be interpreted as a by-product of food, researchers are still unable to separate the mud from the fish remains. The remains are embedded in a mushy medium which remained in a constant state of flux for a long time due to water movement.

Land-dwelling animal bones found have largely been interpreted to have been dumped as food waste from humans passing above the water in boats.



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