

SYSTEM OF BASKETRY TECHNIC

ONLY in recent years have anthropologists interested themselves so generally in the industrial arts of primitive peoples. With this awakening interest has come the appreciation of the prominent place occupied by the cruder forms of weaving—namely, basketry—in the domestic economy of these simple households. It has assisted in the sheltering, the clothing and the feeding of tribes in many parts of the world. This wide distribution of locality, as well as that of usefulness, enables one to better understand the multiplicity of technics which are constructed of materials from so many climes, and in a manner to fit such a diversity of use. With the aggregation of

technics comes the necessity of uniformity in classification and terminology—that confusion may be avoided, and investigations be so recorded as to make possible scientific deductions, relationships of technics—and possibly of peoples.

The accompanying key to basketry, though in condensed form, is presented here with the thought that it may prove as helpful to the ethnologist unfamiliar with the work, as it has to the writer in serious study of collections from many parts of the world. An enlarged issue, fully explained and amplified, will appear later.

Acknowledgment must be made to the two authors who have previously treated basketry classification—Otis T. Mason and J. Lehmann—whose works have made it possible to take a step in advance, and record in clearer and more definite form this key to the technic.

The classification recognizes three kinds of basketry—plaited, woven and coiled ware, the division being based upon their construction or building process, as the elements plait, weave and coil. The fundamental process of the three distinct technics is easily discerned upon slight examination.

Plaiting constructs a mat-like surface by means of active elements only, which move over and under each other in regular order. No passive foundation elements are incorporated, neither are new elements added after the completion of the base, as those already furnished continue to plait the body of the basket.

Weaving is known by its upright warps extending from base to upper edge, as the surface is constructed on these passive warps, crossed by an active binding element, or weft. Two types of weaving—checked and twilled wicker—are less easily recognized because of the equal size of the warp and weft, but even here the distinct weft element added at the base may be traced encircling the basket.

Coiling can easily be distinguished by the spiral movement of its elements. This consists either of an active element, or of a passive element bound down by an accompanying active element.

This key approaches Mason's classification nearest at types of weaving, although here there are differences. Mason entirely excludes plaiting as a basketry process, while his types of coiled ware are based upon the components of the internal element—the foundations. The composition of the inner element is the last consideration, and a later division than is shown on this condensed key.

KEY TO BASKETRY TECHNIC

I. *Plaiting of Crossed Active Elements*

A. Parallel elements in two directions.

1. Over and under one Checked Plaiting.
2. Over and under more than one,
Twilled Plaiting.

B. Parallel elements in more than two directions, Lattice Plaiting.

II. *Weaving of Active Across Passive Elements*¹

A. Parallel warps in one direction.

1. Weft interlaced Wicker Weave.
 - a. Warps coarser than weft,
Plain Wicker Weave.
 - b. Warps of same size as weft.
 - a'. Over and under one,
Checked Wicker Weave.
 - b'. Over and under more than one,
Twilled Wicker Weave.

2. Weft twined.

- a. Weft of two strands.
 - a'. Over one warp Plain Twine Weave.
 - b'. Over two warps . Twilled Twine Weave.
- b. Weft of three strands.
 - a'. Plain weft Three-ply Twine Weave.
 - b'. Braided weft,
Braid Three-ply Twine Weave.

3. Weft wrapped Wrapped Weave.

B. Parallel warps in more than one direction.

1. Weft interlaced Lattice Wicker Weave.
2. Weft twined.
 - a. Warps oblique,
Oblique Lattice Twine Weave.
 - b. Warps vertical and horizontal,
Vertical Lattice Twine Weave.
3. Weft wrapped Lattice Wrapped Weave.

III. *Coiling of Active Element or of Active Along Passive Element*

A. Active element only.

1. Weft spiral Spiral Lace Coil.
2. Weft twisting Twisted Lace Coil.
3. Weft interlacing Interlaced Lace Coil.

¹ Active elements are weft. Passive elements warp.

- 4. Weft knotting Knotted Lace Coil.
- B. Active and passive elements.
 - 1. Weft spiral Twisted Coil.
 - 2. Weft twisting Twisted Coil.
 - 3. Weft interlacing Interlaced Coil.
 - 4. Weft looping Looped Coil.

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