

Card Weaving



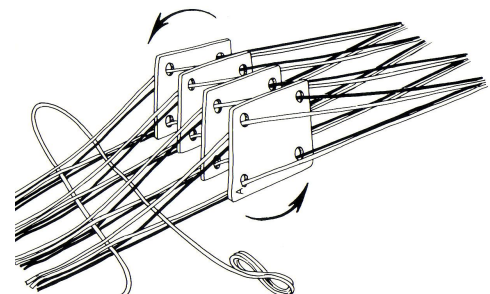
Oseberg ship burial cards for weaving

The one good benefit of have a Husband who hates to go out in the cold, is that I have a large number of cards for tablet weaving. Now if I could only teach him to weave.

Card Weaving is one of the oldest weaving techniques used to create a border or to finish off the edge of a piece of fabric. The Oseberg ship, built in 815-820 burial contained the grave of a woman, thought to be a woman of very high status, buried with a card weaving loom warped with 52 cards. This find is in surprisingly good condition.

I chose to weave my trim on an inkle loom. This loom is more modern than a Norse woman would be familiar with. Normally a piece of band weaving would have been tied to a stationary object, then attached to a belt around the weavers waist. It is for this reason that I chose the more portable inkle loom, as I was unable to weave my trim in a single setting. I chose a cotton warp, instead of a wool or linen warp. I have tried weaving with wool in the past and I was unable to control the tension. I had a tendency to break warp threads or end up with a very fuzzy product with uneven edges. I tried several different weights of yarn, before I chose an 8/2 unmercerized cotton. It seemed to produce the best product in terms of hand or drape. My favorite fiber to weave with is 3/2 perle cotton. Unfortunately, it produced a stiffer and heavier band, when used with cards. (It would make a better belt, then garment trim.) After a considerable amount of reading and exploring of different fibers, I have come to the conclusion that the mercerized cotton produces the closest look of silk (in my price range.) It has a slight shine, that I think the few examples of extant textiles must have had, when they were new.

The sagas tell us that the Norse had a love of color and decoration on their clothing. For this reason I have put trim on the cuffs and neckline of my tunic. In case you are wondering the deep center slit is to accommodate nursing a child. I have done a lot of research on maternity garb. I feel the most practical solution is a deep slit in the neckline, rather than to stuff a hungry baby underneath a tunic starting at the hemline.



Rotation of cards in a pattern