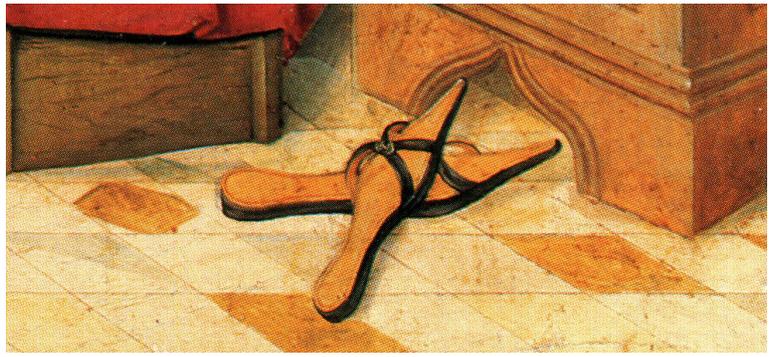


Two pairs of leather pattens

Morten kanik, Styringheim



On medieval paintings of a furnished room you can often see a pair of pattens on the floor besides the bed. With just a strap on the fore foot, and without a back strap, they must be very easy to put on and pull off. The purpose of pattens is an extra and thicker sole to protect your fine shoes or socks – outside from the mud in the streets or inside from the cold floors in the house.

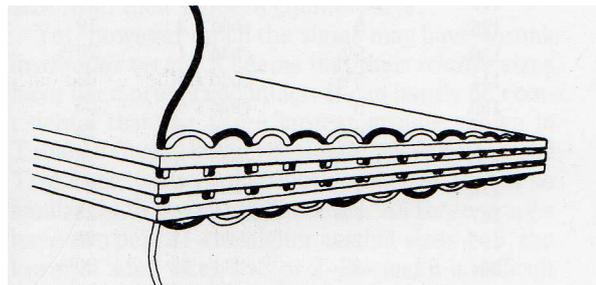
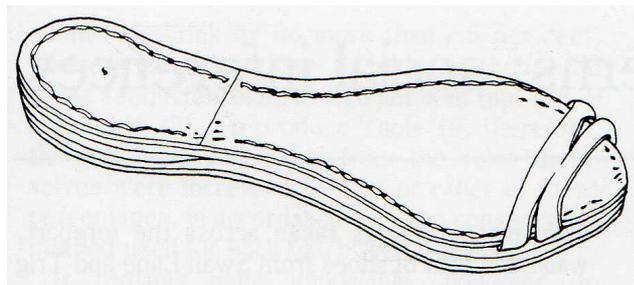
1 Leather pattens for Åsa vävare

Åsa one day pointed at a picture with a pair of pattens and said: I want a pair of these. So I had to read and go to work. It was a year ago I started working with my very first ones last summer on Bornholm and they were finished just in time for the 12th Night Coronation. In spring there was the second pair made, according to the knowlege we got from the first ones. Those were finished just in time for Double Wars and are not yet been taken in use.

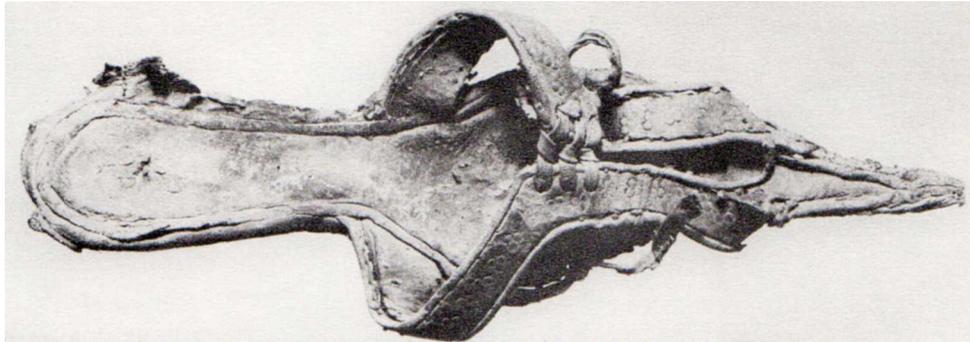
There are some finds of leather pattens in London, from about 1400. They are not as common as the wood pattens. The leather pattens of the 14th century are mostly richly decorated, indicating they had belonged to the upper people. In the 15th century the leather pattens become more wide spread.

Åsa's pattens is something between the upper and the common.

There was a drawing in the book from the London excavations "Shoes and pattens". I thought, that this sole, consisting of several layers of leather, sewn together and with an extra layer on the heel, would be perfect. But I did not liked the way the diminutive straps were joined to the soles. You must be able to walk comfortable with the pattens on your feet.



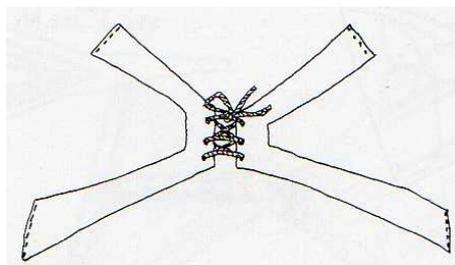
In the pictures I saw that the straps were of another shape and fixed in another position, and then Åsa gave me another book from her book shelves, the classical "Skomod och skotillverkning". And here I saw a photograph of a patten, found in Stockholm, in the "Town between bridges".



2 How did I do it?

Leather pattens are made of cow leather and so are these. The layers are sewn together with flax thread, as in the finds, according to the book. Though I fixed the straps with glue before fastening them with sewing. On the first pair I attached the strap between the middle and the bottom sole. I thought it would be more comfortable for the wearer. On the second pair I attached the straps between the middle and the upper sole, as on the pictures of the finds.

With the first pair of pattens I did not dare to cut the straps like those in the paintings or in the Stockholm patten. Instead of two, I used four straps and placed them as I thought and sewed them on the soles. I later found out that the hinter ones should be placed more backwards to grip the foot better, like in the Stockholm patten. That's corrected in the second pair.



3 Solutions

The first made pattens are tested by Åsa vävare, as you can examine on the bottom sole, and are functioning very well. She wore them with her woolen hoses only, not as an overshoe. The discussion below about pattens and sandals can be applied to her use. What is in fact what?

I learned from the work with the pattens that you can get some result after studying medieval pictures and read about archeological finds. You can never be as skilled as the former patten makers, that's for sure, but you get a hint when trying to make what you or your wife need. The most time you will spend to think and to decide to go to work. When knowing how to do, it will at last be done quicker than you thought before you started. As

the most of us I am sure you must have a dead line to focus on. That's a common knowlege I made my own.

Next time I will make a pair of pattens for myself so I can use my fine Adam shoes outdoors without ruining them.

You can also imagine that the seam is the weak point, when sewed through all the layers. We will see how long it will take before the pattens are needed to be mended. In the London finds there are a number of examples of leather patens beeing resewed, so that will be a future for Åsa's too, if she become a frequent user of her over shoes.

4. Discussion

When the work with the pattens were almost done I got the "Stepping through time" from the library. This third book makes a different approach. Goubitz means, that pattens are either made of wood or of leather. That's also the point of Grew and Neergaard on the London finds.

But Goubitz states that leather pattens always has an inside sole made of cork. The pure leather pattens have a back strap and must be defined as sandals. He makes a very strict distintion, though he have just a few finds in the Netherlands to lean on. He refer to one of the London patten finds and writes about it: "What these authors /Grew and Neergaard ME/ call pattens are in fact sandals, a possibility that they indeed mention".

The diffenence, I suppose, between leather pattens and leather sandals is in general that you're wearing pattens as over shoes, as a complement to your shoes, and wearing sandals as shoes in themselves.

Distinctions and classifications are good things to get structure of things, but you must always be aware that life, human innovation and use will not always be put into a system of definitions.

5 Bibliography

Francis Grew and Margarethe de Neergaard: **Shoes and pattens**. Medieval finds from excavations in London: 2 (1988, repr 2011)

Ernfrid Jäfvert: **Skomod och skotillverkning**, från medeltiden till våra dagar (1938)

Olaf Goubitz, Carol van Driel-Murray, Willy Groenman-van Waateringe: **Stepping through Time**. Archaeological Footwear from Prehistoric Times until 1800 (2007)