

FLESSBERGPLEGG

1. Introduction

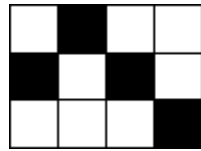
As soon as we saw the Flessberg coverlets in Kongsberg, Norway, it was clear that these were something unusual because the weave had a beautiful pebbled texture that gave the illusion of lengthwise waves. We soon found out that the weave structure is a weft-faced three-shaft pointed twill, something that really caught my interest because I've researched crackle on a four-shaft loom and the distinguishing feature of that weave is that it uses the three-shaft pointed twills.

To assist weavers in designing the patterned bands that are characteristic of the Flessberg technique I've devised a template which is reproduced later in this article along with an explanation of how to use it to make a pattern.

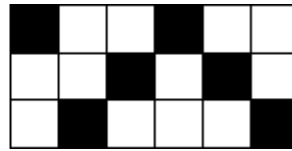


2. Structure

The threading of the weave is a three-shaft, six-warp pointed twill. Krokbragd, a related three-shaft weave, is a four-warp pointed twill.



Krokbragd



Flessbergplegg

Comparing the threading units for these two weaves reveals that whereas Krokbragd threading can produce plain weave, Flessbergplegg cannot. The other significant difference is that the two extra warps in Flessbergplegg produce a wider motif.

Figure 1 shows draw-downs of these two structures, Krokbragd (a.) and Flessbergplegg (b.). Note that in both there are two repeats of the threading unit plus one end to balance the motif, and the treadling is straight twill. The tie-up is direct, with one shaft on each of three treadles. The tie-up is shown with rising shafts O and falling shaft X. I have used three different colored wefts, one color per shaft/treadle, to emphasize the structure and the symmetry within the motifs.

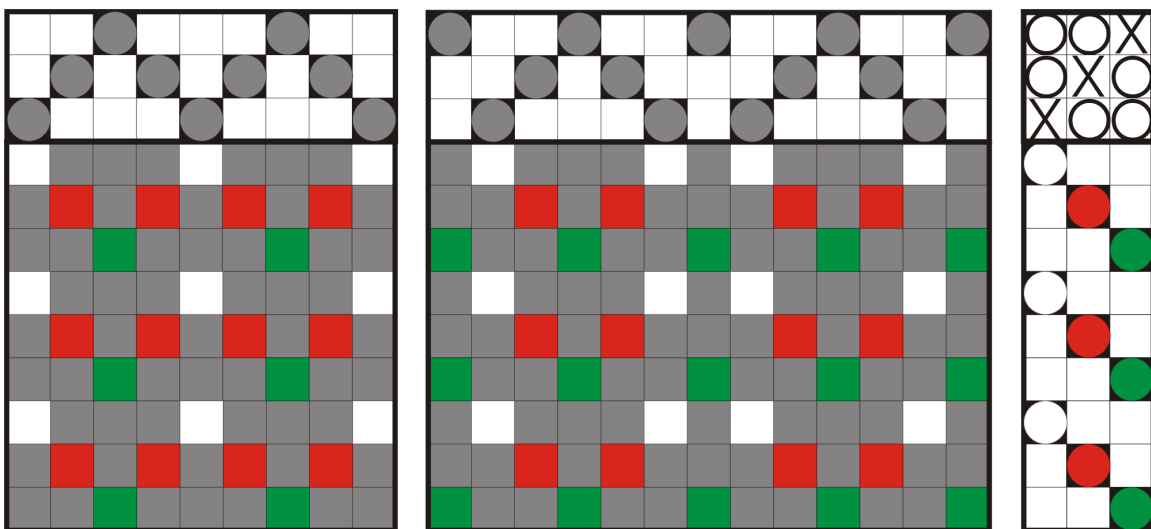


Figure 1: a. Krokbragd

Figure 1: b. Flessbergplegg

In these draw-downs, the gray squares are visible warps in a balanced weave, but in weft-face weaving the warp is covered. Therefore to see what the weave will actually look like requires that the gray squares be compressed out of sight. The illustrations in Figure 2 show approximately what the weft-face woven cloth will look like and can be compared to the detail photo from the Flessbergplegg gamp shown in Figure 3.

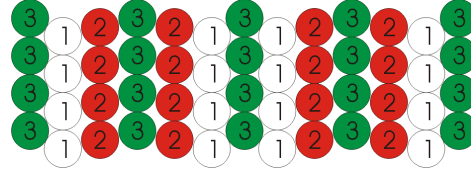
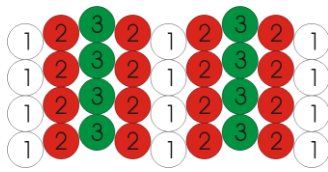


Figure 2: a. Krokbragd

Figure 2: b. Flessbergplegg

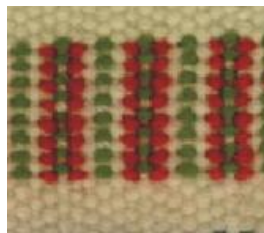


Figure 3: Detail of Flessbergplegg gamp

3. Weft Color Sequences

The weft color arrangement in the draw-down in Figure 4 is white and navy alternating, and this pick and pick color sequence is key to weaving the motifs that characterize the Norwegian Flessbergplegg coverlets.

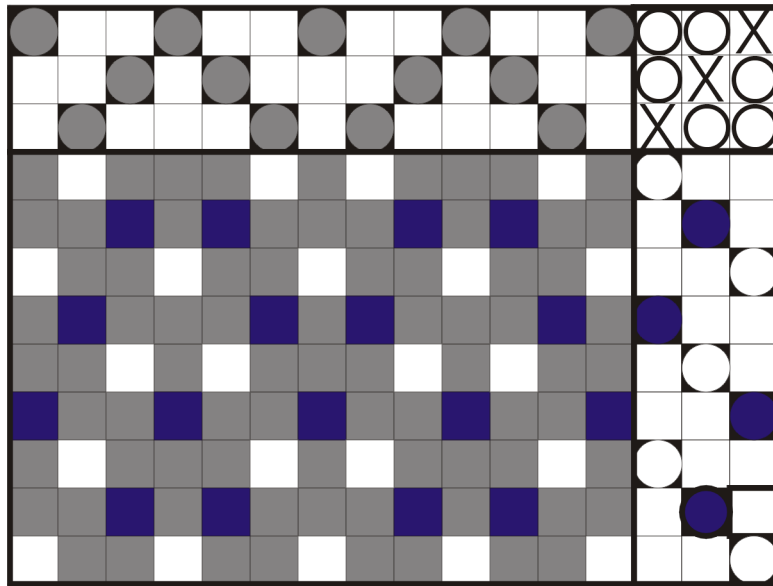


Figure 4: Flessbergplegg draw-down in two colours of weft, pick-and-pick

When the warp ends are eliminated, as they are in weft-face weaving, the textile will reveal the characteristic chevron images, as seen in Figure 5.

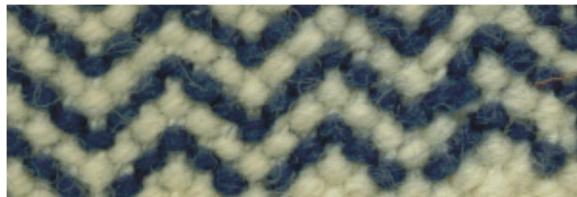


Figure 5: Woven sample of weft-face Flessbergplegg

By reversing the treadling, the colours and shapes of the weft units are mirrored, and the visual symmetry of any design is thus greatly enhanced. Figure 6 is a draw-down of Flessbergplegg treadled in a reversing twill, and Figure 7 is a woven sample.

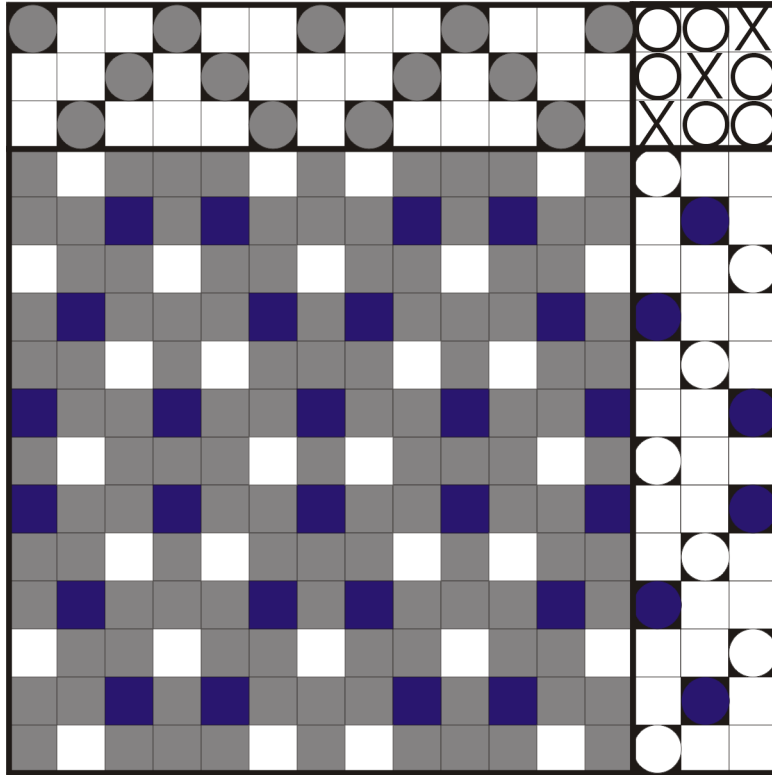


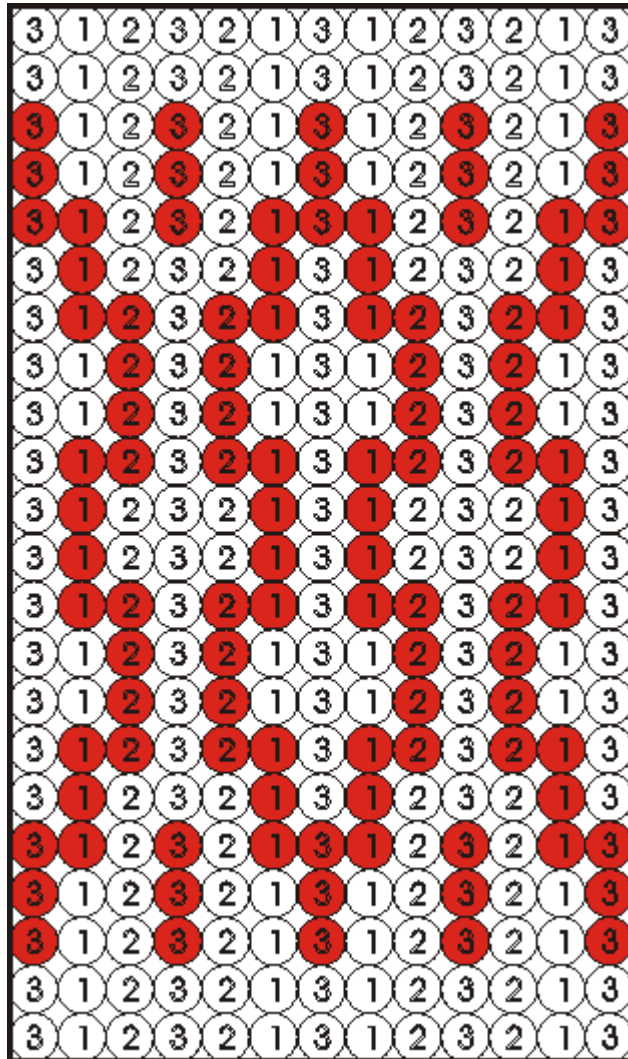
Figure 6: Flessbergplegg draw-down with reversed twill treading



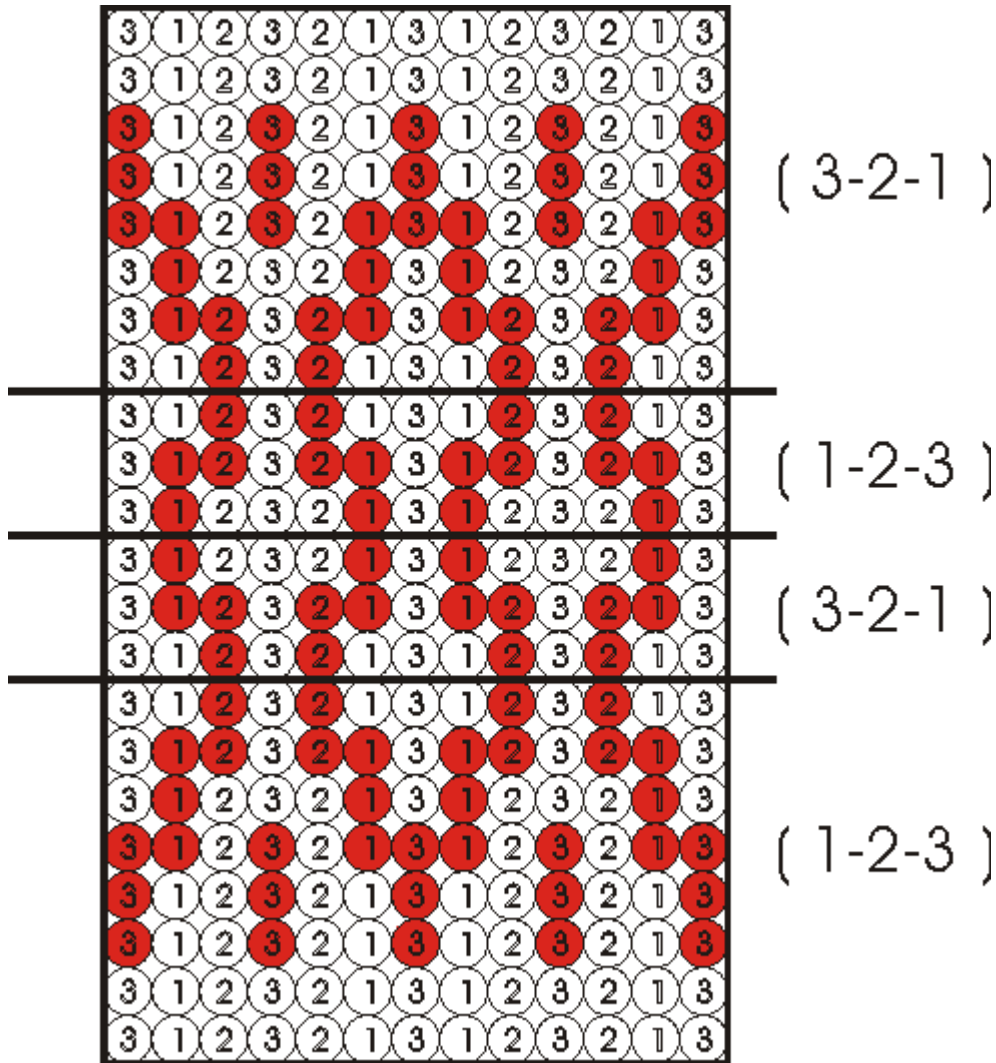
Figure 7: Woven sample of weft-face Flessbergplegg with reversed treading

4. Pattern Making

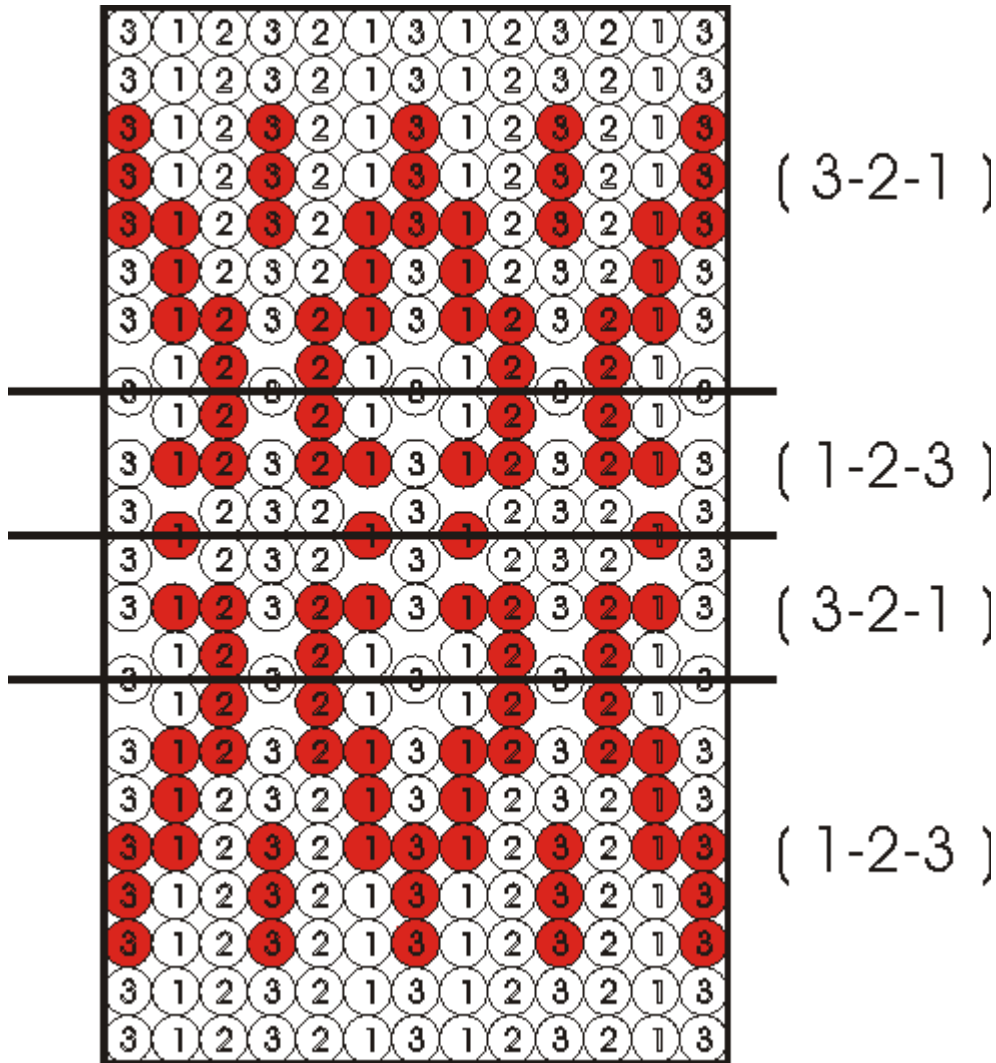
Step 1: Sketch the motif onto a template. I have provided a full-size template that can be copied for this purpose. You must use the same color for all of the dots with the same digit (1, 2, or 3) in any row.



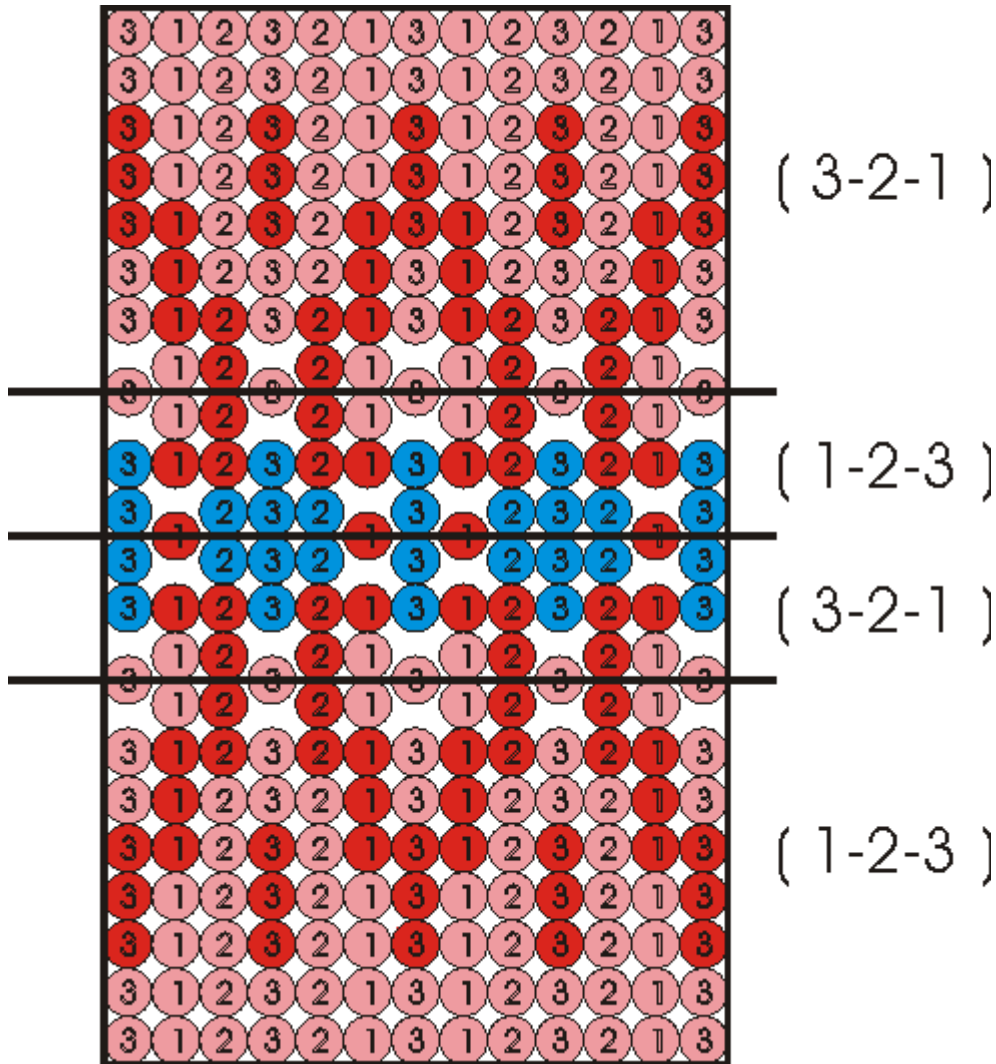
Step 2: Mark the weft-wise axes of symmetry in the motif and designate treading direction (1-2-3 or 3-2-1) in the regions between these axes.



Step 3: Correct for reversing the treading by eliminating some picks.

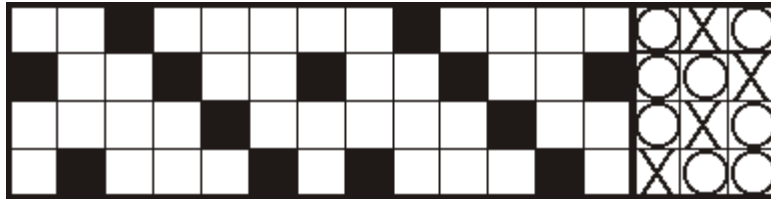


Step 4: Fill in the rest of the weft colors.



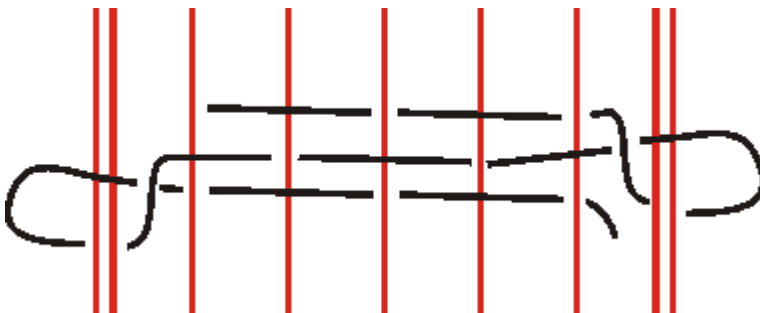
5. Observations and Comments

Since I was weaving on a four-shaft counterbalance loom I threaded and tied up using all four shafts by putting half the ends that would be on shaft two onto shaft four. Here is the modified threading and tie-up:



I used floating selvedge ends of doubled warp on each side, weighted to maintain tension. The doubled yarn prevents the usual overtwisting and untwisting that occurs on the selvedge ends.

The method of turning the weft at the selvedge that was taught by Marta Klove Juuhl in the warp-weighted loom class in Voss is highly recommended for this weave and any other weft-face weave particularly if colors are being carried. The diagram below shows how each weft passes over the floating selvedge, then does a loop around and under the floating selvedge and any other weft colors that are being carried.

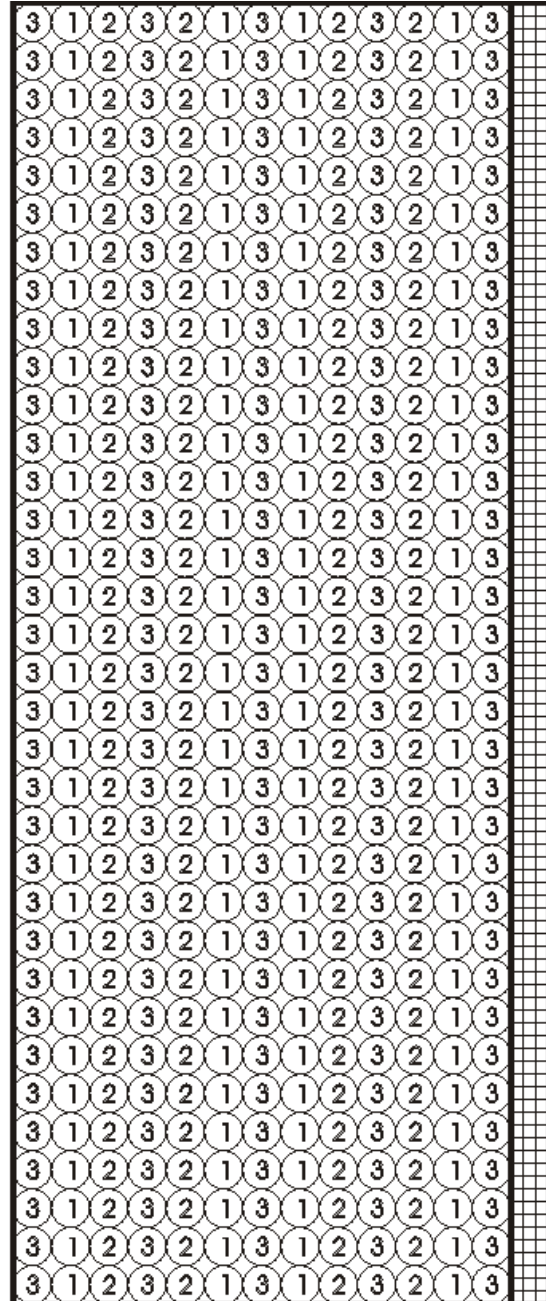
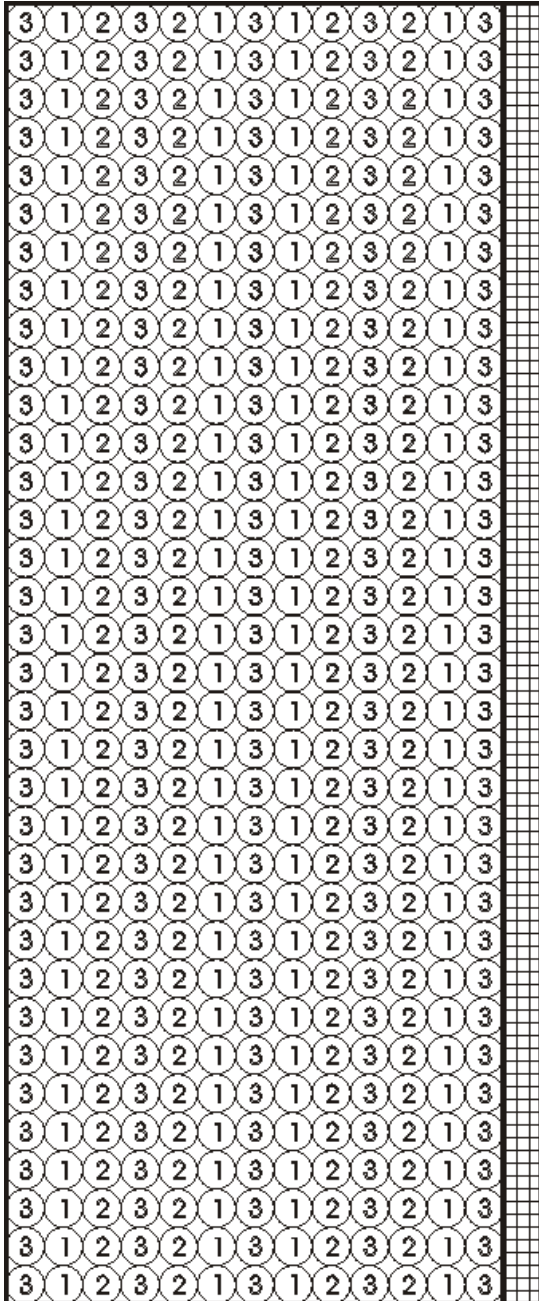


I used a temple as I wove and only moved it about every 4 inches. The yarns I used are from Clasgens (cycny.com), over-twist 2/12 wool warp at 1800 yd/lb, and 4/13 wool weft at 900 yd/lb. The warp sett was 9 per inch, and I found that with similar tension and beating as firmly as I do my plain weave tapestries I was not able to cover the warp completely. That is a

natural outcome of the structure and is quite evident in the photos of the original weavings we were shown in Norway.

6. Template for Drafting

This template can be copied and used to make patterns as outlined.



7. Patterns and Samples

