

NORWEGIAN TEXTILE LETTER

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Translation of the poster:

FROM BED TO WALL: TEPPE FROM ARNA

An exhibition at Ådnatun Museum, Indre Arna, Hordaland, 1994

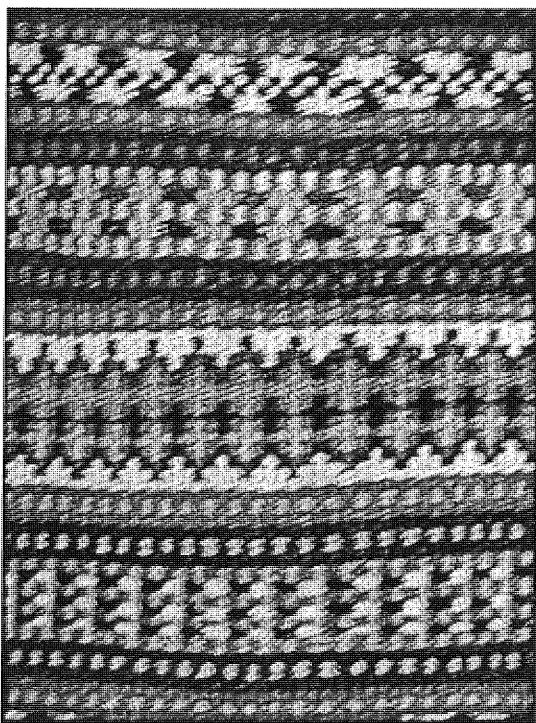
By Marta Kløve Juuhl

The Background for the Exhibition

Last year I was asked by the Culture Department in Arna if I could weave a wall hanging for the Seimshus. The wall hanging had to be woven in a technique that was traditional to this area. In order to get to know something about patterns and traditions, I had to get in contact with people who own this kind of textile, *teppe*, and the Arna Husflidslag helped me with this.

In August 1993 I started the registration work. It was a real break-through when I realized that these tepper were woven on a special kind of loom called an *oppstaddev* (warp-weighted loom). Before I started I didn't have any idea of what I would find, and this was beyond my expectations.

As time went by and I went to even more places and saw more tepper, I began to form a picture of what is special for this district. Evidently, the use of the *oppstaddev* had been a tradition here. But it was about time to have this documented properly.



Teppe Nr. 5,

This led me to the Osterøy Museum after having registered 16 tepper in Arna (13 of these were woven on the *oppstaddev*). There I confirmed what I had learned from the tepper here. At the museum they have an *oppstaddev* with a half-finished teppe on it. This makes it easy to compare the techniques, which are the same in Arna and Osterøy. However, the way the patterns are built up is different in the two areas.

Gradually, I thought that this registration should give more results than just a new wall hanging. The whole town of Arna, or at least the inhabitants with an interest in textiles, should be able to share in this. So what would be more natural than to set up a textile exhibition at Ådnatun Museum?

Today when Arna is part of Bergen, a fact that the politicians seem to forget, it's important to document what is characteristic here. Maybe this can contribute to what gives Arna its own identity.

What is an Oppstadvev?

An oppstadvev is a type of loom that has been in use since pre-historic times without having changed much in its basic principles. It has two side poles, each with a cleft at the top in which to fit a beam. The side poles stand on the floor and lean against the wall. To make warp, yarns are wrapped back and forth between the side poles and around the pins. A strong *tvinna* or braided cord of weft yarn is threaded into the shed while the warp is standing like that. Then the warp with the cord in it is moved up and sewn to the beam. The cord hangs out from the teppe on both sides. This cord will be the start and ending at the top of the teppe.

At the end of the warp threads stones are tied to keep the warp straight and even. These are called *kljåsteiner*. Their weight should be 1 *mork* (250 grams or about 1/2 pound) per single thread. There are two double threads per centimeter in the warp. The weight of these stones could, of course, vary in earlier days according to what was woven, but for these tepper this weight was appropriate.

The weaving starts at the top. The weaver stands and uses a weaving sword or *vevskei* to push up the weft. What we today call a reed in a horizontal loom is missing on the oppstadvev, but the sword has partly the same function to beat the weft up. The other function that our reed has today is to spread the warp threads. There is nothing with that function on the oppstadvev (that was the first thing I noticed when I looked at the old tepper in Arna) - that the warp was so uneven, especially evident in *kjerringtenner*.

One doesn't use a shuttle but lets the weft yarn hang in a big cluster. The colors that are not in use are allowed to follow the edge threads down. This way one gets thick, firm selvages - and just a few threads to tuck in at the end.

When the weaving is done, that which one wove first is the top of the teppe. You never warp for more than one teppe at a time. Tepper that are

woven on the warp-weighted loom are all one width. They are never sewn together down the center.

Warp-Weighted Loom in Our Local History

Among people who are doing textile work, it is known that the warp-weighted loom exists and has been used in several areas in Hordaland, for example in Sunnhordland (it is still used in Fitjar), in Hålandsdalen, and in Nordhordland. Nordhordland is most interesting to us; this is where Osterøy has quite good documentation in the way of old tepper. From Osterøy it is not far to Arna. An elderly lady in Arna told me that she believes the oppstadvev was in use here as late as World War I.

But it seems like nobody has been thinking that a registration of these special kinds of tepper is necessary. To weave a teppe on a warp-weighted loom is quite a time-consuming process. It was probably something people did not want to spend their time on after the textile industry gradually gained a foothold here in town. In the valley it was easy for women to find work in this new industry. Many probably preferred to earn money rather than to weave at home and continue working in an old tradition that was, at that time, not very special to them. Several other things have changed during this time period but it is home weaving that we shall deal with in this connection. The time period we are speaking of is the later part of the 19th century.

When we have now located a good many tepper from Arna that evidently are woven on the warp-weighted loom and very few of the owners know anything about the origins of these tepper, it indicates that this tradition quickly was forgotten.

Another aspect, which might have contributed to decline of the oppstadvev, is the big interest in this kind of loom out in "the big world". Several museum and other collectors wanted to buy old farming and peasant equipment. This resulted in many buyers who traveled in the countryside and collected many things. One of them was J. B.

Evanger from Voss who traded often at Osterøy. And just Osterøy seems to have been a large-scale supplier of warp-weighted looms to museums all over the Nordic countries. A natural thought would be that looms from Arna went the same way.

In some of the collectors' notes it says that the looms have come from Haus. It might be on the mainland side of the old Haus *kommune*. They might as well also have ended up in the woodshed and were burned a long time ago. It is impossible today to find any remnants of such equipment here - the only thing will be some *kljåsteiner* (stone weights) at Unneland and Lone.

What Characterizes the Tepper in Arna

All of the tepper in the exhibition were woven on oppstadvev. Since the reed is missing on oppstadvev, the warp threads per centimeter is quite uneven. But the closest one can get with a reed is 20-10, 2-2 that means two double threads per cm. The warp is of handspun coarse linen yarn. The weft is handspun wool yarn.



Tepper Nr. 4

Colors

All colors are used, some tepper have red and yellow as their main colors, other red and white, and eventually red, white, and blue or red, yellow, and green. But each tepper has its own color scheme.

Compared with the tepper from Osterøy, which resemble closely these from Arna, one can say that the colors vary more in Arna. At Osterøy they are often in red, yellow, and green.

Building of Bands

None of the tepper I have seen look alike, but still it is possible to see that they are made in the same tradition because they have a common construction. The bands are more complicated at the top, for example *krokbragd* which is quite time consuming to weave on an oppstadvev, or in *halvsmett* (*Vestfoldsmett*).

Other bands are *spilbraut* where the weft goes over and under three warp threads. These complex bands are the widest ones at the top. Further down the bands are simpler, usually in *rips* (pick and pick) with *kjerringtenner*. Between every wide band there is often a narrow outline and that you find again and again in the piece. The tepper are finished at the bottom with a one-colored edge where there is some cross-stitch on top, usually in red. This is done to hold the last wefts in their place. The cross stitches were sewn while the tepper was on the loom. It was not common to tie the warp threads into fringe, they just hang. The length varies from 5 cm to nothing.

Something else that makes the tepper in Arna different from all other Nordhordland tepper is the lack of bands woven in *heilsmett* (*rutevev*). This is a characteristic feature in Nordhordland; there exists almost always one or more *smetteband* in these tepper either 8-petal flowers, lightening, crosses. But only two of the tepper I registered in Arna have these kinds of bands. It

might be a coincidence, after all, 13 tepper is not a large sample. But it may indicate that the women here had their own local style.

The fact that weavers had their own special patterns I later confirmed with an elderly lady in Arna. She told that even in the different parts of Arna the patterns could vary both when it came to color and building of bands.

These textiles were originally bed covers, the old word is *brotkvitel* (pl. *brotkvitler* or *brotkvitlar*), which means banded bed spread. Bands down by the foot end are quite simple in the way they were built up. Can feet have been less important than the chest? At least it looks like it when it came to the width and complexity of the bands.

All the tepper have a size that suits beds in the days when beds were short and wide, except for Nr. 2 that may have been for a cradle.

Tepper Nr. 1

Current owner: Karolina Arnetveit

Size: 1.25 x 1.67 m

Weft colors: red, gold, black, white, dark blue, lt purple

Tepper has 16 different bands, most are kjerringtenner and narrow bands at the bottom. Bands become wider and more complicated as you go up. Bands 3, 6 from the top are in halvsmett. Otherwise bands are put together with kjerringtenner and spilbraut or just kjerringtenner. Bands number 1 and 8 are a kind of lynild where the one color is placed like zigzag on top of a bottom one. The width of the kjerringtenner in the bands varies quite a bit. It is obvious that the reed is missing. Age unknown. The owner inherited this from her aunts who were born around 1890. The tepper is probably much older.

Tepper Nr. 2

Current owner: Karolina Arnetveit

Size: 0.62 x 0.74 m

Weft colors: red, gold, green, blue, black, and white

The tepper has 7 different bands with simple stripes between bands. Here are used mostly kjerringtenner and spilbraut. On top (of the photo) edge black fabric was sewn on later so it is not possible to see what the original ending looked like. This one had been a cradle tepper for the grandfather of the current owner. His name was Albright Arnetveit who was born ca. 1850.

Tepper Nr. 3

Current owner: Britt Reigstad

Size: 1.15 x 1.6 m

Weft colors: blue, gold, red, green, and white

The tepper is put together with 14 bands where every second one is kjerringtenner and the ones between are spilbraut. Here the bands do not get more complicated at the top. The construction is quite similar from bottom to top. The only band that is different is the white ending band at the top. Age unknown.

Tepper Nr. 4 (pictured on page 3)

Current owner: Inger Seim

Size: 1.3 x 1.7 m

Weft colors: red, blue, green, gold, white, and black

The tepper is put together of 14 different bands. Down at the bottom there are only rips and kjerringtenner and they get wider and more complicated later on. Bands 2, 4, and 8 from the top are kjerringtenner. Between bands there are narrow stripes in red, yellow, black, and white. The top of the tepper is edged with a fabric band so it is impossible to see how it is started. The tepper is probably from Åsheim. In 1909 the small building at Seim burned so this tepper came from Åsheim later, but is probably older. The grandmother of the current owner came from Åsheim.

Teppe Nr. 5 (pictured on page 1)

Current owner: Aslaug Garnes Johnsen

Size: 1.28 x 1.7 m

Weft colors: red, gold, green, blue, black, and white

The teppe is built up of 19 bands. At the bottom there are only rips and kjerringtenner. Band 7 from the top is krokbragd and in 8 the weft goes over and under two warp threads. Otherwise there are both wide and narrow bands in spilbraut. The ending at the bottom and top is white. At the bottom there are cross stitches in blue. The teppe was woven c. 1850 by Anna Sjursdotter born Rivenes married Garnæs in 1844. She was the great-grandmother of the current owner.

Teppe Nr. 6

Current owner: Erna Åsheim

Size: 1.15 x 1.75 m

Weft colors: red, blue, gold, green, white, and brown (maybe was black)

The teppe is put together with 14 bands where every second one is in rips (kjerringtenner) where only the color varies and every second is in spilbraut. But one band in the middle is krokbragd. It is folded and sewn on both ends so it is difficult to decide what end is up or down. Possibly the krokbragd band is 7 from the top. Many of the threads in the spilbraut bands are worn away. Age unknown. The teppe was woven either at Åsheim or Hauge in Londalen.

Teppe Nr. 7

Current owner: Johanna Herfindal

Size: 1.3 x 1.76 m

Weft colors: red, two gold colors, white, and black

The teppe is built up with 11 bands in rips (kjerringtenner), spilbraut, and krokbragd and a band where the weft goes over and under two warp threads. Bands 2, 4, 6, and 8 are

krokbragd. Between bands there are narrow stripes namely in black and white. The teppe is from Blom on Osterøy, it was made around 1870 by the great-grandmother of the current owner.



Teppe Nr. 8 (pictured above)

Private collection

Size: 1.16 x 1.67 m;

Warp: undyed cotton yarn

Weft colors: red, green, gold, blue, black, and white

The teppe is woven in heilsmett with a large flower in the middle where all colors are used. Around the edge there are small 8-petal flowers in yellow and white (every other one) on red ground. Down below a name is woven in: Niels Romslo in July 1913. The teppe was woven by Maria Askeland married Hodneland in Lindås. She was the great-grandmother of the current owner. She wove it as a wedding gift for her daughter Hilda who married Niels. This is quite different from the other tepper that are from this

region. It is only the weaving equipment that is in common with the other teppe. It was never meant to be a bed spread.

Teppe Nr. 9

Current owner: Anne Britt Romslo

Size: 1.25 x 1.55 m

Weft colors: red, gold, black, and white

The teppe has 10 different bands, mostly rips and spilbraut. It is so worn that it is difficult to decide what is up and down. But one can see from the uneven warp that it is woven on an oppstadvev. Age unknown.

Teppe Nr. 10

Current owner: Randi Børdal

Size: 1.16 x 1.5 m

Weft colors: red, gold, green, white, brown (maybe was black), black

The teppe was put together with 15 different bands, about half are in krokbragd. Otherwise there are some bands in spilbraut, but many of the weft threads that go over and under three warps are worn away. There are 2 bands where the weft goes over and under two warp threads. The teppe is hemmed at the top. Age unknown. Catalog nr. 9 and 10 were not made at Romslo. They were probably bought at auctions here in the district.

Teppe Nr. 11 (Pictured right)

Current owner: Margit Skartveit, born Hauge

Size: 1.25 x 1.64 m

Weft colors: red, green, dark blue, gold, and white

The teppe is built up of 16 bands with red and green stripes between each. Bands 2, 6, and 9 from the top are in heilsmett. Because of this the teppe is distinctive from the other teppe in the exhibition. Band 4 is in heilsmett and spilbraut. Bands 1, 8, 10, 13 and 14 are spilbraut. The rest of the bands are in rips. Age unknown. The

owner tells us that the teppe has been at Hauge as long as she can remember, which means ca. 80 years. She says that they sat on it in the wagon when they went to church and they put it on the horse when they were inside the church.

Teppe Nr. 12

Current owner: Magnhild Skagen, born Hauge

Size: 1.2 x 1.66 m

Weft colors: red, gold, green, and white

The teppe was put together with 18 bands. At the top there is a narrow smetteband with crosses. Bands 3 and 7 from the top are krokbragd. Between bands there are lines of separation in red and green. The cord at the top is braided and ends as a tassel on both corners. The owner inherited the teppe from her great-grandparents, Anna born Tunes 1846 and Albright Hauge born 1847. They married in 1876 and were given this and another similar teppe as wedding gifts. There exists a third teppe from them. These teppe are today divided among



inheritors. The two teppe that are not part of the exhibit do not have the narrow smettebands at the top, but otherwise they have more or less the same composition. All of them should be from the 1850s and were woven at either Hauge or Tunes.

Literature List

Marta Hoffman: En gruppe vevstoler på Vestlandet. Publication of Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo, 1958.

Marta Hoffman: The Warp Weighted Loom. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1974.

Kulturhistorisk vegbook, Hordaland. Publication of Hordaland Fylkeskommune, Bergen, 1993. With article by Ivar Skre: *Oppstadveven, ein tusenårig vevtradisjon*.

Acknowledgments

For me as a newcomer in Arna, it has been almost unbelievable to rediscover these tepper. They are really a treasure that the owners can be proud of. It has also been great to be so well greeted at all the places I have visited. People are more than happy to show what they have of old textiles and to tell what they know. You have only to sit and listen. I owe all the owners a big thanks both for lending their tepper and for all the information they have given me.

After I had systematically clarified and written an article on the subject, I sent the material to textile expert Dr. Marta Hoffmann, who was willing to go through it. I am very thankful that she took time to do this work. She gave me valuable help that enabled me to put the material in a larger context.

Thanks to Anna Østerbø Kåstad at the Osterøy Museum for helping me to affirm many of my assumptions concerning tepper in Arna, and that later was with me in setting up an oppstadvev at Ådnatun, - and to Borghild Lieng for being an

incredibly enthusiastic leader for the Cultural Department in Arna. She is clever to put opportunities in order so projects such as this can be realized.

Marta Kløve Juuhl

A limited number of Marta's posters with 15 color illustrations are available through Laurann Gilbertson at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum for \$10 plus insured postage. Please call or email your order ~~319~~ 382-9681, textiles@vesterheim.org). A portion of each sale goes toward the Lila Nelson Weaving Classroom.

Thank you to Marta Kløve Juuhl for graciously allowing us to print the translation, and to Ingebjørg Vaagen for bringing Marta's research to our attention. Tusen takk to David Kløve for transporting posters, and to Kari-Anne and Åse for eagerly translating the text

Final Acknowledgments

The award (for using Nynorsk) that Arna Mållag distributes out yearly was for 1992 given to Arna and Åsane Samvirkelag (cooperative society).

For the new year in 1993 the Cultural Department got news that the board of the Samevirkelag had received the prize money, 1,000 kroner, that should go "for the benefit of the Seimshus" and the Cultural Department was to oversee "the use of the money in the best way." We asked textile artist Marta Kløve Juuhl if she could weave a teppe for Seimshuset with the colors and patterns used on traditional weavings in Arna/Haus kommune.

In the fall of last year we got the result - a beautiful teppe with brave and warm colors that remain superb on the dark wooden walls in the

north room of the Seimshus. This teppe will always accompany the Seimshus.

The profound documentation Marta Kløve Juuhl had done on the Arna tepper we would like to make known to the public and be preserved in written form. Therefore "Frå Seng til Vegg" an exhibition of tepper from Arna.

We thank Arna and Åsane Samvirkelag for the prize, and we thank all tepper owners for their positive contribution. Last but not least, many thanks to Marta Kløve Juuhl for her work to both document and recreate the local tepper tradition. We hope the exhibit will create new interest in this part of Arna's local history.

The Cultural Department of Arna

Translation by Kari-Anne Fekjær and Åse Svenneby Mjelva, 2000

BOOK REVIEW by Laurann Gilbertson

Everyday Knitting - Treasures from a Ragpile by Annemor Sundbø

Kristiansand: Torridal Tweed, 2000.

Translated by Amy Lightfoot

When I first saw this book in Norwegian (*Kvardagsstrikk*), I was fascinated by it. The author has rescued an amazing collection of knitwear from the "jaws" of a machine that shreds old wool items to make filling for mattresses, quilts, and sleeping bags. When weaving teacher Annemor Sundbø purchased the shoddy factory in Ose in Setesdal in 1983, she had no idea that she would be responsible for preserving the history of 20th century Norwegian knitwear.

Sundbø divides the book into sections by type of sweater then explores the range of motifs and colors and styles. There are also sections on

socks, mittens and gloves, caps, and even bathing suits. Men's, women's, and children's knitwear is pictured.

In a chapter titled "Long Live Traditional Knitting!" Sundbø discusses the ethics of copying patterns then offers some clever design techniques by repeating elements of motifs. The history of many popular knitting motifs is included in the back of the book, along with the significance of numbers, letters, and colors.

Knitters will, no doubt, take a special interest in the book, but there are many elements that will be useful for weavers. Amy Lightfoot's translation is very well done, and the book is a steal considering there are color illustrations on 60 pages. Available from the Vesterheim Museum Store (1-800-979-3346) for \$22.00 plus shipping. 10% discount for museum members.

CONFERENCE ON NORWEGIAN WOVEN TEXTILES

Hosted by the Nordic Heritage Museum

In association with the Norwegian Textile Guild
Seattle Center, October 4-6, 2001

& Pre-Conference Workshops, October 1-4,
2001

Norwegian Textile Exhibitions - The Nordic Heritage Museum is mounting three exhibitions during the Conference under the title Norwegian Textile Art: Tradition and Contemporary Expression. The coverlet exhibition (Woven Treasure) with 25 coverlets in a variety of techniques plus the tools and materials with which they were made, will tell the story of traditional Norwegian textiles; the Norwegian Textile Guild members' exhibition (Cultural Odyssey), will show both traditional and contemporary interpretations of these forms by the weavers of today; and the Oleana exhibit (Art & Artifact) will highlight a successful

introduction of the traditional knitted sweater into the world of high-fashion knitwear, with designs inspired by elements from traditional Norwegian folk art.

Cultural Odyssey Exhibition Seeks Advertising Image! Can you picture your weaving on a poster for Cultural Odyssey: Contemporary Norwegian Weaving in America? Early entries are being evaluated as possible advertising art, so if you are thinking of submitting an entry, get it in soon in order to be considered! The piece or pieces selected will appear on our web page and on advertising material for the exhibition. Exhibition entry guidelines are included as an insert in this edition.

Display Session - Is there an heirloom textile in your family's collection? Do you belong to a textile study group that would like to share its current work? If so, consider joining those demonstrating a technique or showing their latest creations at our free-flowing two-hour display session promoting an exchange of ideas about Norwegian textiles. Please plan to bring a hand-out that explains your display, and insure that your work is monitored to your satisfaction during the session. Space is free (but availability may be limited) at what promises to be a fun and informative event. Please contact Kay Larson before September 1st to reserve table or wall space (4' or 8').

Conference registration fees go up April 1, 2001. If you are planning to register for the Conference, remember that registration fees go up on April 1. Web Page - Check out the latest information about the Conference on the Nordic Heritage Museum's web page at www.nordicmuseum.com.

Pre-Conference Workshops are starting to fill. There is still room in all of the workshops, but space is limited and some classes are

approaching their limit. Workshops being offered are: Norwegian Tapestry (Ingebjørg Vaagen), Fisherman's Rya (Ellen Kjellmo), Sami Warp-Weighted Loom (Isaksen & Vaugen); Nordic Spinner (Noel Thurner); Lichen Dyes (Karen Diadick Casselman); Tablet Weaving (Inge Dam); and Meråker Doubleweave (Norma Smayda).

For conference, workshop, or exhibition information, contact:

Kay Larson, (206) 842-7734 or kaylarson@hotmail.com.

**Vesterheim Textile Calendar
Spring 2001**

April 19 and April 21

“No-Pot Natural Dyeing” workshops
with Karen Casselman, Cheverie NS

April 21

Spin-In at the Decorah Fairgrounds
hosted by Oneata Weavers Guild

June 1 - 18

Entry dates for the 20th National Exhibition
of Weaving in the Norwegian Tradition

June 22 - 24

Ars Textrina Conference on Textiles hosted
by Vesterheim and Luther College

June 23

Lecture by Kari-Anne Pedersen, Norsk
Folkemuseum “Nothing Exceeds Like
Excess: Four Centuries of Norwegian
Embroidery” at 7 p.m., Luther College
Free, sponsored by ASF's Wigeland Fund

Contact: Laurann Gilbertson, (563) 382-9681 or
textiles@vesterheim.org

Studio Vista Textile Monograph # 3 is now available. **ECOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL DYES: A WORK BOOK FOR THE NATURAL DYER** includes dye methods featuring 50 ecological alternatives to conventional mordants. Information on waterless dyes, solar methods, and Eco Dyes from fibre artists in the USA, Canada, Britain, and Australia. 60 pages. 18 Charts, colour plate, and international bibliography. Pre-paid \$21.50 (includes postage). Please make cheques payable to Karen Diadick Casselman. No postal orders please.

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