

Finnish diamonds motif

A possible reconstruction of a Late Iron Age band from Finland

Description

The pattern is based on a find from Finland. The original has been lost and only a drawing exists in Theodor Schwindt's book of 1892.

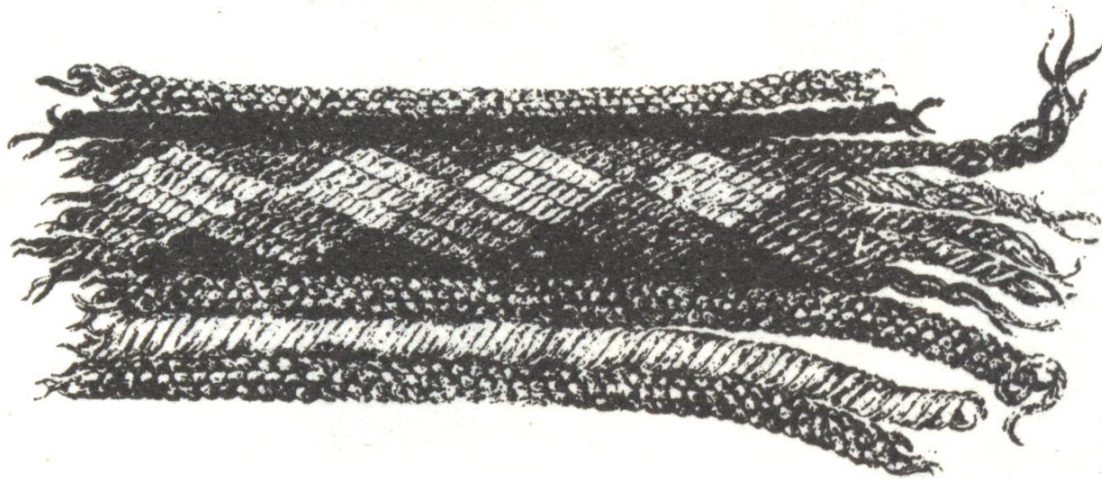


Figure 1: Schwindt's drawing of the Finnish band

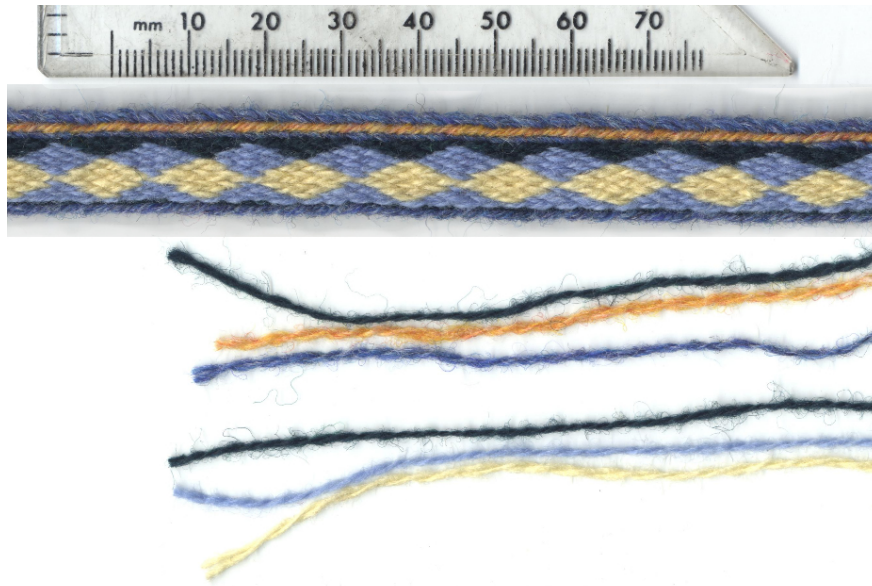
It is not obvious to me how the diamonds in the drawing were produced – the texture of the band and the borders of the diamond motifs don't seem consistent with the common warp twined or twill methods. The coloured warp cords appear to move diagonally across the band and then disappear. Some of the border cords don't even appear to be warp twined but this may be a visual effect of the plies of the yarn.

Diamonds are often woven with a 4-forward, 4-back method, but that is a modern method and produces quite a different texture to the surface of the band.

A possible reconstruction is shown in Figure 2. It was woven using a threaded-in two pack method known from the “Cambridge fragment”, a double-sided linen band found attached to a broken strap end. Penelope Walton Rogers considers this fragment to be mediaeval based on weaving technique and the style of the strap end, but Gale Owen-Crocker accepts it as Anglo-Saxon. The method was therefore definitely known by mediaeval times, and possibly by early Anglo-Saxon. This

reconstruction is not a perfect match for the original drawing, but it looks very similar and uses a historic technique.

Unlike the Cambridge fragment, the border tablets are turned every pick¹ to give a more tightly twisted border, because this seems to match Schwindt's drawing better.



**Figure 2: Sample woven in 3/18 wool
with slightly thicker threads in the border tablets**

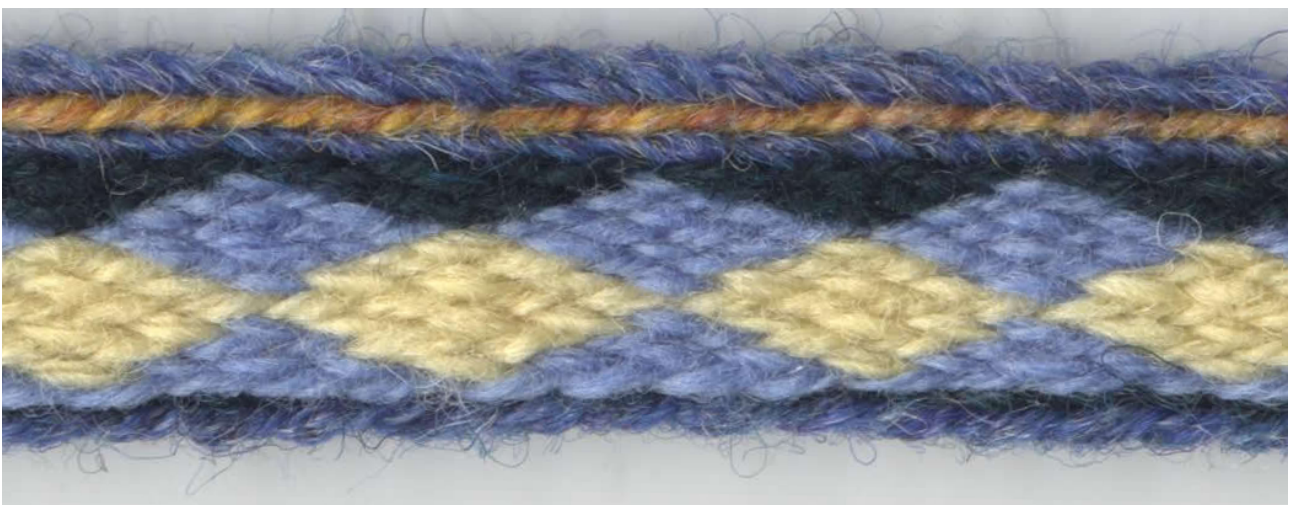


Figure 3: Detail of band

1 One “pick” is a single unit of weaving, that is turn the tablets, clear and beat the shed, tighten and then pass the weft.

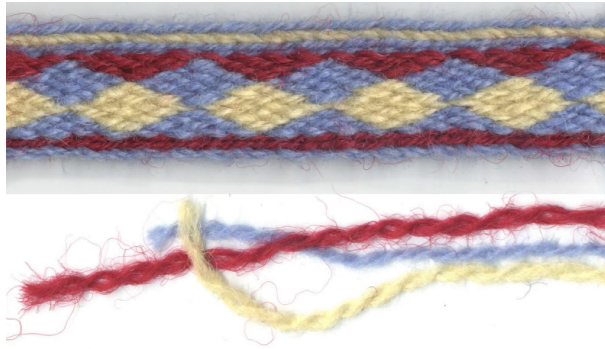


Figure 4: sample woven with one extra border tablet on each side (blue top, red bottom)

Difficulty	Medium
Authenticity	A- A possible reconstruction of a specific band, using a mediaeval technique. Suitable for Viking re-enactment, medium to high status.
Date	Late Finnish Iron Age, approximately 1200 AD
Location	Kekomäki cemetery, Kaukola, Finland
Number of pattern tablets	13
Number of border tablets	5
Weaving technique	The warp-twined pattern is entirely determined by the arrangement of threads in holes. The pattern tablets are turned alternately in two packs, first odd then even.

References

- Crowfoot, Grace M.** *Textiles of the Saxon Period in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society 44*, pp. 26-32. 1951.
- Owen-Crocker, Gale R.** *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*. The Boydell Press, 2004.
- Schwindt, Theodor.** *Tietoja Karjalan rautakaudesta*. 1892. Drawing 376. Reprinted 2012.
- Walton Rogers, Penelope.** *Cloth and Clothing in Early Anglo-Saxon England (AD 450-700) (CBA Research Report 145)*. York: CBA, 2007.

Threading

Thread and arrange the tablets according to Figure 5:

1. Thread the tablets individually with the correct colours.
2. Flip tablets as necessary so that they are correctly oriented, S or Z.²
3. Turn tablets as necessary so that the colours are in the correct positions.

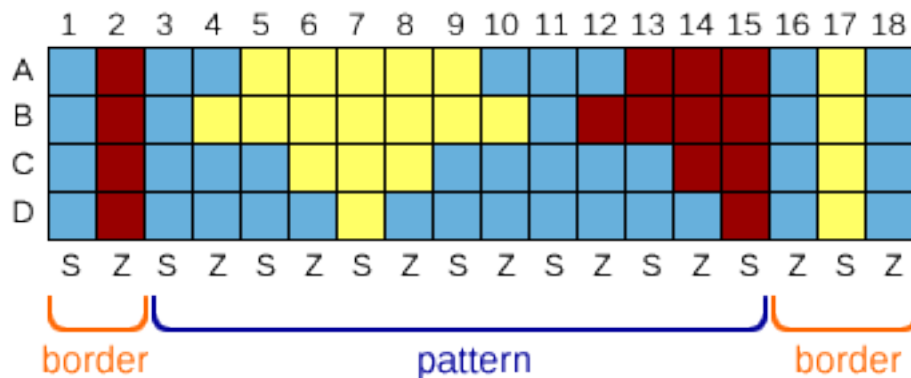


Figure 5: threading the tablets.

Because the pattern tablets are only turned every other pick, the band will be thicker than normal. You can use a thicker thread for the border tablets 1-2 and 16-18 than for the pattern tablets.

Use a weft thread that matches the outermost border tablets.

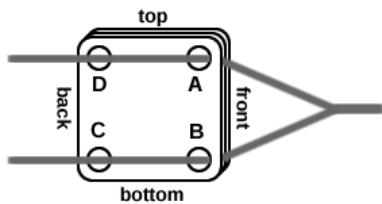


Figure 6: labelling the positions.

A, B, C, D show the positions of the threads in the threading diagram. Most weavers do not label their tablets because which hole is "A" changes as you turn them.

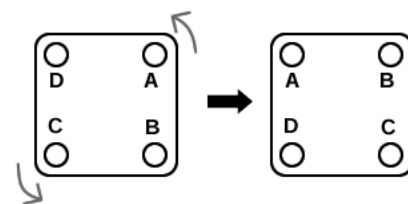


Figure 7: turning the tablets forwards.

If you work with the woven band on your side of the tablets, push the top of the tablets away from you with your thumbs.



Figure 8: flipping a tablet to change it from S to Z (top view).

² Orientation refers to the direction the threads pass through the tablets (Figure 7).

Weaving instructions

Slide the odd-numbered pattern tablets (3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15) forwards to form a separate pack.

1. Turn the odd-numbered pattern tablets AND all the border tablets forwards a quarter turn.
2. Beat, then throw the weft from left to right.
3. Turn the even-numbered pattern tablets AND all the border tablets forwards a quarter turn.
4. Beat, then throw the weft from right to left.

Continue weaving, by repeating steps 1-4.

When the border warp threads become tightly twisted, flip them all and continue weaving. This will reverse the twining and undo the twist.

When the pattern warp threads become tightly twisted, complete a weaving sequence ending with step 4, throwing the weft from right to left, then flip all tablets. Continue but now turn the even-numbered tablets first, that is the pack you just turned. This will reverse the twining and undo the twist.

Troubleshooting

Take care to turn the correct pack: turn the odd-numbered pack tablets when the weft is hanging out the left hand side of the band.³

Tablets 3 and 15, although threaded with only one colour, must be turned as pattern tablets, that is only every other pick.

If the edges of the diamonds look jagged, make the band narrower by pulling the weft tighter, though be careful not to break the weft.

³ After reversal, remember to turn the odd-numbered pack first.