

Weaving in Many Languages

by HELEN LOUISE ALLEN

Many weavers have foreign books which they use for drafts or for the illustrations but are unable to read the written descriptions. It is hard to get these books translated as people who know a language well may not know weaving terms. For instance, to the average English speaking person "tabby" refers only to a cat, and a "shed" is a small building in the backyard. This is true in other countries as well. When I first purchased my Norwegian and Swedish books I decided that as long as Madison is a center of Scandinavian culture I would have the books translated. I engaged a Norwegian to start on Caroline Halvorsen's excellent book. After about an hour's work which consisted mostly in asking what the terms meant, he decided that I knew more about "weaving Norse" than he did. I then studied Scandinavian grammar and worked on the books by myself.

For some time I have kept a comparative vocabulary of weaving terms in as many languages as there are books readily available to the weaver. The vocabularies in any of the languages are not complete as there are many terms that will have to be filled in by weavers of the different countries; the average dictionary knows nothing of weaving terms beyond "loom", "warp", and "weft." Some of my friends have asked for a copy of my lists and also a resume of Scandinavian grammar to help them puzzle out what the descriptions under the drafts and the illustrations might be about.

The majority of the books are in Swedish or Norwegian with a few in Danish. Most of the descriptions under the drafts consist in explanations of the type of thread to be used and the number of threads to the inch; types of information that each weaver has to work out for his or herself according to the materials at hand or the size of the article to be woven. The Scandinavian weavers usually use a much finer thread than we have the time and patience to use, so the number of threads to the inch is very high. The descriptions are, therefore, not as much use as they might appear to be. However if they will be of any use to any one the following bits of grammar may be handy.

Plurals of nouns and verbs are not made by the use of "s" but "a", "ar", "er", or "or" depending upon the word or the language. This is often accompanied by a vowel change in the word. Thus "tand" is "dent" but "tänder" is "dents". "s" on the end of the word usually signifies that it is a verb in the passive and is to be translated by a form of "to be". Thus "Trampas efter solvning" is "To be treadled as threaded", "Trampas som det solvas", "to be treadled as it has been threaded", "Solvas och bindes som nr. 20", "To be threaded and woven as No. 20." Occasionally the "s" will denote the possessive but there is seldom the occasion to use the possessive in weaving.

Besides the plural hanging on to the end of the nouns in certain cases the article hangs on also, thus making a very simple word look very complicated. For instance, "mönsterränderna" looks formidable at the first glance but resolves itself into "monster", pattern, "rand" row, "er", s, "na" the, or "the pattern rows." "Tramporna" becomes "the treadles."

Prepositions are the hardest things to translate from Scandinavian into English and visa versa. They do not have the same feeling for the prepositions that we have. "13 tander p^o 1 cm" is 13 dents in 1 cm., but "1 trad i 1 solv" is 1 thread in one eye. The meaning for "p^o" in the dictionary ranges from "on, upon, at, in, about, against, to, for, of, by," all depending on the connotation. I always figure out the nouns and the verbs and then put in the preposition that best fits the sense without regard to the exact dictionary translation of it.

The terminology used in the Swedish books of Sigrid Palmgren and Maria Collin are somewhat different. For instance, the term for dents used by Palmgren is "tand" but that of Collin is "rör". The translation from the metrical system to the inch is not hard as there are approximately ten centimeters in four inches, thus one multiplies the number given for one dent by ten and divides by four. Usually the number of dents is given in 10 centimeters so one does not have to multiply by ten. In most Scandinavian directions the dents to the cm is given and then the threading thru the eye and thru the reed. The directions may say "8 tänder p^o 1 cm.: 1 trad i solv, 3 tröder i tand." This works out to 60 threads to the inch. Or to take a Norwegian example "90 tinder p^o 10 cm.: 1 trad i hovel, 2 tröder i tind" gives one 45 threads to the inch.

Some times the number is given in terms which correspond to our inch. "17 tal pr aln" or in the Danish books it is often given "20 Snese pr Alen."

A typical description from Palmgren is this:

Del 1 Nr. 24 Halkrus	Vol. 1 No. 24 Honey comb
Varp: Rostgult bomullsgarn	Warp: Rust yellow cotton
N:o 30/2	30/2
Botteninslag: Guld fargat bomullsgarn N:o 30/2	Background weft: Gold colored cotton 30/2
Figurinslag: Grönt bomullsgarn, 5-dubbelt. 16/2	Pattern weft: Green cotton, spooled five threads together. 16/2
Skedtätthet:	Sleying:
11 tander p ^o 1 cm.	11 dents in 1 cm.
1 trad i solv, 2 tröder i tand.	1 thread in an eye, 2 threads in a dent. (55 threads to an inch)

English	Swedish	Norse	Danish	French	German	Dutch
Weaving Loom Warp	vävning vävstol varp	vevning vevstol renning	Vaening Vaening Trend	Tissage metier chaine (to warp ourdir)	Weben Webstuhl Kette	Weven Weggetrouw-Weefstoel Schering-Kette
Harness Treadles Heddle-eyes	skaft trampor solv	skaft trøer hovel hovelene hovling vevskje tind	Skaft Skamlar Søl	lame marche lisse	Schafte Pedale Litz	
Threading draft Threading how to *Dents	solvning Sked (täthet) rörtand plural tänder uppknytning		Solning Røret Rit	peu	Einzuge	
Tie-up Swift		opknytning garnvinde plural skyttel skytler islett	Opbinding	attache devoirdoir	Kette Inteilung garnwinder	Garnafwinder
Shuttle				navette	Schütze Schiffchen Schlussfaden	Scheetspoel Inslag
Weft	Inslag		Islaet Indslag Bomuld Uld	trame duite coton laine	Baumwoele Woele	Katoen Wol
cotton wool	bomull ull ylle	bomull ull		soie lin fils	Seide Leinen Garn Fäden	Zijde Linnen Garen
silk linen yarn thread (s) cloth	siden lingarn garn trad (ar) tyg	garn trad (er) tõi	Garn Traddl (e) tøj Stof Gardin Drejl	fils tissu tissage	Web Stoff Gardine	Draad Weefsel Stoffeering Gordijn
curtain drill rugs	gardin dräll	gardin dreiel gulv løper tepper		serge	Teppich	
mats white— bleached black unbleached	matta vitblekt svart oblekt	hvit bleket sort ubleket	hvid bleget sort ubleget	blanc blanchir noire naturel ecru rouge bleu jaune	weiss bleicht schwartz ungelbleicht	wit blank, bleek zwart ungebleekt
red blue yellow	rødt blått gult	rødt blå	rødt blaa		rot blau gelb	rood blauw geel or gele
Pattern	mönster	mønster	Mønster	model patron serge satin bordure	Muster	Model Patroon Keper Satijn (atlas) rand rip
Twill satin border rep tabby plain weave spinning wheel }	kypert atlas bard rips bundväv cärf	atlas bord rips bunnen lerret	bort reps	liaison	flecht	
				rouet	Spinnrad	Spinnewiel

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A small wooden box — about 12 x 17 x 7 inches deep — four ordinary door stops from the Ten-cent Store and some black upholstery tacks made a stool which completed the ensemble.

The door stops were used for feet, the box was padded, covered with the material like the chair, and then finished with the tacks. (I might add that the tack job was com-

pleted after the picture was taken, and the same evenly spaced row of tacks appears at the bottom as shown at the top in the picture.)

All this wouldn't, of course, fit into an interior decorator's idea of a high-class job, but it does fit into the surroundings and is a marked improvement at a nominal cost.

Monk's Belt

