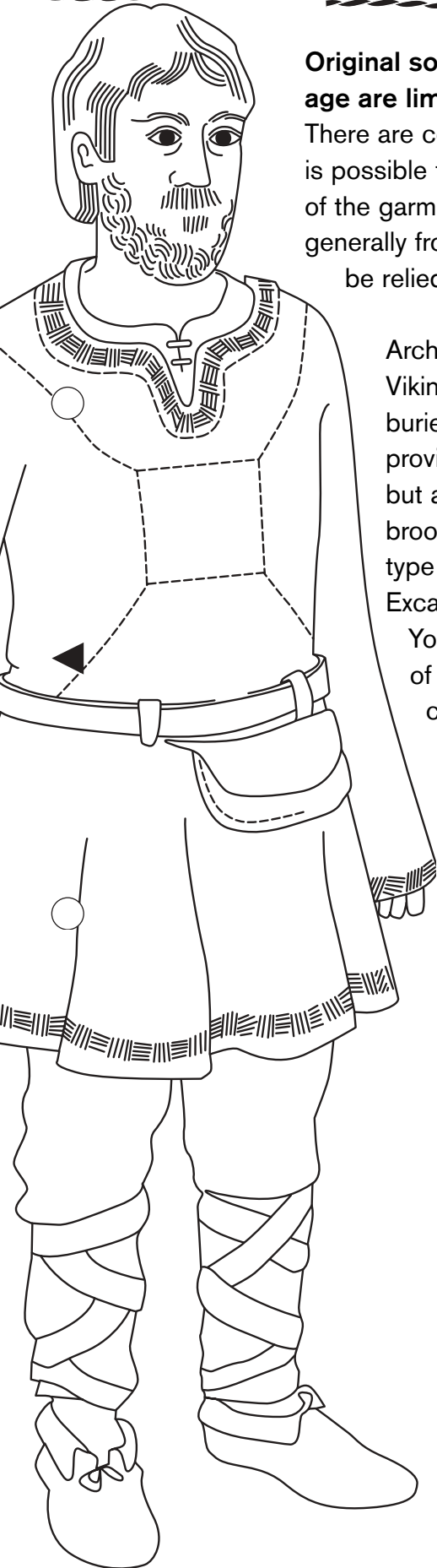




# Viking dress

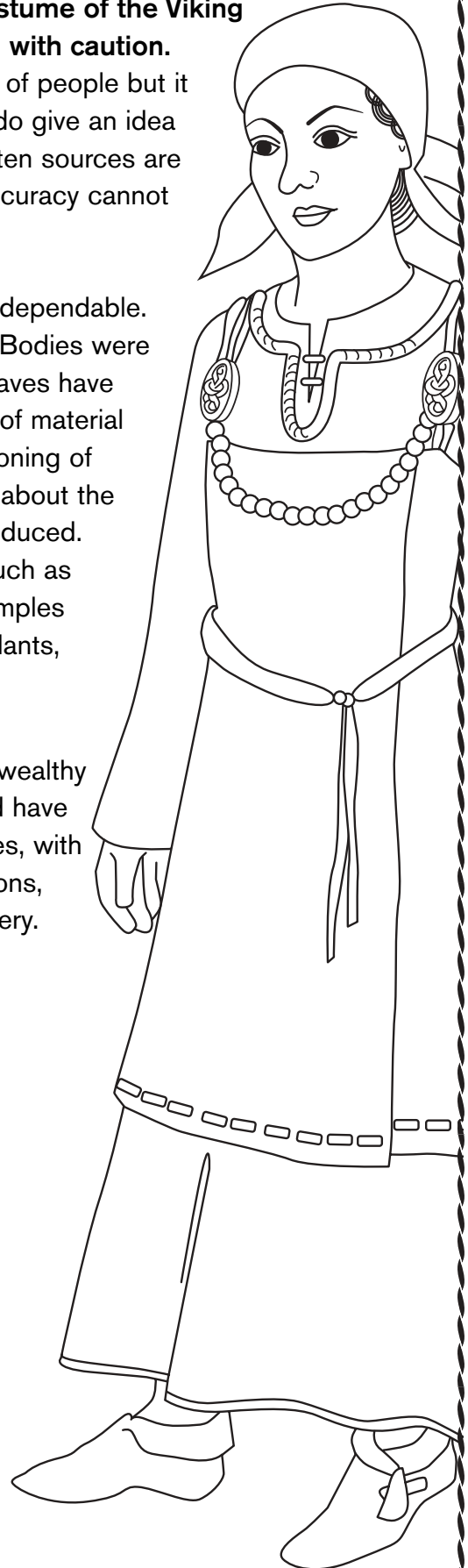


**Original sources of information on costume of the Viking age are limited and should be treated with caution.**

There are contemporary representations of people but it is possible that these are stylized. They do give an idea of the garments worn and their cut. Written sources are generally from a later period and their accuracy cannot be relied on.

Archaeological evidence is more dependable. Vikings burials are a rich source. Bodies were buried clothed and equipped. Graves have provided us not only with scraps of material but also information on the positioning of brooches, from which something about the type of garments worn can be deduced. Excavations at settlement sites such as York, have provided further examples of both fabrics, brooches, pendants, caps and shoes.

The overall impression of a wealthy Viking man or woman would have been quite gaudy to our eyes, with bright colours and decorations, and different kinds of jewellery.





## Men

• Clothes of wealthy Vikings were often richly decorated.

• A fine wool or linen undershirt was sometimes worn.

• Garments might be stitched in contrasting thread. Embroidery was worked with wool, silk and gold and silver thread.

• Over this was a tunic with long sleeves, often flared at the hem.

• A very fine form of braid was made by a method known as tablet weaving. It was used for trimming cloaks and tunics, and for tying back hair.

• Breeches were available in various styles – a baggy almost Eastern style, a straight style and a baggy shape bound below the knee by cloth bands.

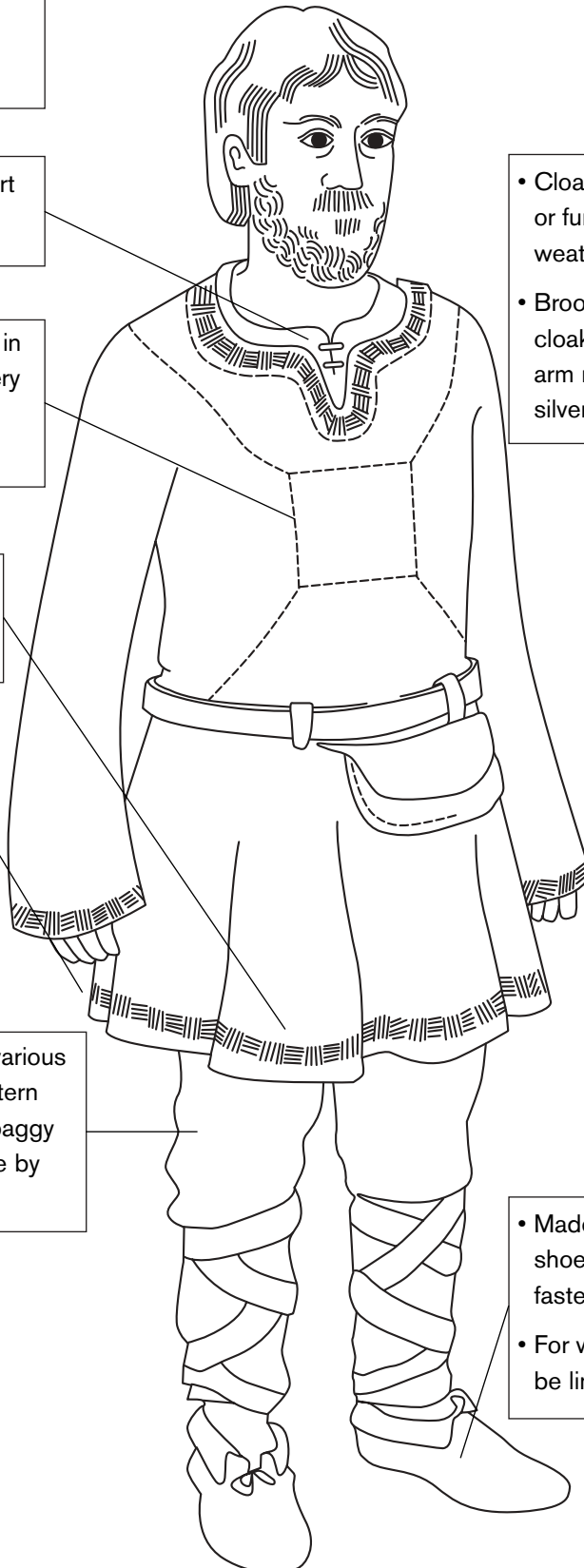
• Cloaks were of either heavy cloth or fur – essential in the cold weather of the north.

• Brooches were used to fasten cloaks and men also wore metal arm rings, made usually of silver, sometimes of gold.

• Silk was also used to trim and edge garments.

• Made from calf- or goatskin, shoes were laced at the ankle or fastened with toggles.

• For warmth in winter they would be lined with fur.





## Women

• Clothes of wealthy Vikings were often richly decorated.

• A simple shift of linen or wool was worn under a woollen dress.

• Garments might be stitched in contrasting thread. Embroidery was worked with wool, silk and gold and silver thread.

• The dress was suspended from pairs of loops held together with brooches.

• Made from calf- or goatskin, shoes were laced at the ankle or fastened with toggles.  
• For warmth in winter they would be lined with fur.

• A woollen jacket or cloak, or a fur cloak, would have been worn for warmth.

• Brooches worn as dress fastenings were usually oval in shape and festoons of beads were hung between the two brooches.

• From the right-hand brooch hung implements such as keys, knife, comb, scissors, needles and purse. These objects were also signs of status.

• Silk was also used to trim and edge garments.

