

Story of the Site

Material / Immaterial Heritage Framework

Foteviken

Langmanshuset (House of the Juror)

Inventory Number 12a

Name of the reconstruction **Langmanshuset (House of the Juror)**

Photos





Our replica of Suntaks chair can be seen in this picture, also part of the Oseberg bed.



Copyright: Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway
©2010, A. Reconstructed bed (copy) from Oseberg ship burial, Tonsberg, Vestfold, Norway
Period: Viking Age
Photographer: Ketan & Knopstad

The actual Oseberg bed, not our reconstruction.



The actual Suntaks chair, not our replica.

Description of the reconstruction

“A country must be built up by law”. These words were spoken by the Danish king Valdemar the Victorious in 1241.

The role as a Lawspeaker was an important one during the age of vikings. It was a high status role and it was an oral tradition. The Lawspeaker had to be able to recite the specific laws regarding various infractions from memory and he would have to be able to do so at the Thing (governmental gathering). This was based on common Germanic oral traditions.

A Lawspeaker was appointed for life by the farmers in their province, almost always from one of their own with strong oral skills and a good memory, but also from one of the more powerful families. The more exact guidelines varied from province to province. For instance in Westgothic law the father of the new Lawspeaker had to be a landowner.

After the age of Vikings it became common that the Lawspeaker was attached to the King's entourage and/or family and eventually the right to elect a Lawspeaker passed entirely to the king.

First a few words about the museum itself. Foteviken is a reimagining of a viking village. It is not based, nor placed, at archeological finds, like for instance The Iron Age Farm in Stavanger, Norway, where they've built up the houses exactly where they found holes after beams for the houses. We've taken inspiration from, among many other, Sigtuna (Sweden), Bergen (Norway), and Tingstädetträsket (Sweden). The idea behind this specific construction was to build a house fit for a high-status person in the village, namely the lawspeaker.

This house also has the “temporary” silversmithy. A small smithy suitable for casting and forging of more malleable metals, like silver, bronze and gold. Our silversmith also does a first-person interpretation. The previous silversmith embezzled from the king, that's why the current silversmithy is located in the house of the juror so the lawspeaker can keep an eye on him. The current silversmith is dissatisfied with his payment of three herring, he wants four.

The house and silversmith is also involved in a first-person event with transport of the silver chest from the house of the Juror to the tower where the treasure chamber is located.

The long sides are built in Thatched country technique and the gables are built in Wattle and Daub technique. Oak frame and oak support beams. The house has two parts, living quarters and kitchen. The bed is a replica of the Oseberga bed and the high-backed chair is a replica of Sunntaksstolen. The house is a mix of several building techniques relevant to that age, and is hypothesized that this would have been done in that age. The foundation has a rubble drain. This was a decision based on maintenance since it is not visible to visitors.

The decoration inside is done with red ochre paint. The entrance door has ornamental carvings on the inside which was a mistake. It was supposed to be on the outside, but we reasoned with that they did mistakes back in those days as well (We have no historical sources for this claim).

The house does not have ramps for wheel chair access, but the doors are built to accommodate wheel chair access which means a wheel chair can be carried in. The museum is in a planning phase to make the village more accessible for people with physical disadvantages.

Further Reading

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawspeaker> Easy and obtainable information to read up on the role and history of the Lawspeaker.
- 2.
3. <http://www.fortidateknik.z.se/IFT/litte/littekg/rafqjut.htm> A thorough explanation of the relevant techniques for casting silver and bronze.

Sources

Reconstruction (material)

1. Location

Not relevant to this reconstruction/reimagining

2. Dating

Not relevant to this reconstruction/reimagining

3. Current location

Foteviken, Sweden

4. Secondary literature

http://www.hurstwic.org/history/articles/daily_living/text/longhouse.htm

http://www.sorlandsmuseum.se/PageFiles/8529/2007_03.pdf

In-depth about building techniques about another specific reconstruction, but is still relevant to our reconstruction/reimagining (It is in Swedish).

Story (immaterial)

5. Primary sources

The Role of the Swedish Lawman in the Spread of Lay Literacy. Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications. Larsson, Inger (2010) ISBN 978-2-503-53407-7. An in-depth explanation of the role of the lawspeaker in Scandinavian Viking Age society with references for historical events with named lawspeakers.