Medieval Weave Structures

Each of these weave structures is taken from an extant pre-17th century textile

I have attempted to give some examples of when and where this textile can be found, however these are examples only and are not to be taken as an exhaustive list

**Basic**

**Tabby**
- Tabby (plain weave)
- Half-basket (extended tabby)
- Basket weave

**Twill**
- 2/2 twill
- 2/1 twill
- 3/1 twill

**Other**
- Satin (5 shaft)
Tabby (Plainweave)
Tabby is the simplest weave structure, and can be found throughout history in various fibres

Weaving Draft

When and where can this textile be found?
• 1st century Egypt in linen, cotton, and goat hair [1]
• 1st century Denmark in wool [2]
• 1st century England in wool [3]
• 1st – 4th century Western Roman Empire in linen and wool [3]
• 1st – 4th century Eastern Mediterranean (Roman Empire) in linen [4]
• 1st – 11th century Lithuania [5]
• 2nd century (Roman Era) Czech Republic in a plant fibre (linen?) [6]
• Second half of the 2nd century (Roman Era) Scotland in wool [7]
• 3rd – 4th century Denmark in wool [8]
• 3rd -5th century (Roman Era) France [9]
• 5th – 7th century England (Early Anglo-Saxon) in linen and wool [10]
• 5th – 7th century Switzerland in wool and linen [11]
• Late 5th – mid 7th century (Merovingian) Belgium [12]
• Late 6th century (Merovingian) France in plant fibre (linen? hemp?) [13]
• 6th – 7th century (Merovingian) France in wool and silk [14]
• Late 6th – early 7th century (Merovingian) Belgium in animal fibre (horse? goat?) [15]
• 6th – 8th century Denmark [16]
• 9th – early 10th century Pomerania in silk [17]
• Late 9th – 10th century England in silk [18]
• Late 9th – 12th century England in wool [18]
• Late 9th to 14th century England in linen and wool [19]
• Late 10th – 12th century England in vegetable fibre (linen?) [18]
• Late 11th – 12th century in England in goat hair [18]
• 10th – 12th century Russia in linen and wool [20]
• Mid-10th – 11th century Russia in linen [21]
• Late 10th century Prague in linen and silk [22]
• Late 10th to mid-11th century England in silk [19]
• 11th century Denmark in linen [23]
• 11th – early 12th century Poland in flax or hemp [24]
• 11th-13th century Ireland in wool [25]
• 12th century Norway in wool, hair, flax, and silk [26]
• 12th – mid-14th century Sweden [27]
• 12th – 14th century Spain in silk [28]
• 12th – 16th century Iceland [29]
• 13th century Scotland in linen [7]
• 13th century Pomerania in wool and silk [17]
• 13th – 14th century Ireland in a vegetable fibre (linen?) [25]
• Late 13th to early 14th century in England in wool [30]
• 14th century in England in silk [30]
• 14th century in Poland in silk [31]
• 14th century Norway in linen [32]
• 14th century Denmark in wool [33]
• 14th century – 15th century Poland in flax or hemp [24]
• 15th century in England in wool [30]
• 16th century Netherlands in wool [34]
• Late 16th century England in silk [35]
• Late 16th century Netherlands in silk [34]
• Late 16th century Ireland (Dublin) in silk, wool, half-silk (silk/wool or silk/linen), linsey-wolsey (animal/vegetable), and wool/cotton [36]
Half-Basketweave (Extended Tabby)
This weave structure is a simple variation on tabby weave, achieved by pairing the warp or the weft. This pairing is usually of two threads, but can be more.

Weaving Draft

When and where can this textile be found?
- 1st – 4th century Western Roman Empire in wool and linen [3]
- 1st – 4th century Eastern Mediterranean (Roman Empire) [4]
- 2nd century (Roman Era) France in wool [9]
- 4th century (Late Roman) England in linen (or possibly hemp) [37]
- 10th or 11th century Iceland in wool [29]
1. Basketweave (Extended Tabby)
This weave structure is a simple variation on tabby weave, achieved by pairing the warp and the weft. This pairing is usually of two threads, but can be more.

Weaving Draft

When and where can this textile be found?
- 1st century Egypt in linen and cotton [1]
- 1st – 4th century Western Roman Empire in wool and linen [3]
- 1st – 4th century Eastern Mediterranean (Roman Empire) [4]
- Late 2nd – early 3rd century (Roman Era) France [9]
- 4th century (Late Roman) England in linen (or possibly hemp) [37]
2. 2/2 Twill

In twill weaves, the weft is staggered to the right or the left, creating a diagonal effect. In 2/2 twill the weft goes under two warp threads, then over two. This is also called a balanced twill, because the warp and weft floats are even.

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When and where can this textile be found?

- 1st century Denmark in wool [2]
- 1st century to mid-3rd century Egypt (Roman Era) (in wool?) [38]
- 1st – 4th century Western Roman Empire in wool and linen [3]
- 1st – 4th century (Roman Era) France [38]
- 1st – 4th century Eastern Mediterranean (Roman Empire) [4]
- 1st – 11th century Lithuania [5]
- 2nd century (Roman Era) Poland in wool/linen (both fibres in same textile) [39]
- 3rd – 4th century Denmark (likely wool) [40]
- 3rd – 4th century Denmark in wool [8]
- 4th century Poland in wool [39]
- Norway in mid-5th century to mid-6th century (wool?) [41]
- 5th – 6th century Norway in wool [42]
- 5th – 7th century England (Early Anglo-Saxon) in linen and wool [10]
- Late 5th – mid 6th century (Merovingian) Belgium [12]
- 6th – 7th century (Merovingian) France in wool [14]
- Late 9th – mid-10th century England in linen [19]
- Late 9th – 10th century England in wool [18]
- Late 9th – mid-11th century England in wool [19]
- 10th – 12th century Russia in wool [20]
• 11th century Finland in wool [43]
• Late 11th – early 12th century Pomerania in wool [17]
• 11th-13th century Ireland in wool [25]
• 11th – 14th century Norway [44]
• 12th century Norway in wool [26]
• 12th – mid-14th century Sweden [27]
• 12th- 16th century Iceland [29]
• 13th – 14th century England in wool [19]
• 14th century Denmark in wool [33]
• 16th century Netherlands in wool [34]
• Late 16th century England in wool [35]
• Late 16th century Netherlands in silk warp/wool weft [34]
• Late 16th century Ireland (Dublin) in wool [36]
3. 2/1 Twill

In twill weaves, the weft is staggered to the right or the left, creating a diagonal effect. In 2/1 twill, the weft goes under two warp threads, then over one, creating a warp-faced twill.

**Weaving Draft**

![Weaving Draft Image]

**When and where can this textile be found?**

- 1st – 4th century Western Roman Empire in wool [3]
- 1st – 4th century Eastern Mediterranean (Roman Empire) [4]
- Mid-late 3rd century (Roman Era) Spain [45]
- 1st century to mid-3rd century (Roman Era) Egypt (in wool?) [38]
- 2nd century (Roman Era) Czech Republic [6]
- 10th – 12th century Ireland in wool [46]
- Mid-late 10th century England in a plant fibre (linen?) [19]
- Late 10th century England in wool [18]
- 11th century Lithuania [5]
- 11th-13th century Ireland in wool [25]
- 11th – 14th century Norway [44]
- Late 11th – 12th century in England in goat hair [18]
- Mid-12th century in Pomerania in wool [17]
- 12th century Norway in wool [26]
- 12th – 13th century England in wool [19]
- 12th – mid-14th century Sweden [27]
- Late 13th century Finland in wool [47]
- 14th century Norway in wool [32]
- 14th century Denmark in wool [33]
- Mid-14th century Scotland in wool [7]
• First half of the 16th century Netherlands in wool [34]
• Late 16th century Netherlands in silk warp/wool weft (weft-faced 1/2 twill) [34]
• Late 16th century Ireland (Dublin) in half-silk (silk/wool or silk/linen) [36]
4. 3/1 Twill

In twill weaves, the weft is staggered to the right or the left, creating a diagonal effect. In 3/1 twill, the weft goes under three warp threads, then over one, creating a very warp-faced twill.

3/1 twill is not a common weave structure on its own, but it is the basis of more complex weaves such as 3/1 ribbed twill and 3/1 twill block damask.

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When and where can this textile be found?

- Late 16th century Ireland (Dublin) in silk [36]
5. 5-Shaft Satin

Satin has a similar binding to a warp-faced twill, except that the pattern unit is at least five and the binding is spaced in such a way as to avoid a regular pattern (such as the diagonal pattern in twill).

Satin weave was developed in China, and the earliest examples can be found there dating to the 8th century. From extant textiles we know Satin was introduced to England no later than the last quarter of the 13th century. Satin is commonly associated with silk, as the long floats are ideal for showing off this fibre. There are examples of mixed-fibre satin as well. The Clare Chasuble (late 13th century, England) was made from satin with a silk warp and a cotton weft, most likely imported from Iran. In the late 15th century the Italians were weaving ‘satin de Bruges’ which had a silk warp and a wool or linen weft.

Satin was commonly used as the basis for more complex weaves, such as satin damask and lampas.

Note: Sateen is the term generally used to describe a weft-faced satin but has been used to mean other things (such as a satin made from cotton). This term should be understood in context when reading.

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When and where can this textile be found?

- Introduced to England no later than the last quarter of the 13th century [48]
References


