

## Oseberg Tents

The Oseberg tents were fairly large and were made of ash. The long poles had round through tenons on their ends, which were pegged to hold the tent in place. The round ridge pole (313) of the large tent was 5.7m (19 feet) long. The front and back 4-sided ground poles (311, 330) were 4.8m (16 feet) long. The side ground poles (315, 329) were 5.25m (17.5 feet) and 5.7m (19 feet), respectively. The diagonal poles were 4.8m (16 feet) long with carved terminals. The carved designs for this tent are below (a & b). The ridge pole (312) of the smaller Oseberg tent was 5.05m (16.8 feet) long and had an elliptical cross-section. The front and back ground poles (322, 324) were 4.5m (15 feet) long, and the side ground poles (320, 328) were 5.7m (19 feet) long. The diagonal poles with their carved heads were 4.10m (13.6 feet) long. The carved designs can be seen below (c, d, e and f).

(Tent Diagrams right: Christensen, Ingstad & Myhre, p. 130:  
Note that the numbers are artefact numbers, not dimensions.)

(Oseberg Tent Poles below: <http://s192.photobucket.com/user/Castlegrounds/media/Oseberg/Volume%202/Plate19sm.jpg.html>)

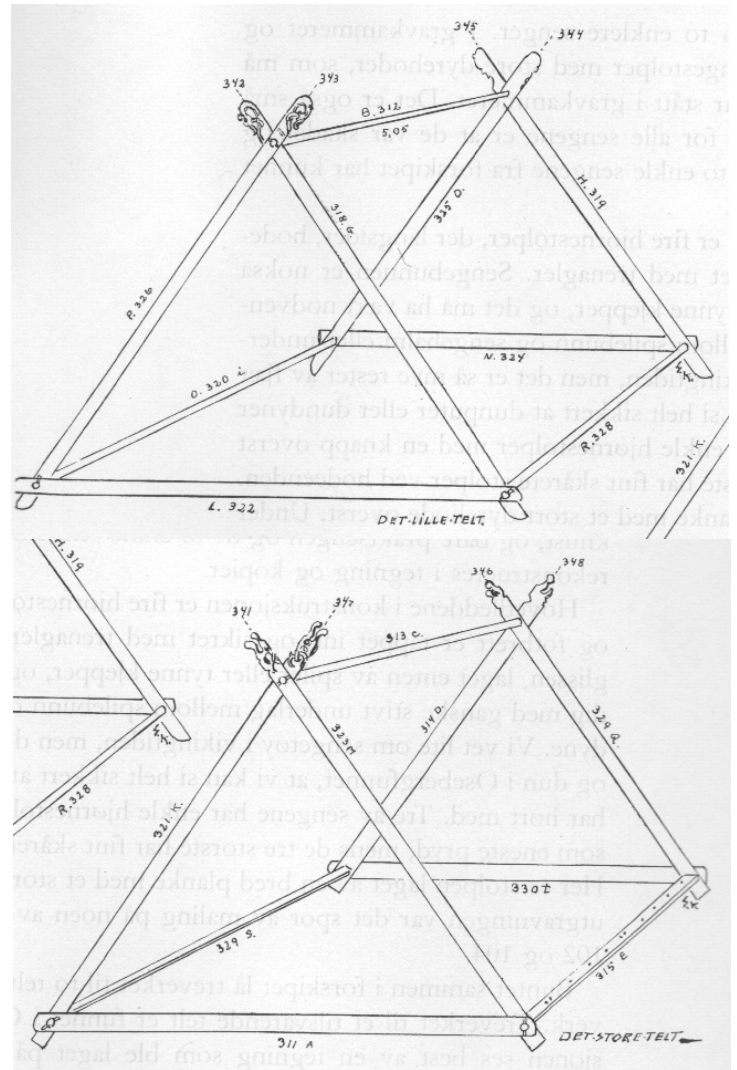
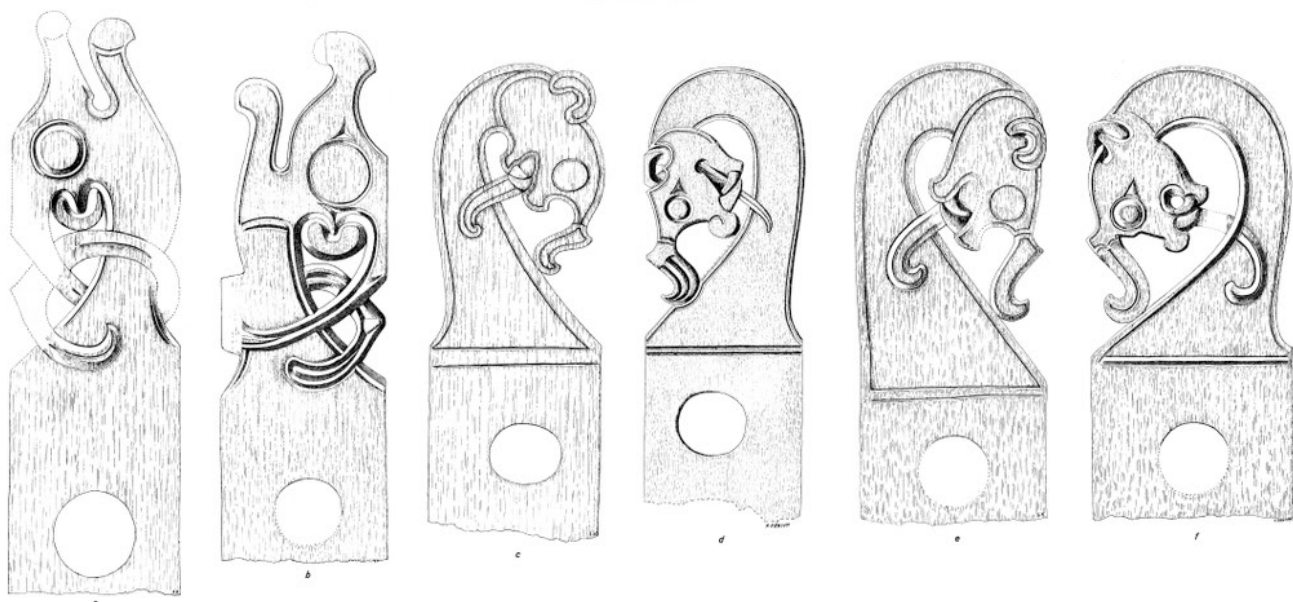


Planche XIX

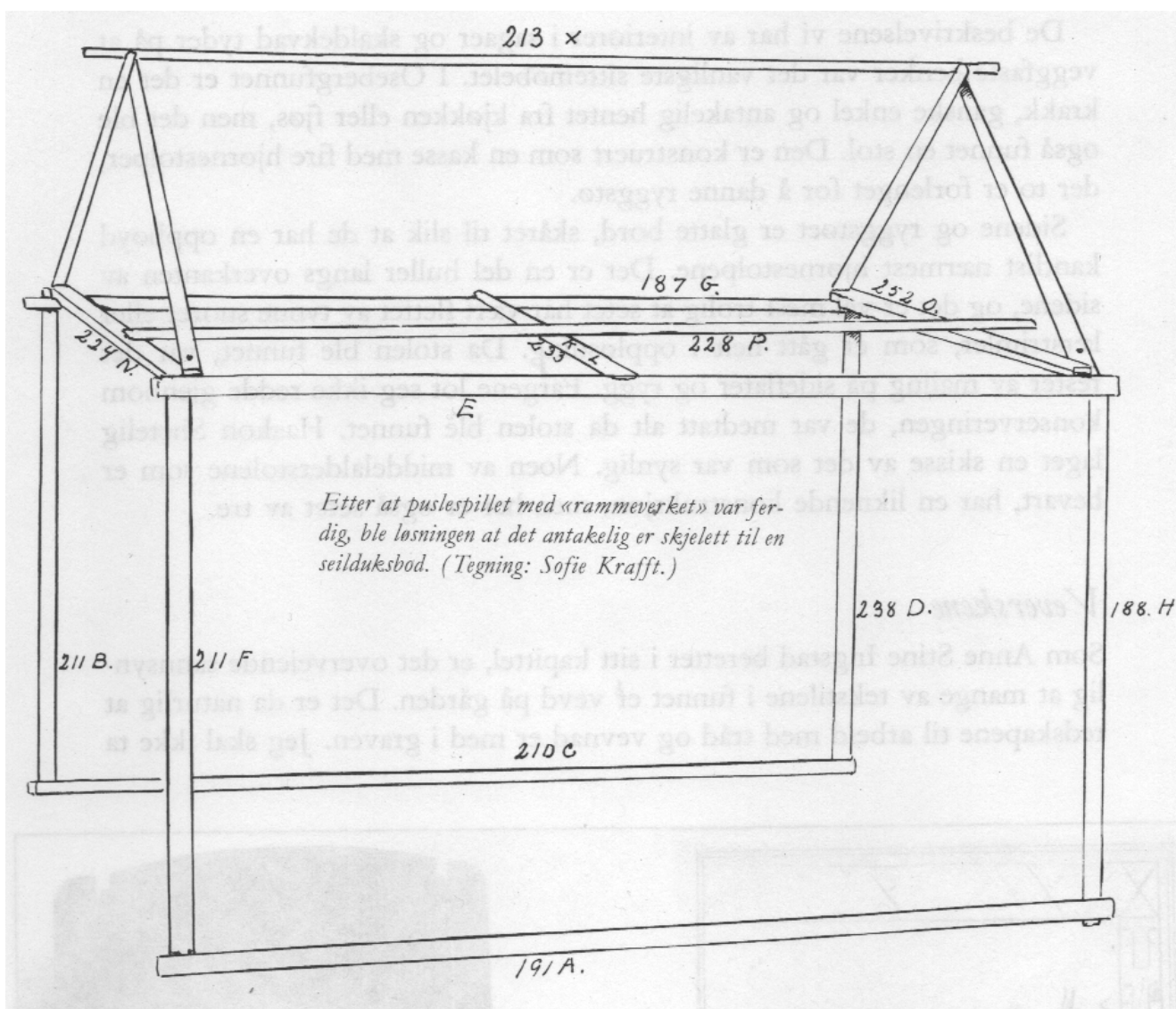
TELTVINDSKIENE



## Oseberg Tent or House Frame

In addition to the two tent frames found in the Oseberg ship burial, there were pieces of a house-like structure, or perhaps a Thing booth. All of the poles were made of ash wood, except for No. 228, which was fir or pine. Most of the poles have some decorative carving on them, while a few of the poles are plain. Most of the poles are four-sided in cross-section. Some of the poles and fragments did not have an obvious place in the house frame.

Based on the pole dimensions, this house was just over 7 feet wide and 11 feet long. The side ground poles (210, 191) are 3.4m (11.3 feet) long, the uprights (211, 188, 238) are 1.9m (6.3 feet) long, the round ridge pole (213) is 3.27m (10.9 feet) long, the front and back roof framework poles (224, 252) are 2.21m (7.36 feet) long, the side roof framework pole (187) is 3.45m (11.5 feet) long, the half-round cross-roof bracing (233) is 2.23m (7.4 feet) long, the long round roof bracing pole (228) was 3.4m (11.3 feet) long, and four poles (212, 307) are all between 1.53-1.57m (~5 feet), so they may well be the diagonal roof supports. Some poles have holes, tenons and other evidence of how they fit together.

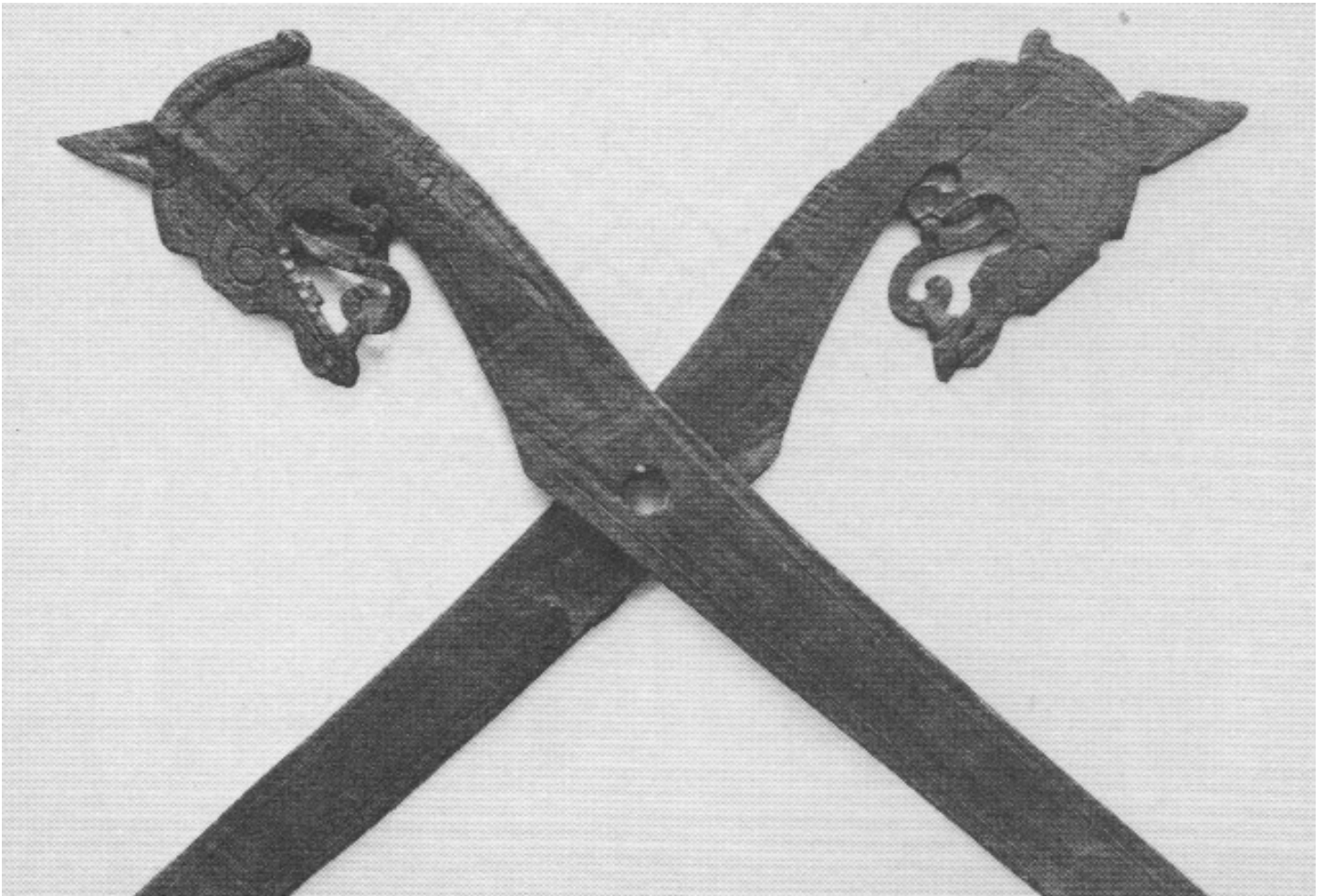
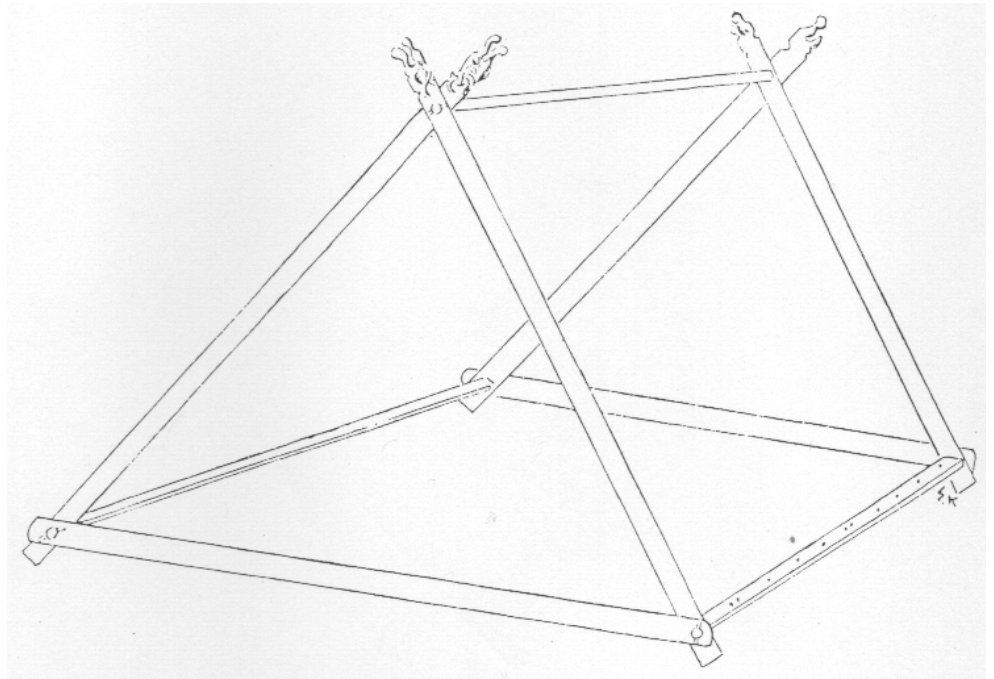


(House Frame Diagram above: Christensen, Ingstad & Myhre, p. 130: Note that the numbers are artefact numbers, not dimensions.)



## Gokstad Tent (Conjectural)

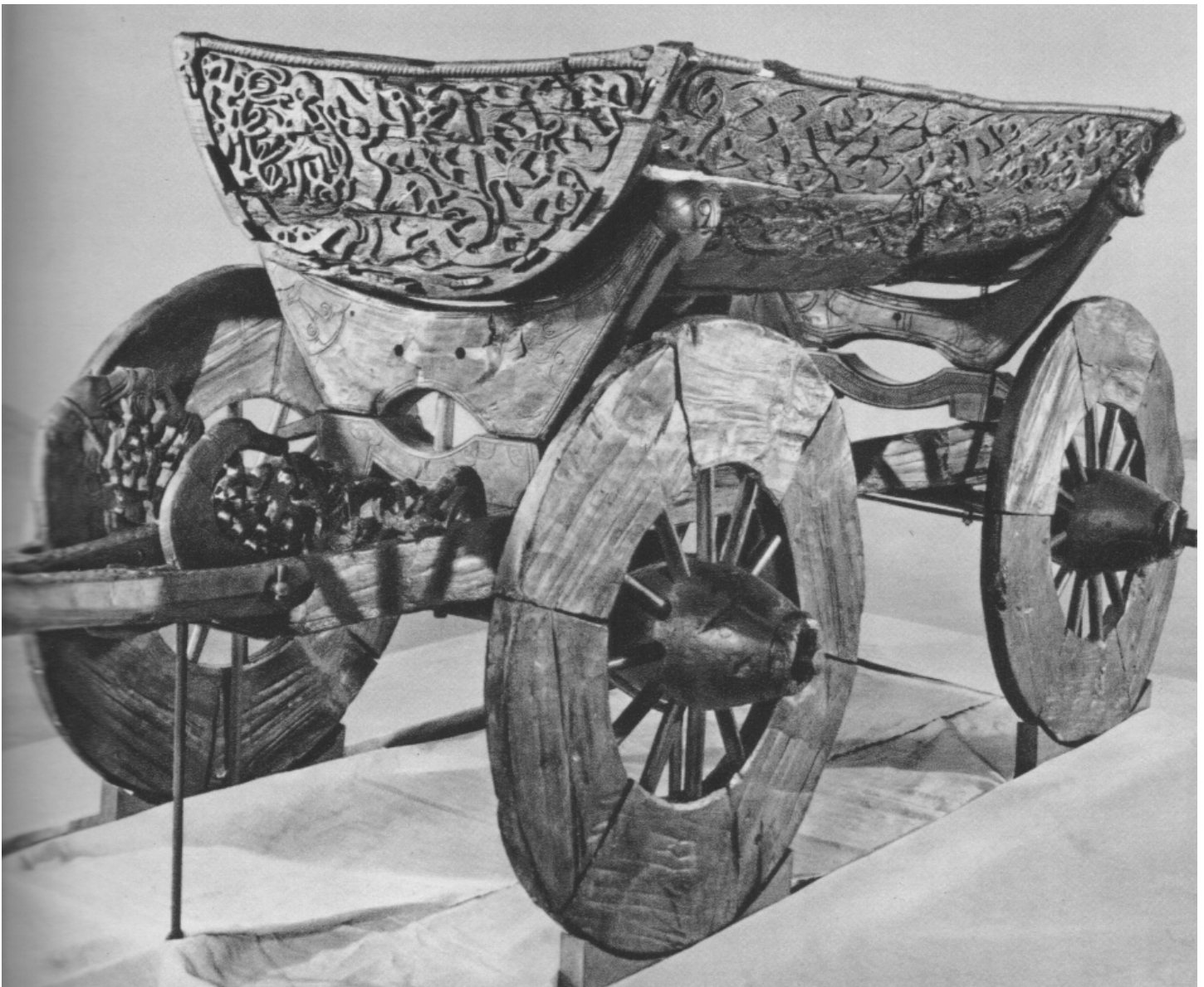
There were two large carved poles found in the Gokstad ship burial that are believed to be tent poles. These poles are carved and were originally painted black and yellow, the same colors as the shields found on the ship. These poles were carved by the same workshop that carved the sides of the ship, and the bed headboards. The carving on the tentpoles is very like the design on the headboards. Only one pair of poles was found; the other seven poles needed to make a tent were not found. The sketch at right is a suggested reconstruction of the tent, based on the Oseberg burial finds. The Gokstad tent poles are notably smaller than the Oseberg tent poles. (photo: Simpson, p. 76; sketch: Wexelsen, p. 21)



## Oseberg Cart

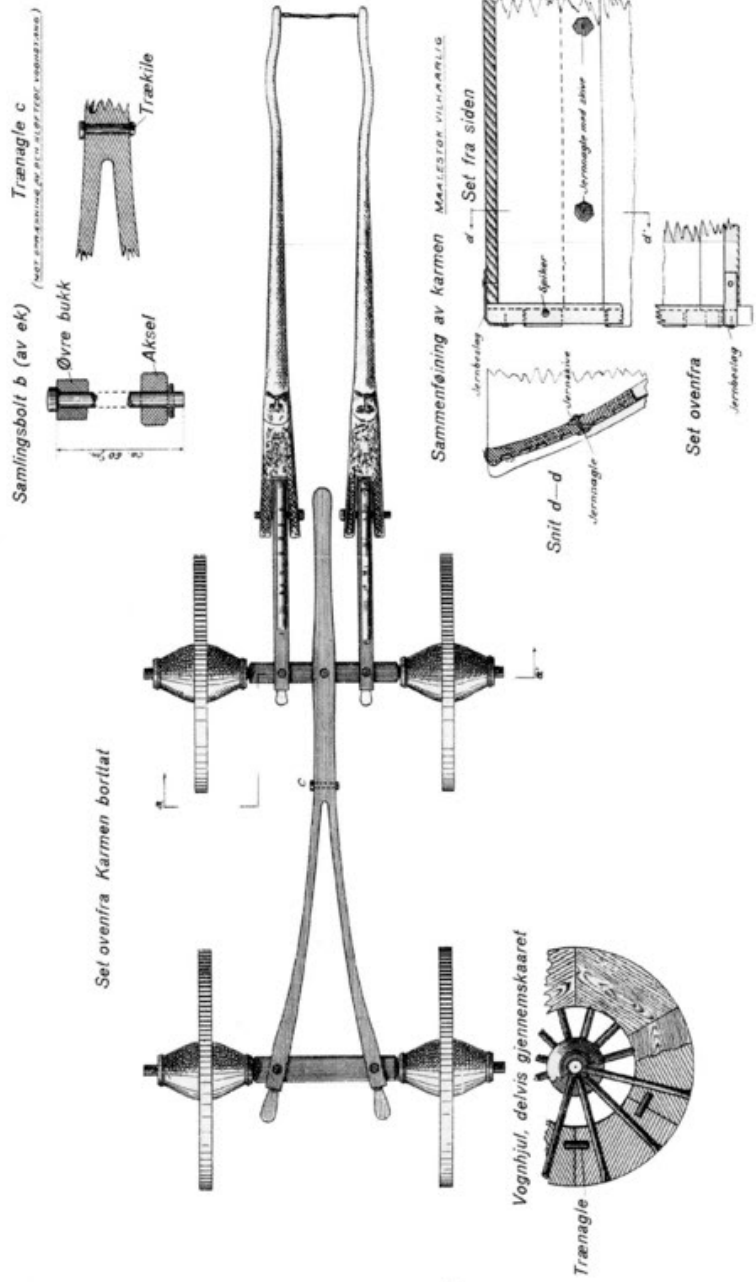
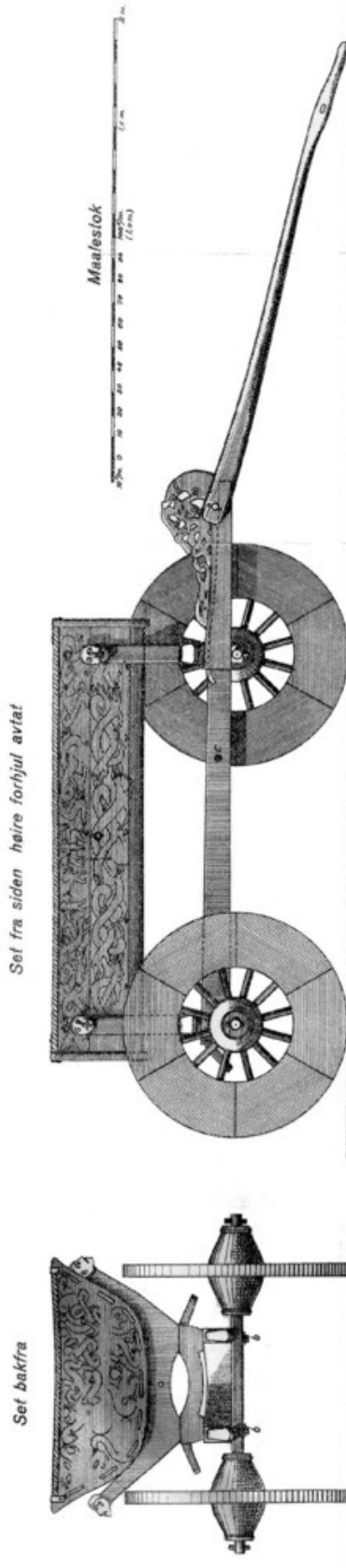
The Oseberg Cart is the only such cart known from Viking Age contexts. There are a few similar carts from Denmark, and Switzerland, and there are depictions of such carts in old Scandinavian rock-carvings. Two four-wheeled carts have been found in Etruscan graves, and such carts were not uncommon in ancient Rome. And of course, there are two carts pictured on the Oseberg tapestry. It is not clear if this cart was used for ritual or for more mundane needs.

The Oseberg Cart was built from oak, beech and ash woods. The wheels are 1 meter wide and are made of 6 pieces of joined wood attached to 12 spokes that lead into the beech wheel hub, which is 40cm (16 inches) long. The wagon is 2.63m (~9 feet) long. Both axles are made of oak and are of slightly different construction. The body of the cart is made of several pieces of carved oak which are fitted together with mortise and tenon joints. The body is 1.97 meters long. The body is able to be lifted off the wagon entirely, as it rests on the carved supports. The wagon body is ornately carved, though the rest of the cart is much more plain. (Anker, p. 51)





VOGNEN



(photo: [http://s192.photobucket.com/user/Castlegrounds/media/Oseberg/Volume%202/Plate I small.jpg.html](http://s192.photobucket.com/user/Castlegrounds/media/Oseberg/Volume%202/Plate%20I%20small.jpg.html))

## Oseberg Sledges

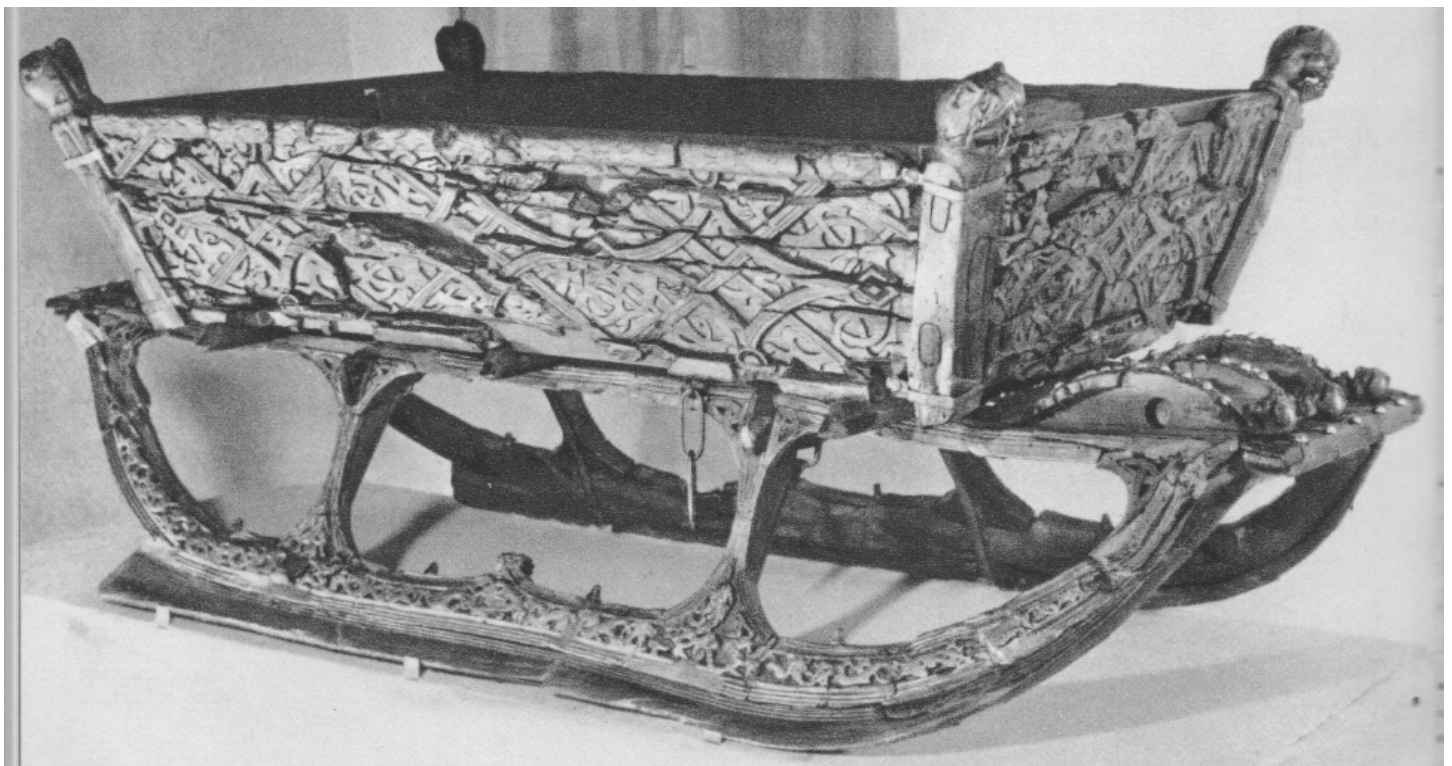
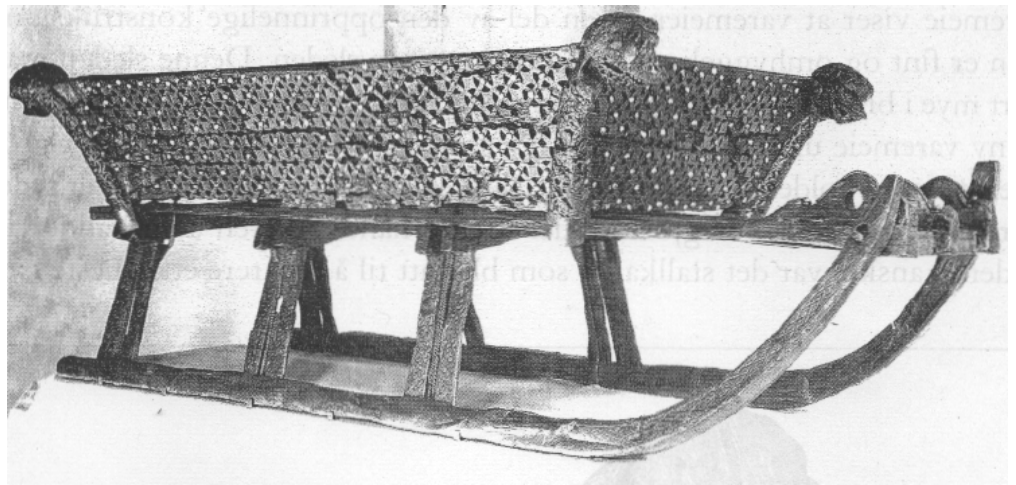
There were four sledges found in the Oseberg burial. Three are “state” sledges, meaning they have been ornately carved, while the other is often referred to as the “Common” sledge. This one lacks the heavily carved surfaces of the state sledges. All of the sledges are built in a similar manner. They all consist of a pair of runners with supports and a frame to hold up the body of the sledge. The bodies of these sledges were removable. The Common sledge was made primarily of beech wood, and was 255cm (102 inches or 8.5 feet) long, 85cm (34 inches) between the runners, and 63cm (25.2 inches) between the top supports. The sledge stands 39cm high in front, and 36cm high in the back.

Gustafson’s sledge (right) was made of beechwood, and was 2.25m in length, a bit smaller than the Common sledge. It has a diagonal pattern with many tinned nail accents.

Schetelig’s sledge (bottom photo) is made of beech and oak with more complex knotwork carvings.

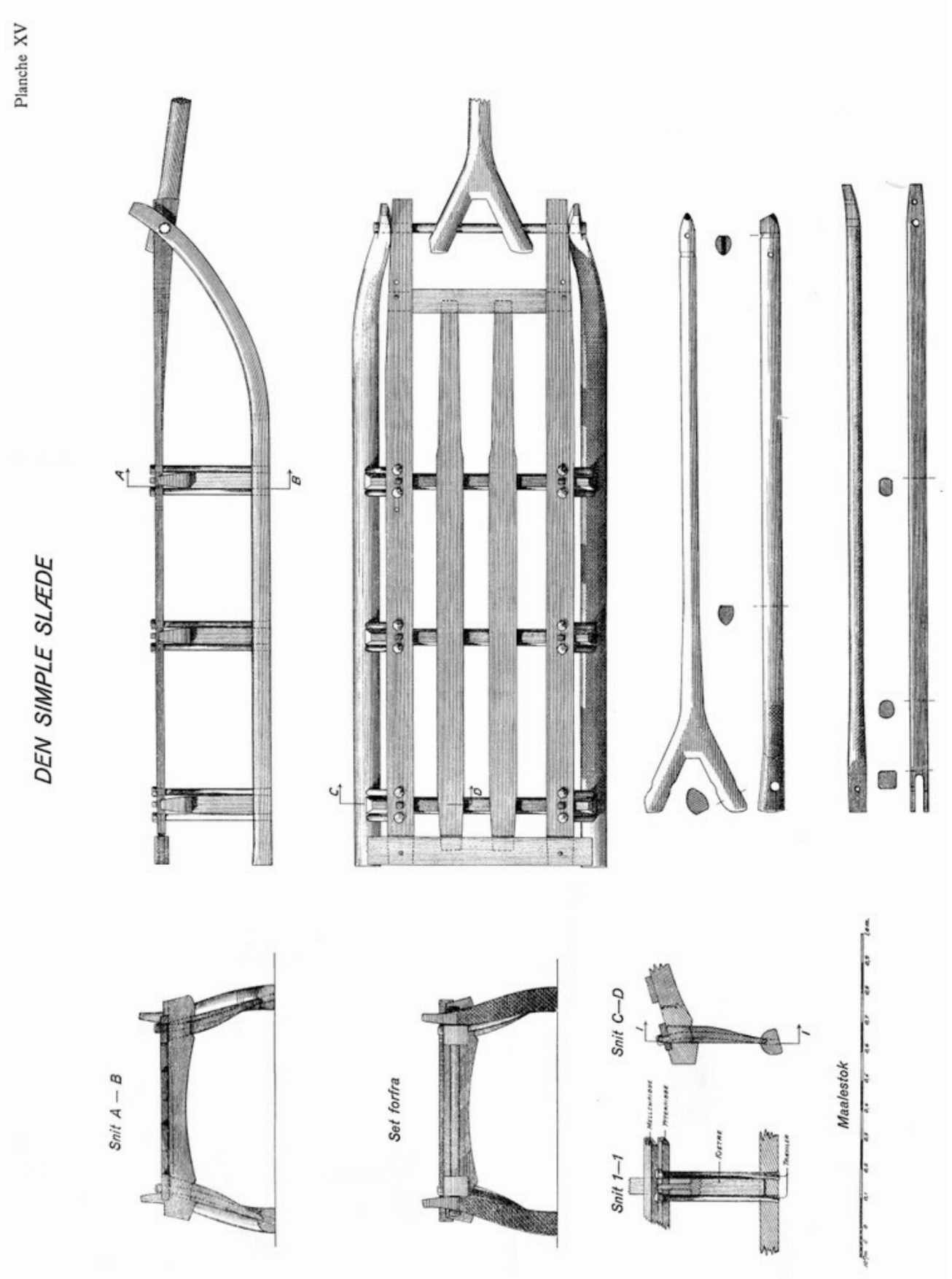
The Fourth Sledge is a similar size to the other sledges, but is in much worse shape.

(Wexelsen, p. 124 right;  
Anker, p. 46 below)



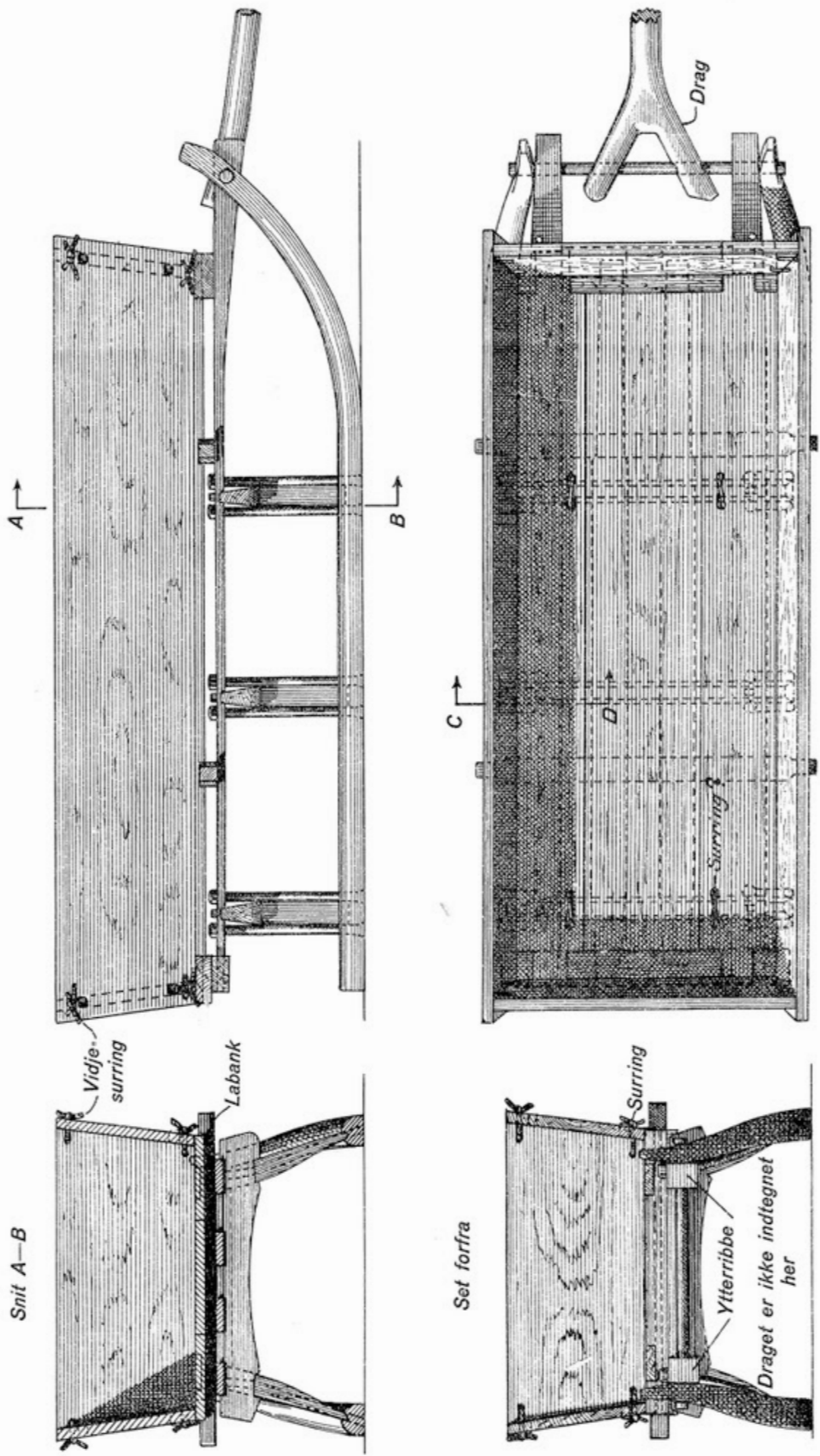
# Schematics of the Oseberg Common Sledge

(sketches: <http://s192.photobucket.com/user/Castlegrounds/media/Oseberg/Volume%202/Plate16sm.jpg.html> and plate 15)





DEN SIMPLE SLÆDE MED KARM



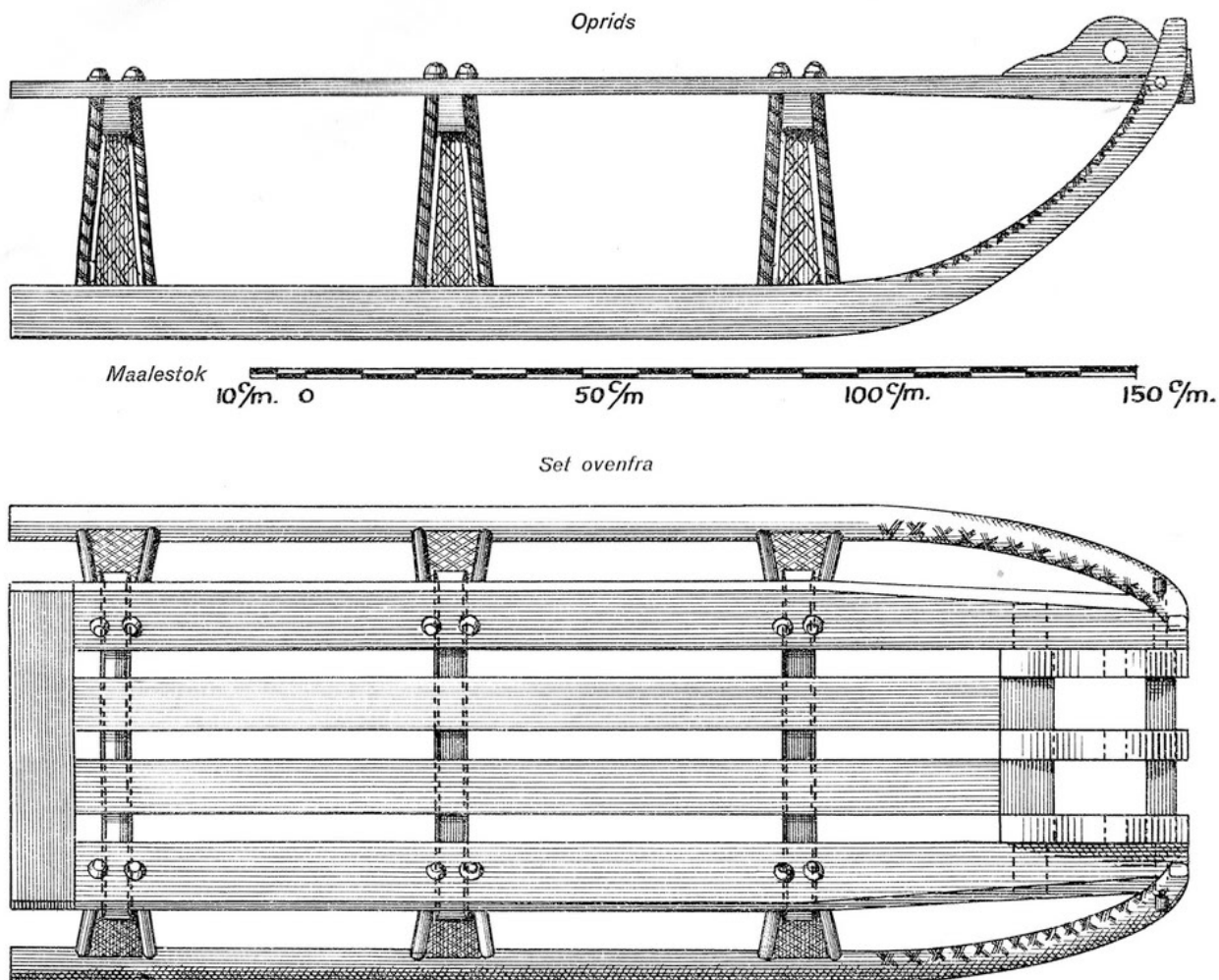


## The Gokstad Sledge

The Gokstad Sledge was not found intact. It appears it was shattered as part of the burial rites, and not by the grave-robbers who came later. The reconstructed drawing below was made using the construction of the Oseberg plain sledge for measurements and comparison. The Gokstad sledge was made entirely of solid oak. The side supports were mortised into the side boards, to better hold the weight of the cross pieces and bear the load the sledge carried. On the outer edge of the supports, trenails were driven into further secure the upper part of the sledge. It is likely that the Gokstad sledge originally had a removable body like the Oseberg sledges.

Planche V

### REKONSTRUKTION AV GOKSTADFUNDETS SLÆDE



(sketch: <http://s192.photobucket.com/user/Castlegrounds/media/Oseberg/Volume%202/Plate5sm.jpg.html>)