

Passemaine (Hand Made Trims)
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http://www.vertetsable.com/demos_simpletrims.htm

Simple Passemaine Trims -

This particular demonstration started out as a fairly small, fairly straightforward page of techniques. As you can see, it's become a monster! Some of the individual techniques actually deserve their own demonstration. Where possible, I've included illustrations of the techniques but some are too extensive for this to be done. In those cases, I've tried to include a book where illustrations and more thorough explanations of the technique can be found. Most books are under \$20 US and can be ordered online.

If a particular technique requires specific equipment, I've included online stores where those tools can be found. Most tools are under \$20 US.

These days, Passemaine or Passemaiterie means tassel and fringe making and all the other little things associated with that craft. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries, however, Passemaine (which translates from French literally as "passing through the hands") meant braids, cords and other trims which required only the hands or hands and other limited tools to accomplish.

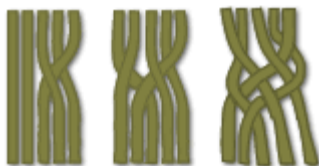
The following techniques are broken up into three categories; hands only techniques, limited equipment techniques, and extensive equipment techniques. No matter the equipment, however, all these techniques are simple, straightforward, and extensively used in period. One last caveat: the following presentation is by no means exhaustive of the techniques used in period.

Hands Only Techniques -

Braiding or **Plaiting** and all its myriad variations fall into this category. All you need are your hands, cord and a stationary object to hook your cord to in order to plait. The familiar technique of three ply braiding is probably the most simple type of trim to make. Surprisingly, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there are many examples of this simple technique being carried out and the result applied to garments. Three ply braiding can be accomplished with three strands of cord or can be varied by adding strands and plaiting each strand separately or treating several strands as one plait and going from there.



Four or more strands of cord, treated individually in the plaiting process can produce beautiful results. The first process of individual strand plaiting involves literally weaving a strand from the outside through all the other strands, dropping it, and then weaving the next strand from the same side through all of the strands, the first included, dropping it and so on. This is literally finger weaving and produces a biased patterned plait. Examples of this type of braid can be seen on garments as trim and were also used as finished cords for tying together bonnets, sleeves, and other small garments.



The second process of individual plaiting involves plaiting both outside strands simultaneously. This is more commonly known as French braiding. It produces an actual braid rather than a woven braid as with the technique above.

One of the most common and very period variations of three ply braid is known as **Greek Braid** or **Greek Plait**. It requires five strands of cord but, during the plaiting process, the outside strand is plaited over the two strands next to it and left in the center. The outside strand on the other side is then plaited over the strand next to it and the outside strand left in the center from the first plaiting process. The illustration to the left shows the process. This particular braid is fairly dense but turns around corners well and is easy to stitch down. Examples of it can be found on almost all garments from the period.



A more complicated braiding treatment is shown in the illustration to the left in which the three outside strands on both sides are treated as two single strands in the plaiting process and the two center strands are used to plait in and out between them. This produces a beautiful braid and, if made with thick cord, the result can be a very wide trim. Examples of this braid can be seen on many garments.

Macramé, a technique of decorative knotting, uses simple basic knots to create a multitude of patterns. The term derives from an Arabic word for braided fringe. Its first known use was recorded by Arabs in the 13th cent. During the next hundred years it spread to Southern Europe where it remained in use until modern day. Historically, the Arabic term for macramé, had a much wider meaning, which included strips, braids, grids, squares, and medallions as well as fringes and scallops. Macramé can actually be considered as the grandmother of bobbin lace techniques. The only difference between macramé and bobbin lace (both use bobbins) is that macramé is accomplished using simple knots whereas most bobbin laces are accomplished by twisting the threads together. This particular embellishment technique is extremely suited to the Southern European and Central Asian areas. Because the number of knot types is extensive, I won't get into the "how-to" in this demo. I will refer anyone interested to [The Complete Encyclopedia of Needlework](#) by Therese de Dillmont. This book is available from Amazon for about \$12 US. Click on the title to read more about it!