

## FINGERLOOP BRAIDING



**Fingerloop braiding** is a technique of making sturdy and decorative cords from threads. It is a type of braiding known as *loop manipulation*. The braid is made from loops of thread, attached at a central point, and the loops placed over the fingers and interlaced in different ways.<sup>[1]</sup>

In Europe it originated in the Middle Ages, and excavations from London have produced numerous examples in silk from between the second half of the 12th century and first half of the 15th.<sup>[2]</sup> From the 15th century onwards, various

directions and recipes for different fingerloop braid techniques began to appear in books and in print.<sup>[1]</sup>

A related technique, which involved the loops being placed over the hand or fingers, is the Japanese kute-uchi style.<sup>[3]</sup> This technique arose in the 7th Century, and was used through the Middle Ages to the 19th century, for uses such as tying armour.<sup>[4]</sup> There is some new evidence arising that indicates that samples previously believed to be kumihimo, may actually be kute-uchi or fingerloop braids.

Fingerloop braids were a type of braided cord with many uses. Beginning in the 13th century, they were used for lacing up clothing for a tighter fit. They were used to hold up men's hose and to lace shoes. Braids were used to gather and tighten fabric at the neck and wrists of undergarments. Decorative cords were used to cinch purses in the same way.<sup>[5]</sup>

Some wide and flat braids were made to be purely decorative and sewn on garments as trim.<sup>[5]</sup>

Silk was a popular choice for fingerloop braids, both for its strength and its ability to be dyed many different colors. Leather was another popular material, especially for lacing shoes and tying armor. There is evidence that wool was used. Linen and flax were likely used, but little of those materials has survived.<sup>[5]</sup>

References:

1. Bennis, E. 2007. "Set on Yowre Hondys:" Fifteenth Century Instructions for Fingerloop Braiding in Netherton R. and Owen-Crocker, G. Medieval clothing and textiles Vol. 3. Boydell Press.
2. ^ Crowfoot, E., Pritchard, F. and Staniland, K. 1992. Medieval finds from excavations in London: 4. Textiles and clothing c.1150–c.1450. (HMSO, London.)
3. ^ Illustrated Instruction: Kute-uchi L–M BRIC News, 2004.
4. ^ Single-face Tortoise-shell Design Braids L–M BRIC Illustrated Instruction Series No. 7
5. ^ Jump up to:a b c Swales, Lois; Williams, Zoe Kuhn. "Fingerloop Braids". Fingerloop Braids. Retrieved 1 May 2016.
6. Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fingerloop\\_braid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fingerloop_braid)

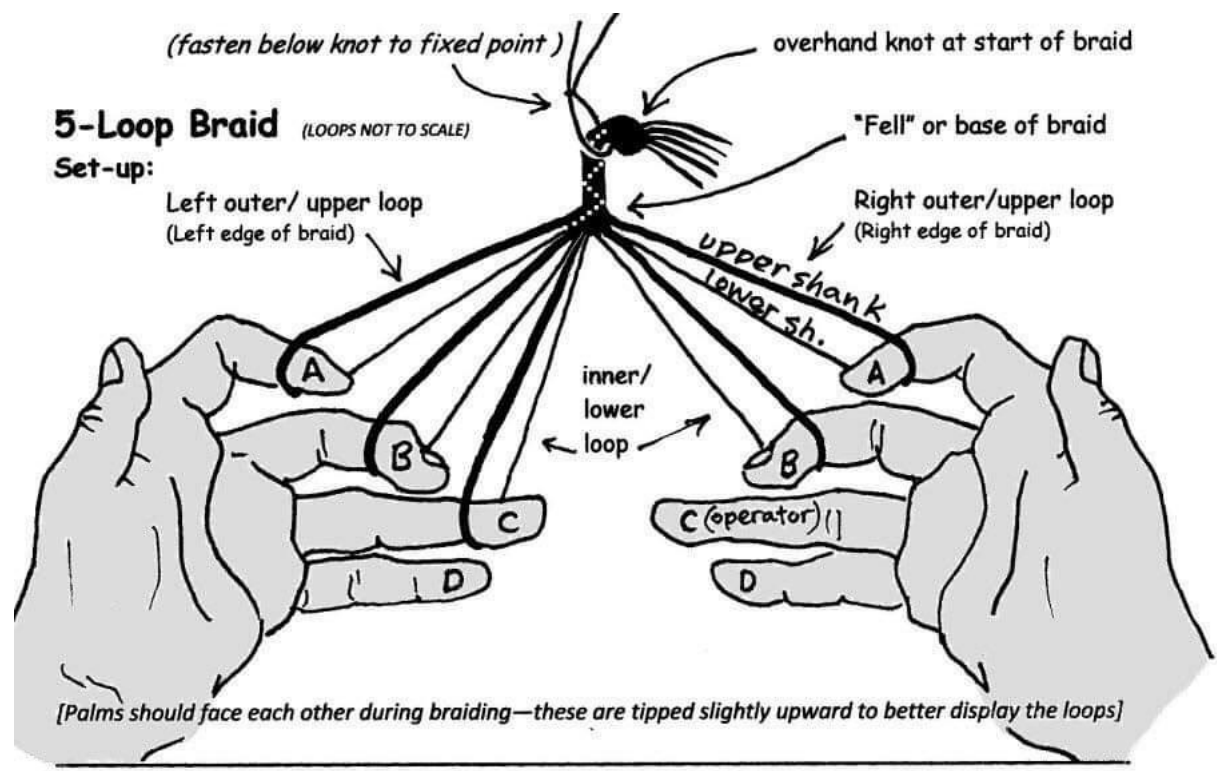


Figure 5. Wall painting in Constance, Germany, "Dr(in)gens son wir uns nut schamen!"  
 スイスとドイツ国境のコンスタンツにある13世紀の建物の壁絵  
 Photo by M. Kinoshita ©1998

Links for further research:

- <https://fingerloop.org/>
- [http://www.lightlink.com/rhiannon/Fingerloop/flb\\_intro.html](http://www.lightlink.com/rhiannon/Fingerloop/flb_intro.html)
- <https://www.cs.vassar.edu/~capriest/fingerloop.html>
- <http://www.stringpage.com/braid/fl/fingerloop.html>
- <https://loopbraider.com/>
- <http://lmbric.net/index.html>
- <http://lynette.housezacharia.com/Fingerloop/>

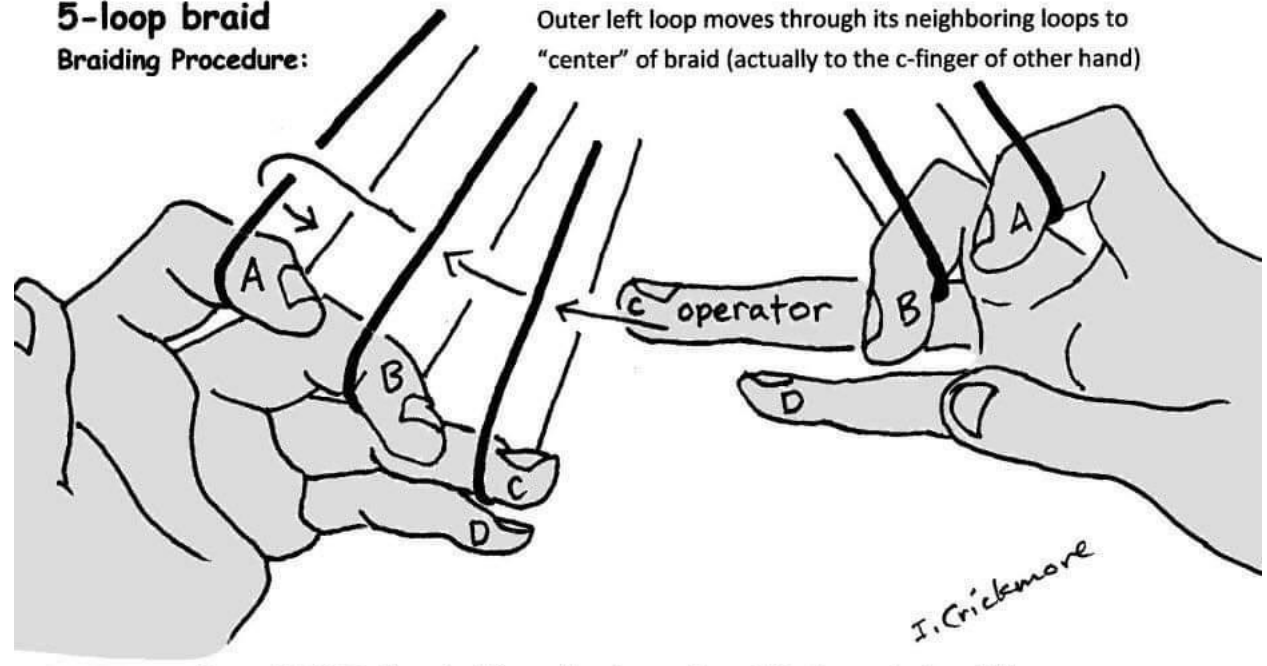




### 5-loop braid

#### Braiding Procedure:

Outer left loop moves through its neighboring loops to "center" of braid (actually to the c-finger of other hand)



1. Operator finger (RIGHT C-finger holding no loop) goes through 2 of opposite hand's loops: first C, then B-loop. Then takes the A-loop by hooking its upper shank from *above* the loop and pulling the loop back and out through B and C-loops.
2. Shift the 2 remaining LEFT loops up, freeing the left C-finger of its loop, so it can be the next operator.
3. Tighten by spreading hands apart in an arc, til loops of both hands form a straight line.

# Fingerloop Braiding just 3 Loops\* -C.2004/Rhiannon


\*Based on a braided object found in Europe worked with several 3 loop braids.  
3 loop braid instructions are not found in any of the manuals so far as Rhiannon knows.)

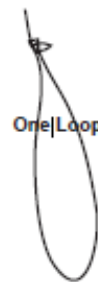
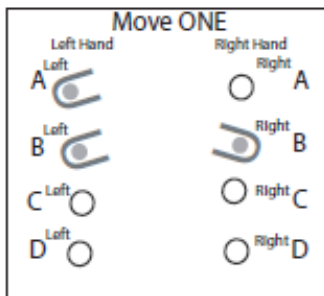
## An Explanation of the schematics to show the loop moves:

A = your index finger  
B = your middle finger  
C = your ring finger  
D = your little finger

Thumb is used as a "helper" with your index finger, but doesn't have a loop on it.

 = loop on your finger

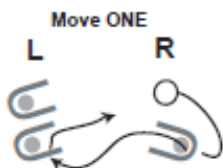
 = NO loop on your finger



Tie the knotted end of loops to a "leash" and leash to a sturdy object.

The braid starts forming here

Your fingers go in the loop ends  
3 loops



Move ONE (and a half)



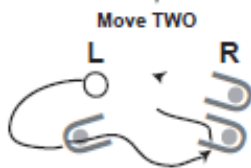
Move ONE (and three-quarters)



Take your index finger thru the middle of the loop on your right hand and "hook" the bottom of the bottom loop on your left hand (Left hand bottom loop is on your left middle finger). Keep all your fingers "curved" as you carry that loop back to your right index finger.

Move the left index finger loop down to your left middle finger.

Next do a mirror image of what you just did.



Take your L index finger thru middle of the loop on your left hand and "hook" the bottom of the bottom loop on your right hand (right hand bottom loop is on your right middle finger). Keep all your fingers "curved" as you carry that loop back to your right index finger.

REMEMBER: spread your arms out widely after you make each move to tighten your braid structure.

REPEAT move ONE and move TWO until you come to the end of having room for your fingers in the loops.

To finish: Grab one loop and take your fingers out of all the rest of the loops. Take the remaining loop off your finger, and put it around the rest of the loops so you can pull the tail of that one loop thru itself.

MOVE variations:

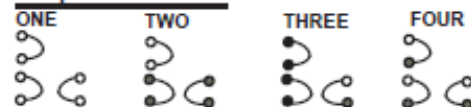
Try going thru the top loop on both moves:



Try going thru the bottom loop on move ONE and the top loop on move TWO:



COLOR variations: A single bow can be just one color or it can be one color on top and one color on the bottom. (a knot at both ends:

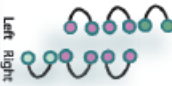


**5. A GRENE DORGE OF VJ BOWES-C.1475**  
(In English: Barley Corn of 6 Bowes)

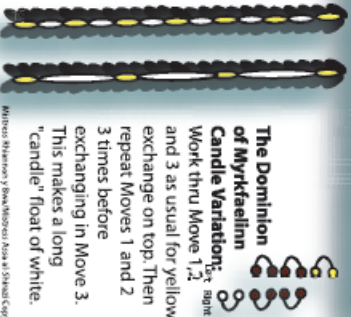
Place 1 bowe each of one color on BC<sup>Right</sup> and BC<sup>Left</sup>. Place a different colored bowe on D<sup>Right</sup>. Place a different colored bowe on A<sup>Right</sup>.

- Move 1<sup>a</sup> - A<sup>Right</sup> through BC<sup>Right</sup> take C<sup>Left</sup> REV.
- Move 1<sup>b</sup> - Walk down B<sup>Left</sup> to C<sup>Left</sup>.

**Color Arrangement of bowes on fingers**



One Bow of 6 Bowes - C. 1475



Mistress Rhiannon y Bwa/Mistress Azza y Smael Copyright

**A LACE BEND ROUNDE OF 8 BOWES- C. 1475**

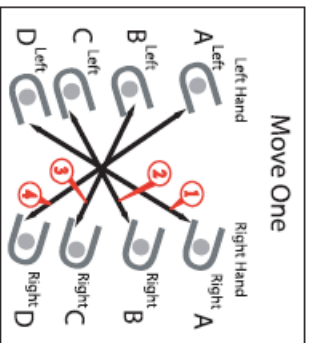
- Place 1 bowe each of one color on ABCD<sup>Right</sup>.
- Place 1 bowe each of another color on ABCD<sup>Left</sup>.
- Move 1<sup>a</sup> - A<sup>Right</sup> change with D<sup>Left</sup> REV.
- Move 1<sup>b</sup> - B<sup>Right</sup> change with C<sup>Left</sup> REV.
- Move 1<sup>c</sup> - C<sup>Right</sup> change with B<sup>Left</sup> REV.
- Move 1<sup>d</sup> - D<sup>Right</sup> change with A<sup>Left</sup> REV.
- Repeat from Move 1<sup>a</sup>.

NOTE: Loops exchange places between fingers, one passing thru the other. In this lace, it is possible to pickup a loop either reversed or unreversed. The lace structure will show a slight difference between the two choices.



Lace Bend Rounde of 8 Bowes - C. 1475

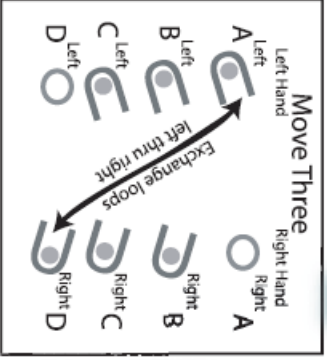
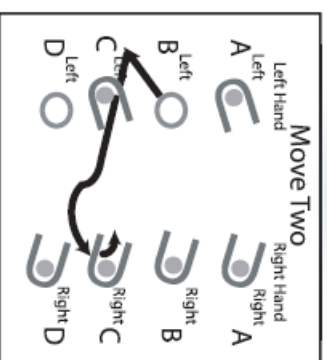
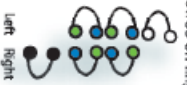
**Color Arrangement of bowes on fingers**



Mistress Rhiannon y Bwa/Mistress Azza y Smael Copyright

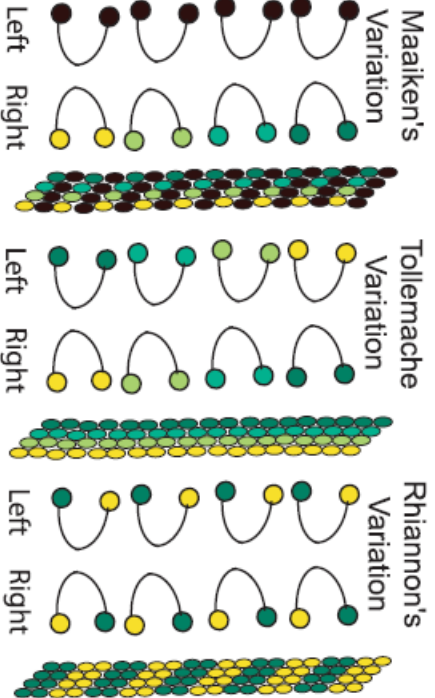
**The Barony of Marinus Variation:**

**Color Arrangement of bowes on fingers**



- Move 2<sup>a</sup> - B<sup>Left</sup> through C<sup>Left</sup> take C<sup>Right</sup> REV.
- Move 2<sup>b</sup> - Walk down Right Bowes.
- Move 3 - A<sup>Left</sup> change with D<sup>Right</sup>.

**A LACE BEND ROUNDE OF 8 BOWES- C. 1475 - variations**

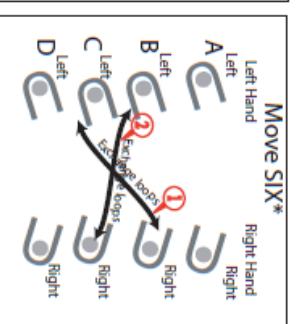
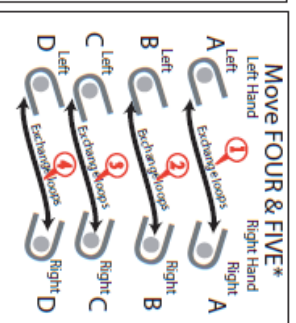
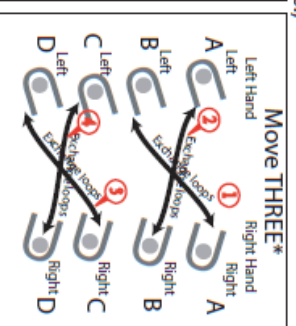
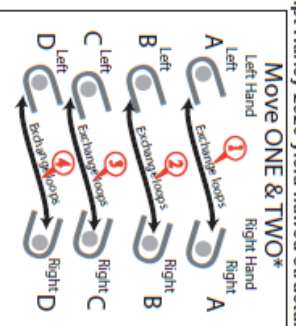
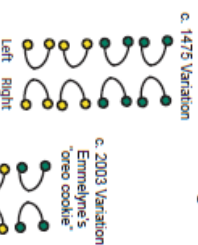


## LACE MASCLE OF 8 BOWES \*-C.1475

### One Worker

\*Based on Naomi Speiser interpretation - original instructions in manuscript Harley 2320 yield flawed structure.)

#### Color Arrangement of bowes on fingers



### Two Workers:

Each worker sets up in **mirror image** and works as above but at:

**Move Seven: NOTE:** The instructions below don't quite "work". Experiment with raising or lowering one of the second workers hands before you connect the two braids by exchanging your R d with fellow's R d and your L d with fellow's L d. As written, the second braid closes around itself rather than laying flat.