

## Narrow Oseberg Band

### Overview of project:

In 1904, a large ship burial was discovered outside Tønsberg in Vestfold. This would become known as the Oseberg ship burial and has been described “as the most beautiful Viking tomb ever found” (<https://www.khm.uio.no/english/visit-us/viking-ship-museum/exhibitions/oseberg/>). The two women buried aboard the ship were accompanied by a large array of textiles. Many different types of materials were used including imported silks, woolens, and what was to be believed as linen. Coarser wool was used in tablet bands to decorate and ornament finer material tapestries. These bands contained diamond shapes and crosses as the dominating patterns. I set out to recreate one of these bands through tablet weaving with wool. Tablet weaving or card weaving is a weaving technique where cards or tablets are used to create a shed through which the weft is passed.

### Tools and Materials:

I have used worsted wool yarn in my band. The colors used could have been achieved using woad-dyed wool and the white would have historically been another color that could have been dyed or a linen dyed to contrast. I used my inkle loom set up with ten tablet cards to achieve the diamond pattern.

### Construction:

Guidance from multiple sources was obtained in how to warp the threads on the loom to create the diamond pattern. This pattern uses a ten card set up and is unusual in that the pattern is created through the arrangement of the colored threads in the tablets and not from individual turning of tablets themselves ([https://www.shelaghlewins.com/tablet\\_weaving/Oseberg\\_narrow/Oseberg\\_narrow.pdf](https://www.shelaghlewins.com/tablet_weaving/Oseberg_narrow/Oseberg_narrow.pdf)). The tablets were set to a S or Z orientation (how the threads come through the tablet holes) and the tablets were all turned together as one unit. When twist began to build up the tablets S or Z orientation was reversed and the tablets were once again turned. This helped to alleviate the twist build up. The reversing of the tablet orientation also changed the orientation of the diamond pattern. Since the fragments were incomplete and starting to disintegrate it is unknown if the pattern switched. The completed band is 75 inches long.

### Sources:

<https://www.khm.uio.no/english/visit-us/viking-ship-museum/exhibitions/oseberg/the-textiles-among-the-oseberg-finds/index.html>. Extant pieces and historical information

[https://www.shelaghlewins.com/tablet\\_weaving/Oseberg\\_narrow/Oseberg\\_narrow.pdf](https://www.shelaghlewins.com/tablet_weaving/Oseberg_narrow/Oseberg_narrow.pdf). Pattern set up, construction and background information.

Christensen, Arne Emil; Nockert, Margareta. Osebergfundet IV, Tekstilene. Universitetet i Oslo 2006. Original extant piece and reconstruction images.