

Woven frilled veils



Often you can see the long frilled veils on manuscript illuminations and on sculptures. The veils are draped around head and shoulders in different ways. They can also be worn in double layers leaving the neck unveiled. The same long veil can be worn in many different ways. The veils have often a small and slightly frilled edge. It has been discussed if the edge is sewn on the veil or if it is a woven frilled veil.

Two veils with sewn frills



Some years ago I made two veils with sewn frills. One with frills along just the long sides of the veil and one with frills round the whole veil. And I tested to wear them in different ways.

Now the time had come to do what I had wanted all the time: veils with woven frills!

Three veils with woven frills

The report [Textiles from Burgos Cathedral](#) (Camilla Luise Dahl, Marianne Vedeler, Concha Herrero Carretero) describes some long, narrow (11-18 cm) woven silk ribbons, with pleated or frilled edges. These are no veils but rather head or cheek ribbons.

There is a variation of the edges. But mainly they have thicker yarn in the edges, sometimes single threads, sometimes double threads. The weft is the same as the warp in the main weave.

This is not the kind of textiles I want to weave. I want to weave frilled linen veils. But these textiles show clearly how to make a frilled edge. So I go along with it.



The Project

My weaving project is a linen veil of 50 cm width with a small frilled edge on both sides and with a length of 150 cm.

I have a fine linen yarn 28/1. Last year I made some samples with varying settings in plain weave and frilling the edges in different ways. I wanted a relative open plain weave so it would drape fine round the head.

In the spanish silk weaves the thread in the edge is 1,5-2 times as thick as the main weave. Linen yarn 16/1 worked fine for the edge.

The edge and the main weave are of the same set. This means, that the edge will be thicker and more dense.

The sample I liked most had 15 end/cm in the main weave – 50/10, 1 end per heddle, 3 ends per dent.

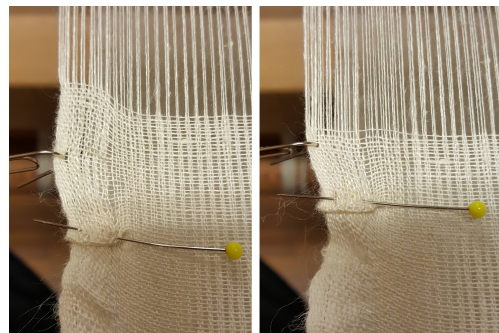
The weaving

The threads for the edge were warped separately and will hang loose at the far end of the loom, wound on a reel on each side. Two damask weights were enough to hold them straight.

The frills were made in this way:

I shuttled 14 wefts, pulled the edge down so the weft line became straight, and fixed it with a needle. Again I shuttled 14 wefts, pulled the edge and moved the needle.

The small hook, the paper-clip, straighten the edge so it was no need for me to hold it in with my fingers. It took me 50 cm of weaving to find out. The paper-clip is attached to a string with a small weight hanging over the side of the loom.



The weaving manner is quite simple. It is a plain weave. The difficulty is to handle the loose hanging threads for the frills. When changing the tension of the main warp and the edge warp you can make the edges more or less frilled.

The result



The frills of the first veil have 21 ends and is woven 1/1 with 3 end per dent, having the same set as the main weave. It is whole white.

For the second veil I wanted to weave blue stripes.



Two medieval images on Gotland. having striped veils.

Maria from Lärbro is from the third quarter of the 1400-century. Her veil has both red and blue stripes.

Bro church has a long wallpainting of “Passionsmästaren” from the middle of the 1500-century. In the motif “Anna själv tredje” with Jesus, Maria and Marias mother Anna, Jesus grandmother has a veil with thin stripes, two and two together. That veil gave the pattern for my blue striped frilled veil.



The frills have 20 ends and is woven 2/2 with 4 end per dent. Each stripe is woven with two wefts of blue 16/1 with 14 weft between. 10 cm to next stripe gave the appearance of Anna's veil.



When I was planning this veil I asked a friend on Bornholm what picture she had used for her veil with stripes And I got this picture from Østerlars church, a wallpainting of Maria from early 1400-century.

And look – she is wearing a veil with the same 2 + 2 stripes as mine, but in red!

So, as I had warp left for one more veil I was of course eager to weave one with red stripes too.

One of the spanish weaves has a red frill. I combined Spain with Bornholm, red frill an stripes for this veil.

The frills have 24 ends and is woven 2/2 with 4 end per dent.

The warp was not long enough so I made a finish in an other way, with a broad red stripe.



Finishing

All the veils were washed by hand and I worked the fabric so the reed marks disappeared. I ironed the main weave, leaving the frills unironed.

Many of the medieval pictures shows the frills as small plaits. I starched just the frills and formed them between two fingers. We will see how long they will stay that way when used.

