



HIBERN ð N ð RSE ð WIRRAL

wrap around coats

We are very limited in our knowledge of Viking age clothing. Our understanding relies on textile fragments, burials, written descriptions and archaeological finds.

Clothing & textiles are rarely preserved, especially in the acidic soils of Scandinavia. When fragments do survive they are in exceptional conditions for preservation lie waterlogged burials or sealed graves.

Two of the most important sites are Birka, the trading centre with numerous finds and the Osberg Ship, whose burial good included woven textiles and clothing fragments. Hebedy also has a wrap coat find the Haithabu Kaftan.

The wrap around coat (or warrior's coat) may have had its origins with the Eurasian horse-riding nomads like Huns and Avars finding its way west during the migration period & early middle Ages. They could have also been a cross over from saxon wrap coats with vikings adapting a shorter version.

The Vikings and Rus adopted this type of coat featuring overlapping front flaps closed with a belt. Finds also included a sleeveless version.

The 7th century Sutton Hoo and Valsgärde helmets show depictions of wrap coats. Fragments of these coats were also found at the Viking Age site of Hedeby on the Jutland peninsula.

Worn with a tunic and sometimes baggy trousers the motifs on surviving helmets suggests it might have been work in everyday life as well as battle.