

L-M BRIC News NO. 42001-03-17 © Revised 2002, 2006

L-M Braiding Research & Information Center / Masako Kinoshita
 5 Winthrop Place, Ithaca, NY 14850 U. S. A.
 Phone & Fax 607-257-0886 e-mail mkinoshi@twcny.rr.com

[Nihon-go ban 4-go](#) [Home](#) [Bibliography](#) [World Distribution Map](#)

L-M BRIC News

Special issue

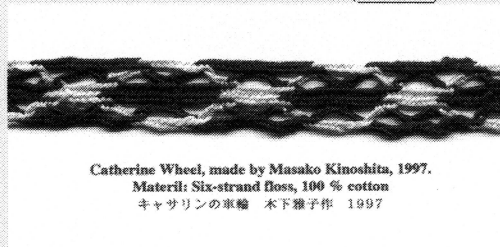
LOOP-MANIPULATION AS LACE-MAKING TECHNIQUES

Since the last issue was published in May 2000, there have been three intriguing discoveries related to the loop-manipulation braiding technique. Interestingly, they all concern in the lace-making techniques ([Note 1](#)):

Previously we had known three lace-making procedures using l-m. With the newly added evidence we now realize that there was a time in Europe when the l-m was used for lace making more widely than we had known; the fact all students of the history of textiles and textile techniques should be aware of. We decided, therefore, to dedicate this issue to "l-m as lace-making techniques."

THREE PREVIOUSLY KNOWN L-M LACE-MAKING CASES:

I. THE CATHERINE WHEEL ([Note 2](#))



Recorded in the 17th-c. English pattern books ([Note 3](#)), is the first l-m openwork we have encountered as far as we know. It is a three-braider method in three-color scheme with each braider holding 5 loops.

II. LACE MASKELL and LACE FRETYS:



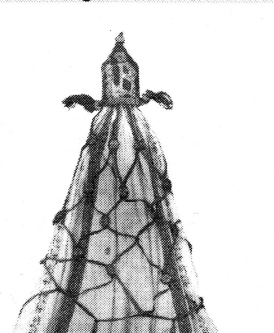
These two-color 8-loop single-braider recipes were found in 'Treatise for Making of Laces' ([Note 4](#)): The former is a flat openwork and the latter tubular with the inner core showing through the openwork. We regard these two similar procedures as one case.

III. OPENWORK INSERTION on a 15th-c. sudary ([Note 5](#));

The sudary belongs the Treasury of the Uppsala Cathedral, Sweden. (Fig. 1)

It is said to have belonged to Jakov Ulysson (1469-1515), Archbishop of Uppsala, and doubtlessly was made in the textile workshop of the Brigittine nuns in Vadstena, according to the Estham-Speiser paper.

Speiser with M. Sondag ([Note 6](#)), doubting the earlier attribution of the work as being 'the earliest piece of bobbin-lace,' studied miniscule structural details and found several mistakes in stitches unique to the l-m technique, establishing that the lace insertion in fact was made using the l-m technique. It was most likely to have been made by



four braiders each holding three loops of red, blue, green and silver yarn. The green yarn forms the edges while other three colors crisscross forming the middle structure.

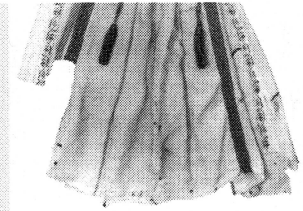


Fig. 1. The Uppsala sudary
Courtesy of Treasury of the Cathedral of Uppsala
大司教のステグリー ウプサラ大聖堂宝庫提供
L-M BRIC News ©

THREE NEW FINDINGS

IV. **DAS LINTWURM PORTLEIN** ("Dragon braid" recipe) found by Ute Bargmann in a 15th-c. German manuscript, and reported to us. We passed it to Speiser who is fluent both in the language and the technique.

V. **LACE-MAKING WITH THREE WOMEN**, a receipt found by Layinka M. Swinburne in a 17th-c. English manuscript. Swinburne sent a query to Santina Levy, a well known textile historian, who happened to be a friend of Noémi Speiser!

VI. **TWO COPES** (Note 7), depicted in photographs, owned by the Episcopacy of Portalegre, Portugal, were sent to Speiser by Mari-Louise Franzen (Note 8), who had assisted the research of the Uppsala sudary.

Noémi Speiser worked on all three latest finds and concluded that the German and English recipes were essentially the same as the "Catherine Wheel." While the English lace on the cope could not be determined definitively, they look, according to Speiser, suspiciously l-m made.

IV. **Das Lintwurm portlein** Found by Ute Bargmann in a 15th-c. manuscript housed in the Library of Heidelberg University

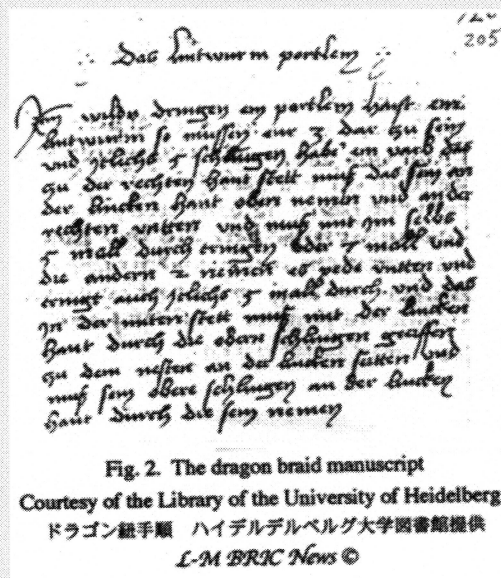


Fig. 2. The dragon braid manuscript
Courtesy of the Library of the University of Heidelberg
ドラゴン紐手順 ハイデルベルグ大学図書館提供
L-M BRIC News ©

Item wildu dringen* ein portlein hast ein lintwurm so müssen eur 3 dar zu sein vun jeliche 5 schlingen haben ein varb das zu der rechten hand stett musz das sein aus der lincken hand obers nemen und an der rechten vntten vnd musz mit zur selbe 5 mal durch bringen order 7 mal und die andern 2 nemen es pede uttten vnd bringt auch jelche 5 mal durch vnd dasz zu der unten stett musz mit der lincken hand durch die obern schlingen greiffen zu dem nesten an der lincken seitten vnd musz sein obere schlingen an der lincken hand durch die sein nemen

U. Bargmann contributed following report: (Note 9)

I found the finger looping riddle, "das Lintwurm portlein (dragon braid)" in a manuscript listed in a German book on early writings dealing with the trades. Several hands wrote the manuscript. Its first 115 of 207 pages deal with woven bands. This is followed by a lengthy section of cures for various ailments, and then falconry, lures and recipes for sauces and compotes. And then pops up the "lintwurm portlein." After that, it's horses and chickens.

Lintwurm also means a worm or snake that turns, so it could be that the color winds around the braid. Judging from the paucity of the text, people must have been very familiar with the technique, so that only so few words were required to instruct the readers

in the making of this braid.

The origin of the ms is unknown; it's estimated to be from mid to late 1400's although it could be earlier.

The manuscript seems to have originated in the Klarissenkloster (the Convent of the Poor Clares) in Nuernberg – there are some clues in the ms such as most of the names of the patterns are Nuernberg patrician surnames, etc. Also a few bands in this ms are similar to those contained in the ms of patterns for gold bands written a half century later by Anna Neuper of the Convent.

The convent declined after Nuernberg became protestant--after 1525 no more novices were admitted. The last nun died in 1596. The library was dispersed: the ms wound up in the library of the Elector Palatine Ottheinrich. The Prince of Bavaria who took Heidelberg in the 30 years War shipped the whole library to the Vatican as a gift to the Pope. After lots of bickering and negotiations, the German manuscripts of the collection came back to Heidelberg, where they were placed into the university library.

It's really amazing that it has come to life again after more than 500 years, isn't it?
(End of Bargmann's contribution)

*Speiser points out that the word 'dringen' appears in a 13th c. fresco of the 'Haus zur Kunkel (House of Distaff)' (Note 10) in Constance, Germany.' The word, which in modern German doesn't make sense here, means in middle German 'to make' things with fiber material, synonymous with to plait, make baskets, fences, ropes, etc, and even to sew. In the fresco two maidens work as if engaging in l-m braiding. The appearance of the word used in a context of the l-m, capped with a proof of the existence of the l-m in Germany, as was found in the Heidelberg manuscript, helps further establish the validity of the interpretation that the fresco is a scene of l-m work. If the fresco was established to be a scene of l-m braiding, it will be the oldest illustration so far found to show the use of the l-m technique.



Figure 5. Wall painting in Constance, Germany,
"Dr(in)gens son wir uns nut schamen!"
スイスとドイツ国境のコンスタンツにある13世紀の織物の壁絵
Photo by M. Kinoshita ©1998

V. A Booke of medicens ... written by Mr. Anthony Lewis ... : out of a Booke which was the La: Marquies Dorsetts

Contribution by Noémi Speiser

Layinka N. Swinburne studies the medicinal content of manuscript recipe books and commonplace books, etc. Incidentally she was intrigued by a few lines relating to textile matters: the first description of lace-making she came across in about 40 documents predominantly from the North of England (1590-1830). She sent a query to Santina Levy, the well-known textile historian. Santina found it was a matter of loop-manipulation, so she handed it over to me.

Here I cite Ms. Swinburne's letter:

"MS Sloane 556 is held in the British Library. It is a receipt book copied by one of the household from an original belonging to Lady Ann Clifford. There are sections on cookery and a few animal remedies and hints. Most are of earlier 17th-c, type and the contributors are not from the usual court circle but seem to have been more lowly gentry.

"The title is 'A Booke of medicens collected being most or all of them as used medicines to heale written by Mr. Anthony Lewis the 20th of January 1696: out of a Booke which was the La: Marquies Dorsetts.' This was Lady Anne Clifford; Lewis was probably her steward.

Lady Anne's youthful interest in silk production was mentioned in her funeral oration. In her portrait in the great Appleby triptych is shown with an embroidery and materials on the table beside her." (End of Speiser's contribution)

Here, we compare the three recipes, the Sloane and Catherine Wheel in original sentences, and the Dragon (English translation by Speiser), broken only by 'step numbers' added by Speiser for easier comparison.

SLOANE 556 (British Library) f.31 transcribed by L. M. Swinburne.

- +1 The lace of three woomans worke being wrought to 15 bowes (Note 11) of ii coolers 10 of the sadest colours and 5 of the lightest coolers, the five lightest being in the middle womanis hand: and the woman on either side must have 5 bowes a piece of the sadest coolers
 +2 all working through double bowes. but the woman in the midst and the right hand must work above the other one the left hand must take one above and another beneath. Above one ye left hande: and benethe on her right hand. At the beginning they must all worke together five or six tymes that the three bowes be kept neare ye mydle woman.
 +3 Then must the mydle woman change her bowes first with ye right hand and att the change of every bowe work twis.
 +4 both of them then
 +5 must the mydle woman change with her on ye left hand in like sort and then
 +6 she in ye mydle must work 5 tymes and the other two five tymes a piece and
 +7 then begin to change again as before.

+1: TO MAKE THE KATHEREN WHEEL,

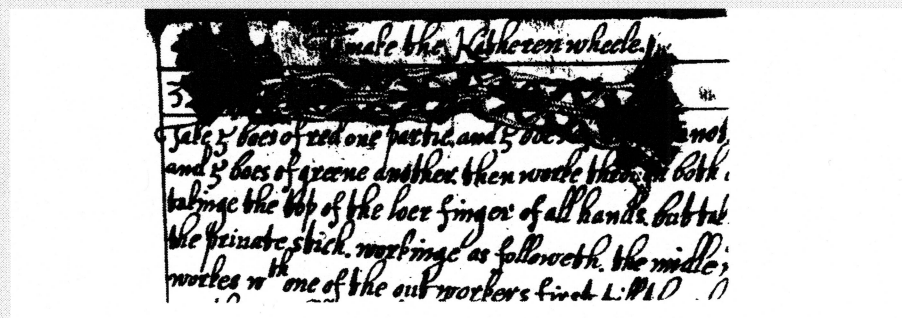


Fig. 3. The original manuscript with a swatch of "Katherine Wheel"
 Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria & Albert Museum.

「キャサリンの車輪」見本付き原手稿

V & A 美術館理事会提供 Photo by Noémi Speiser

L-M BRIC News © 2001

- Take 5 boes of red one partie. and 5 bows of whyte another and 5 of greene another. (Note 12)
 +2: then worke through both boes taking the top of the loer finger of all hands but taking the private stich working as followeth.
 +3: the middle worker with one of the outer workers first till they have one another's culler. And
 +4: then the outer worker 4 stiches alone. and
 +5: the middle worker workes with the other out worker as afore till they have allsoe one another's culler.
 +6: and the other out worker workes 4 stiches alone and the middle 3 stiches. And
 +7: so from one to another. the middle worker allways changing.

+1: IF YOU WANT TO WORK A BRAID WITH A DRAGON,

- there must be three of you, each 5 loops have one color
 +2: The right (braider) takes the loop of the left hand from above (crossed

trans.) and that of the right hand from under (open trans.) and do it by herself 5 or 7 times. and the other two each bring them both through taking from under 5 times
 +3: and the worker at the lower position using the left hand must pass through the loop on the forefinger of the person to her left and must take the loop on the left person's forefinger.

Comparing above three recipes, readers will see a parallel amongst them. You can see that the Dragon is not a complete recipe.

In all three recipes, four pigtail braids and a 4-ridge flat braid are connected in a regular openwork pattern.

The Sloane recipe requires two colors, and the other two three. Of the Sloane, Speiser and Kinoshita differ in the interpretation of a portion in step +3, "at the change of every bowe work twis." Speiser interprets *ëtwisí* as the two loops, one coming from the right braider and another coming from the left braider, are exchanged, whereas Kinoshita thinks that the loops are exchanged twice in a row each time. The former interpretation produces a lace with a crisscross pattern in two colors and the latter one with a two-color vertical stripe.

Note the difference in the recipes for making 4-ridge flat braids. In the German recipe you take top shank of the running loop, one from above and another from beneath. In contrast, in the English recipes you take the top shank for the transfer of one way and the bottom shank for that of the other way (Note 13).

There is no instruction for how to exchange the loops in the 17th-c. pattern books. The earlier record, *Treatise for Making of Laces*, however, tells you how exactly it is done. (Note 14)

VI. The English Copes in Portugal

In her letter to us, Speiser wrote, 'the book in which Ms. Franzen found the two copes tells little except that they might have gone to Portugal after the English Reformation and they were restored in mid-20th c.

'The openwork has been inserted between the embroidery and fringes around the edge of the hood. The insertion is of the Catherine-type, in two colors with the shape and color effect suggesting a golden lizard stretched along the central axis' -- the dragon braid?

Of the six cases, case II works under a principle entirely different from that of all others. Of the other five, which are Catherine types, cases III and V depict two possible ways of loop exchange; one that creates an interlaced connection and another a linked connection. Cases III and IV are associated with convents, and indicate the role played by nuns for preserving and advancing fiber hand crafts in the middle ages. It is interesting to note that 1. All the records suggest that the technique was familiar to the people; 2. The similarity of the instructions between the Catherine Wheel and the Lintwurm portlein, 3. Both the Lintwurm and the Sloane's were found as a stray among a field of medical and/or cooking recipes, reminding us of the similarity of the topics in which Kinoshita found the instructions of Japanese l-m techniques.

Noémi Speiser, who is intimately involved in restoring not only English l-m techniques but also all l-m lace techniques so far known, has written an article specifically dealing with her research relating to l-m as lace-making techniques, to be distributed free of charge. Those who are interested in receiving the article may contact her at:

Ziefenerstrasse 26 CH-4424 Arboldswil, Switzerland
 Phone & Fax (Country code 41) 61-931-2155
 Her books are available from:
 Unicorn Books and Crafts, Inc., unicorn@unicornbooks.com

ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES: INTRODUCTION, No. 4

The Catherine Wheel
 Twin 2-ridge flat braids (or twin pigtails).
 4-ridge flat braid with a twill pattern (shjigeuchi)

LIST OF OBSERVATION POINTS FOR RECORDING L-M TECHNIQUES

The list shows what to look for when you happen to encounter a person who knows l-m braiding and is willing to answer your questions. It will be greatly appreciated if you take such a record and send it to us.

Our readers' Activities specifically related to l-m techniques (Jan. 2000 to March 2001):

ï Works exhibited:

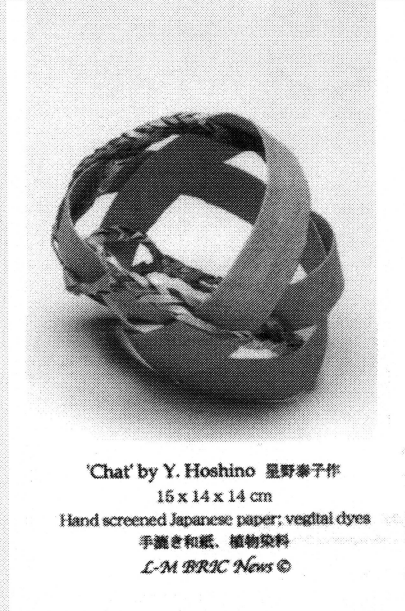
K. Honma, Feb., March '01, Fiber as Art, Tokyo and Fukui, Japan; Y. Hoshino, Feb. '00, Basketry Exhibit, Tokyo, Japan, and June '00, Convergence 2000, Cincinnati, OH; M. Kinoshita, June '00, Convergence 2000, Cincinnati, OH.

ï Workshops: C. Kawabe, 3 classes at Otani Women's Junior College; M. Kinoshita, workshops at Amherst, MA; Tokyo, Osaka, Ikoma, Japan; Deerfield, MA; C. Take, holds private classes at her studio, Funabashi, Japan.

ï Commissioned works: C. Nishioka, Replica of drawstring for a pouch belonging to the Asuka Shrine Treasury, National Treasure, for Kyoto National Museum.

ï Publications: N. Speiser, 'Old English Pattern Books,' Strands 2000, 2000.

*Please let us know your activities related to l-m techniques.



'Chat' by Y. Hoshino 星野泰子作

15 x 14 x 14 cm

Hand screened Japanese paper; vegetal dyes

手漉き和紙、植物染料

L-M BRIC News ©

Acknowledgement (2000-2001):

The reports brought to this issue support our conviction that the l-m was far more commonly known among many cultures and that additional records and artifacts are waiting to be found. All it takes is having somebody who happens to be interested in the l-m. It sounds simple but we know that it takes a special person to go to the trouble of taking notes and sending it to us. We deeply appreciate these friends. Thank you U. Bargmann, M-L Franzén, S. Levy, and L. Swinburne.

I also would like to thank N. Speiser for her advice, and J. Saunders and N. Speiser for monetary contribution and all those who sent me letters of encouragement.

L-M BRIC News is totally self-supported publication by the Loop-Manipulation Braiding Research and Information Center founded by Masako Kinoshita to promote the study of L-M braiding. The Hardcopy version is distributed free of charge. Donations from interested readers, however, are welcome.